

The McNair Scholars Journal
of the University of Washington



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THE MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

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Volume IX
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From the
Vice President and Vice Provost for Diversity

One of the great delights of higher education is that it provides young scholars an opportunity to pursue research in a field that interests and engages them. The McNair Scholars Program offers support and opportunity for students to pursue scholarly research, and The *McNair Scholars Journal* plays an important part in that support by publishing their results. The Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity is pleased to publish the ninth edition of *The McNair Scholars Journal* of the University of Washington.

The McNair Scholars Program offers opportunities to a diverse group of students—students who may not otherwise get the chance to work closely with a faculty mentor on in-depth research. The young scholars who participate in the McNair program are among the most motivated and dedicated undergraduates at the UW. Their hard work and accomplishments put them in a position to succeed in graduate school. The *McNair Scholars Journal* plays an important part in the career of these young scholars by publishing their research at an early stage.

Please join me in thanking the faculty, staff and students who came together and made this journal possible.

Sheila Edwards Lange, Ph.D.
Vice President for Minority Affairs
Vice Provost for Diversity

From the
Director

I am very pleased to present the ninth edition of the University of Washington's *McNair Scholars Journal* to our reading audience. The collective excellence of these sixteen projects is a testament to the hard work of our students and the unwavering support of faculty mentors who supervised these projects. As always, I want to extend my gratitude to the faculty, whose guidance and support has allowed our students to grow in meaningful ways, while giving our scholars the foundation to enter graduate school with confidence and solid research experience.

The McNair Program at the University of Washington strives to create meaningful academic experiences that will enable our students to succeed at the next level. The research component for McNair Scholars has two specific goals: First, engage students in the research enterprise at the undergraduate level so they develop the analytical and methodological skills, academic sophistication, and confidence that will make them successful students in graduate school. Second, provide students a unique opportunity to publish their undergraduate research, so the scholars gain an early understanding of the critical role that publishing will play in their academic careers. In this respect, the McNair Journal is a key component in the preparation of our scholars for careers in research and teaching.

Our journal involves the work of several people who work behind the scenes proofreading, editing and preparing the final draft for publication. I would like to extend my appreciation to the UW McNair staff, Dr. Gene Kim, Associate Director, Rosa Ramirez, Program Coordinator, and our graduate student staff, Ashley McClure and Jorge Martinez, for their commitment to the McNair mission and for bringing this project to completion. They are an asset to the program and have been instrumental in preparing this high quality journal.

On behalf of the entire McNair Staff, I sincerely hope that you enjoy reading the ninth edition of the *McNair Scholars Journal*.

Dr. Gabriel E. Gallardo
Director, McNair Program
Associate Vice President, Office of Minority Affairs

From the
Dean of the Graduate School

It is a privilege to introduce the IX volume of The McNair Scholars Journal. This publication contains papers comprising an impressive spectrum of disciplines and representing the depth and potential of scholarship which the UW offers. The work of the McNair Scholars in this volume is absorbing, eloquent and impassioned—and all of us affiliated with the program (the Scholars, their faculty advisors, the McNair Program staff, and the Graduate School) should be proud of their work.

As you are aware, the McNair Scholars Program honors the memory and achievement of the late Dr. Ronald E. McNair, the physicist and NASA astronaut. Its goal is to encourage young women and men to emulate his academic and professional accomplishments. One of the McNair Program's goals is to encourage students who have been disadvantaged in their pursuit of academic excellence to attain not only a baccalaureate degree, but to continue a career in graduate education, culminating—we hope—in a doctoral degree.

The leadership, faculty and staff of the UW keenly believe that graduate education is much more than a private benefit for individuals—it profoundly serves the public good by educating people who can promote the shared ideals of our nation. A strong democracy depends on advanced-degree holders who can address the complex demands of 21st century society. As a public institution, the UW has a responsibility to prepare future leaders—such as the McNair Scholars—who, after they earn their advanced degrees, will be called upon to solve problems and enhance quality of life, both locally and globally. Hence, the Graduate School is honored to partner with this program and with the UW Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity.

Please join me in recognizing and thanking all of our McNair Scholars and mentors for creating a robust, vibrant intellectual community at the UW. These young future professors, leaders and policy makers epitomize the talent and intellect which no doubt will have global import, and will provide crucial leadership in an increasingly complex and changing world.

Gerald J. Baldasty, Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School
Professor, Communication
Adjunct Professor, Women Studies, American Ethnic Studies

From the
Associate Dean, The Graduate School, GO-MAP

I am very pleased that you have the opportunity to read the work of our McNair Scholars. This work represents the culmination of the efforts of very talented students who represent the breadth and excellence of the academy. Our McNair Scholars are from many different disciplines, from the humanities to the social sciences to the natural sciences, but all are alike in their excellence, which you will clearly see in their work.

The McNair Program's mission, the encouragement of students who have been disadvantaged, is critical to the future of higher education in the U.S. As our population becomes increasingly diverse, we need more role models on our faculties and in leadership positions, but it is also critically important that we not waste talent. Although these students have been disadvantaged, they are very talented and we need them to succeed. This is the reason that the University of Washington Graduate School's Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program (GO-MAP) is a proud partner with the McNair Program. We share in the mission of finding, encouraging, and supporting these talented students so that they can take their place in the next generation of scholars and intellectual leaders of this society.

Finally, it is important that we recognize that one of the important things that the University of Washington and other research universities do best is to train researchers. Our students have the wonderful educational opportunity to study with and learn the craft from some of the leading scholars in the discipline. By taking advantage of this opportunity, McNair Scholars will be among the most competitive for the best spots in graduate training programs as well as for the fellowships and research assistantships that will support their work and study.

I hope that you enjoy reading their work and join me in appreciating the quality of these students.

Sincerely,

Juan C. Guerra, Associate Dean
The Graduate School, GO-MAP

Journal Disclaimer

While the McNair Program Staff has made every effort to assure a high degree of accuracy, rigor and quality in the content of this journal, the interpretations and conclusions found within each essay are those of the authors alone and not the McNair Program. Any errors or omission are strictly the responsibility of each author.

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Contents

Defecating on Your Microphone: Gender Politics and the Power of Women in Hip Hop <i>Madeleine Clifford</i>	1
A Case study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil: <i>Movimiento Sim Terra</i> <i>Cristina Domogma</i>	17
New Face, Post Race? The Politics of Mixed Race Identity and the Emergence of Post-Race Discourse <i>Camille Elmore</i>	25
Building Resistance: Architecture & Anarchism/ a (Sub)Cultural Landscape <i>J. Edith Fikes</i>	47
Detecting Crossover PCR Using a Double Encoder <i>Nicholas C. Gomez</i>	92
Trumping the Race Card <i>Jessica Guidry</i>	99
The Quest for Meaningful Pedagogies: Cambodian Americans in Higher Education <i>Jimmy Lal</i>	131

Differential Experiences and Needs of Queer and Heterosexual Students in Sex Education <i>Jaimée M.K. Marsh</i>	147
Student Activism: The Challenges and Benefits of Collaboration <i>Jaimée M.K. Marsh</i>	165
Synaptic Processing in Pre-Adolescents: An Event-Related Potential Study <i>Vanessa D Montoya</i>	179
The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression <i>Christina Rainey</i>	197
Broadening Discourse and Centering Social Justice: Struggles for a More Just Food System in Seattle, Washington <i>Yecelica Valdivia</i>	219

Defecating On Your Microphone: Gender Politics and the Power of Women in Hip Hop

Madeleine Clifford

The Personal is Researchable: My Freestyle, My Methodology

“Restless messages
breaking surface sentences
we be between the lines
better cite us if you’re so inclined
renovate a mindstate
we may be ladies but still penetrate
our power’s on a conscious tip
coming with this knowledge we inherited.”
CanarySing, “Changes”

Introduction

My initiation into writing Rap lyrics occurred much like Roxanne Shante—in the form of a battle Rap. I wrote my first official verse in response to a group of wealthy white boys who paraded around my predominantly white high school and bragged that they had started their own exclusively white, exclusively male, Rap crew. It wasn’t the fact that their demographics deviated from Hip Hop’s roots in the impoverished, ethnically diverse inner city, but that their rhymes were just plain and simply weak—plus they spent a lot of time imitating and projecting ghetto stereotypes. One boy rhymed: “living in the hill is no joke;” the hill he was referencing was called Queen Anne and atop that Seattle neighborhood stood some of the wealthiest mansions in the country. My Rap was a rebuttal to their musings. To me, Hip Hop represented a profound lived experience and thus I decided to respond. Although I didn’t share my battle Rap with many people, it did get my creative juices flowing.

I started with dramatic performance, moved on to Slam, which is competitive poetry, and eventually started writing my own verses regularly. It was difficult at first because I was forced to compound concepts into musical bars whereas with Spoken Word I could be choosy about the pattern of my poetry. Yet the more I wrote Raps, the more I felt that I was becoming a better, more meticulous poet. I had to expand my vocabulary, avoid the common clichés and create in the small space allocated to me. It was difficult and, at times, frustrating, yet what kept me doing it was the fact that most of all, Rap felt therapeutic. The idea that Hip Hop has the capacity to protect, defend and promote healing has

motivated me to delve deeper into not only the history of the culture but also the problematic nature of marketing and packaging Hip Hop to the masses. The misogynistic images and degrading ideas that are projected in industrial mainstream Rap music are indeed inescapable, yet these images and ideas do not adequately encompass what Hip Hop has meant to Black women historically nor the music and culture's potential to advocate Black Feminist principles.

Recent Hip Hop and Black Feminist scholarship prioritizes acknowledging oneself in the research process. In her work, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, bell hooks describes using the phenomenon of "back talk" not only to defy authority and join the discursive space, but also to provoke thought and direct where the discussion moves in the future (5, 18). Additionally, Hip Hop scholar Tricia Rose commonly places herself into her research by referencing concerts she attended or intimate experiences of contradiction as a listener and lover of the culture. Thus, I too, have approached my research by occasionally using "I" and honoring my own lived experience as an emcee and woman of color as pivotal to forming a research methodology.

When I use the term Hip Hop in this paper I am generally referring to a culture, which is comprised of four main elements: DJ-ing, breakdancing, emceeing and graffiti writing. For the purposes of this paper Hip Hop may also be a term used to refer to emceeing specifically. Additionally, the terms Rap and Hip Hop are interchangeable throughout this paper. I may refer to the "discursive space" as well, and this term is meant to reference community centered practices in Hip Hop such as ciphers, which will be described in the conclusion of my paper. Finally, my main research approach will be to examine contradiction and sexism in Hip Hop; next, I will define some important Black Feminist epistemologies, provide close contextual analysis of two songs by Black female artists and conclude by posing key questions for further research.

Wack Poetics: Contradiction vs. Community in Hip Hop

"I've been the hip-hop head dancing at the club, the party, the show. I've been seduced by the lush sensual thumping of the beat, only to have some gangstafied lyrics punch me in the face. I started staying home, but my body still craved the beat. So I was waiting for the right hip-hop artist to come along, like a knight in shining armor to make the kingdom of hip-hop safe for me again. But the right hip-hop artist *is* me."

Defecating On Your Microphone

-Aya de Leon, *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip Hop Feminist Anthology*

As a young person, I enjoyed rhyming and often hummed phrases, memorized my favorite poets and molded a means of articulating my inner most aspirations. When communicating my personal struggle was imperative, poetry became my primary language. As both a Spoken Word poet and a Hip Hop head, I was captivated by compelling instrumentals and inspired by the flurry of philosophies that Rappers could provide via their creative rhyme schemes. For example, I remember checking out the album *Reflections Eternal/Train of Thought* by Talib Kweli and DJ Hi-Tek from the Seattle Public Library and being enveloped in images and ideas that provoked critique of the power structure over beats that honed African rhythms. Kweli—former member of the classic Hip Hop duo Blackstar—spoke of Rappers who “drink champagne and toast to death and pain like slaves on a ship talking about who got the flyest chain” (*Africa Dream*). Kweli references Rappers who he argues promote violence as they “toast to death and pain;” he challenges these artists by placing them into historical context metaphorically and describes them as taking part in their own enslavement. Before Kweli, I was unfamiliar with any sort of critique of the violence and materialism that saturated the airwaves of my favorite Hip Hop stations. Once I began to analyze the songs that played over the airwaves, I was overwhelmed by how many negative images and ideas listeners were exposed to as opposed to positive or thought provoking ones. It was almost as if certain Rap songs were being prioritized above others.

Imani Perry writes about the broad spectrum of Black cultural expression that Hip Hop artists can potentially uphold through their poetic expression in the introduction to his book entitled *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop*. He writes that:

“In the world of Hip Hop, holy and well-behaved gestures sit next to the rough and funky. Violence, sexuality, spirituality, viciousness, love and countless other emotions and ideas all form part of the discursive space. Part and parcel of the refusal to serve as the moral conscience of the nation any longer has been the development of music that allows for a wide range of expressions and positions [...] the high and low sit next to each other holistically, a space in which one can act a number of roles and play out intense moral and psychic dilemmas on wax” (6).

Perry's analysis speaks to Hip Hop culture's capacity to advocate for a complex comprehension of what it means to be Black in America. His point is important particularly because it reminds individuals to continuously approach an analysis of Hip Hop with a fundamental understanding that traditionally Hip Hop "allowed for a wide range of expressions and positions." To elaborate on Perry's point, it is also important to note that Rap artists traditionally debated within and between songs and through media outlets. Just like any other dialogue or debate, contradictions were continuously addressed. Although negative images and concepts have been part of popular Hip Hop songs from the beginning, these images and ideas were considered in comparison to positive ones that were concurrently projected in the "discursive space." Yet, more recently, it has become difficult and, at times, impossible to find even one major Rap artist that isn't upholding age-old stereotypes of violent, materialistic Black men and promiscuous Black women. Hip Hop heads that wish to hear alternative sounds are forced to delve "underground." Although the concept of "underground" Hip Hop is contested, it generally refers to music that is sold under independent labels or does not gain mainstream success due to artists being unsigned by major record labels. Ultimately, the polarization of Hip Hop into dichotomies of "good" verses "bad" or "conscious" verses "commercial" disallows for any sort of meaningful dialogue about sexism.

On the other hand, labels can be useful precisely when Tricia Rose writes that the "pejorative use of the term 'commercial' is meant to draw sharp attention to the power of Viacom, Universal, Sony, and other massive media conglomerates in elevating one thin slice of what constitutes hip hop over all other genres, because doing so panders to and helps reinforce America's veiled but powerful interest in voyeuristic consumption of black stereotypes," (Hip Hop Wars, 242). Rose writes that media conglomerates have been able to "shape the conversation" and have in essence silenced compelling critiques of some of the social forces that have created the ghetto and upheld sexist ideals in the first place (9).

For women who love Hip Hop and are exposed daily to songs that degrade and target their gender—the dilemma of responding to the widely controlled "discursive space" of the industrial mainstream Rap industry is a daunting task. When it comes time to face the music, women may decide not to listen to their favorite artists or, more commonly, opt out of even going there. For example, Rose describes being faced with a similar predicament. She writes that "once I really listened to the words and thought about the story being told, it was hard to know what to do: Respond to the funk and ignore the words, or reject

the story and give up the funk that goes with it” (262). Rose speaks to the temptation to simply let the beat take control; eventually, she comes to the conclusion that “like any other powerful and compelling force, beats can be distorted, used as a baseline for stories that undermine the spirit. Music comes from but also makes community so the question becomes: what kind of community do we want to make?” (264). To expand upon Rose’s point, the more women choose not to respond to objectification in Hip Hop, the more it is normalized, the more it becomes part of the community space.

It is the reality of a system that overwhelmingly construes women’s voices as less valuable in the public sphere that explains why many women never pick up the microphone or develop a craft. This also sheds light on why the number of women Rappers is small in comparison to men. Feminist Hip Hop critics have recently highlighted the fact that “hip-hop doesn’t exist in a vacuum;” that indeed our entire society upholds sexist ideals and in some circumstances that is what has made certain Rap artists profitable in industrial mainstream media (Black Noise, 150). Yet, it is also important to note that just because society itself is sexist does not excuse sexism in Hip Hop and until people openly address oppressive and abusive language, young women of color will continue to be degraded and discouraged from expressing themselves in Hip Hop circles. The lack of female outspokenness and expressiveness results in a lack of discussion, a silencing of women’s voices and an overall inability for Black women to “talk back” and change the “discursive space” for the better.

Some of Us Are Brave: The Importance of Intersectionality

“Some of the young ladies have to become themselves, have to learn to stop being what a man wants them to be and start realizing who they are and what they are.”

—Lauryn Hill, *Rhyme and Reason*

Perhaps the best example of an artist that struggled to survive in light of polarizing binaries of “good” vs. “bad” is Lauryn Hill; she taught me about poise and prowess as she punked emcees who were “imitating Al Capone” she promised to “be like Nina Simone [...] defecating on your microphone” (*Ready or Not*). Hill’s reference to the late great Nina Simone prompted me to check out Nina Simone albums and discover the song “Four Women,” which described the plight of black women before Black Feminism was formally articulated. And when Hill dropped her own solo album I—like practically everyone else I knew—was serenaded by each song on *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*. Hill was

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

queen, unrelenting lyricist, but most of all, she was at onset willing and able to combat crippling Black female stereotypes. In the early stages of her career, Hill negotiated the space between scholarship and straight street. In this way, her presence in the media as well as her lyrics allowed for broader definitions of Black identity and Black female identity in particular.

Perhaps we can look at Lauryn Hill as a representation of the current state of Hip Hop, the beautiful ballads of life woven with whimsical style, the celebratory and the judgmental, the consequent loss of something sincere and the utter madness that comes with such a loss. For example, a friend of mine described going to see Lauryn Hill perform in Brooklyn in 2008. Thousands gathered to see the emcee Rap the handful of ballads that had become an anthem of a generation; my friend was ultimately unable to get into the park where the concert was held because the show was completely sold out. Yet, as Hill began to perform, thousands of fans started to exit the park due to the fact that Hill's performance was not what it used to be. Perhaps it was because everyone could tell that Hill was not performing to the best of her ability; maybe the limelight was just too much for her to bear. Whatever the reason, there is currently a general consensus that Hill has lost an important part of herself and so has Hip Hop as a whole. It seems that Hill battled with maintaining her own complex identity in light of industrial mainstream pressure to be packaged and stereotyped—to be identified as one dimensional.

In order to understand some of the pressures that Black women face in society one must put their experiences into historical context. Throughout U.S. history, black women—as well as other groups of women of color—have struggled to claim a place for themselves in movements for equality. Black women were central yet largely unrecognized organizers and participants in anti-lynching and Civil Rights campaigns: they petitioned, rallied, and risked their livelihoods and lives, yet their experiences as women were significantly downplayed (White 1998). Likewise, even in light of Sojourner Truth's famous *Ain't I a Woman* speech, the First Wave Feminist movement failed to significantly address or alter the lives of the majority of Black women in the United States. Not only were the needs of principally upper class white women prioritized, but racism within the movement was pervasive. Even contemporarily, Black women as well as Latina, Asian and Native women experience racism in Women Studies classes (hooks 2000). Thus—in the last thirty years—it has become a primary concern for Black women to develop a means of articulating their unique experiences

Defecating On Your Microphone

as marginalized people, so as to create a dialogical space with common language in order to claim agency.

Black Feminist Thought established itself as an important mode of discourse within Women Studies circles during the Second Wave Feminist movement of the 1960s and 70s as prominent activists and academics such as Angela Davis, bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins made significant strides toward creating awareness of oppression against Black women. They urged people to acknowledge and accept that “sexism, class oppression and racism are inextricably bound together;” this notion was further termed Intersectionality. Intersectionality advocates for the analysis of oppression in terms of gender, sexuality, race and class (Collins n.d.). Black Feminists claim that an understanding of the Black female experience must acknowledge that systems of oppression are interlocking.

In order to understand the ways in which many Black female emcees have pushed to uphold Black Feminist principles such as Intersectionality, it is imperative to close read songs. The following are two distinct examples of a tendency that some female artists have had to promote Black Feminist values and direct the “discursive space” in ways that promote healing and agency for entire communities.

Lyrical Interpretations: Mystic and Lauryn Hill

Mystic is a female emcee originally from the Bay Area and is a member of Hieroglyphics crew. She discusses her life experience in a song entitled “Fatherless Child.”

Feels better if I tell em my story
Yo, on November 24th, 1999
I was in L.A., and I was in the kitchen cookin
And I got this page right
And uh, I called back and I was informed that
My father had passed away from a heroin overdose
About two hours earlier
So this song is for him, and to him
And for all the fatherless children in the world
The mother's who raised us, the people who love us

It's a Monday, finally found the perfect beat
To speak my peace on how I came to be
The way I was raised, how I was born
Why I smile so sad, and have the eyes of a storm

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

Moms from Virginia, you from Rhode Island
Met up in the state where the sun's always smilin
Minds connected, physicals exchanged
Y'all both believin that the world can be changed
Time passed to 1973, and you begged my mom to create me
First she said no but she loved you too much
1974 had a child to touch
He was into other things, that ripped life scenes
Liquor, drugs, other women, destroyin dreams
But you know how women be, she tried to hold on
For the sake of your love and the beautiful bond

(Chorus)

I'm a Fatherless Child, it's all I've ever been
All I'll ever be, since you're gone from me
Still, I hope you know that I can never unlove you, love you

1974 was a year things changed
Too much alcohol makes people violent and strange
You broke the windows with a baseball bat
As my mother cried inside with me on her lap
The dream destroyed, it was time to leave
She didn't take much, just a few things of lovin me
That was the birth of this fatherless child
And a struggling mother with the world in her eyes
She did it though, put herself in college
Raisin me wit grace, givin me the knowledge
And pops you, you never came by
Never sent money never called to say hi
I use to lie to the other kids on the block
Say I knew where you was at so the questions would stop
I fronted to my friends that you didn't mean much
But I used to cry alone, and long for your touch

(Chorus)

Ninth grade I thought you were dead
Call my mom about a paper, and that's what you said
I was angry and confused, all because of you
Wanted to ask you why, and just say f you (f you!)
But the feelings passed, what were my options?
Studyin my face tryna find what was lost and
I decided that you didn't mean s!#%

Defecating On Your Microphone

That I was really worth lovin and you lost a gift
Before that, I grew breasts and things
Got raped in the bathroom, and the question sings
Would it have, could it have, should it have
Been different if I had yo hand to grab?
Would I be easier to love, not so torn inside
If you would've beat that man, and stood by my side?
Would I write sad songs, and call pain daily?
How different would I be if you had raised me?

1997, you called my home
From Telegraph & 43rd, for the child you never owned
I told you come by, Adam came to help me
You were homeless and drunk, but not lookin unhealthy
We sat for hours, I asked you every question
We sang on my porch and discussed life lessons
And I loved you, like you had always been there
You said you'd never leave again, so I released my fears
1999, tryna to sign my deal
Ten years of hard work, finally becomin real
So I brush you off, writin songs for a movie
That was the last time I saw you, forgive me truly
The day my deal was done, you died
Wit the needle in your arm, and angels by your side
And I miss you, tattoood it on my back
Fatherless child, fade to black

Mystic, Cuts for Luck and Scars for Freedom, “Fatherless Child”

Mystic dedicates her song to “all the fatherless children” perhaps relating her experience in a single parent household to other black youth born in the seventies and throughout the eighties when the “[...] War on Drugs’ policy favored punishment over other social responses,” (Rose 50). Mystic’s father, a drug addict, appears to be unable to maintain a strong presence in her life; Mystic writes that she “fronted to [...] friends that you didn’t mean much/ But I used to cry alone and long for your touch” and in essence places importance upon father figures for young women. In her third verse, Mystic ponders “how different would I be if you had raised me?” as she describes being raped. In this way, she is able to promote ideas of Intersectionality; Mystic describes the loss of Black male figures in the Black family but takes it a step further as she explains how this loss affects young Black women specifically. Mystic’s

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

father is so significant to her, in fact, that only experiencing talking to him for one day in which they “discussed life lessons” apparently impacts her growth for a lifetime.

It is evident in the lyrics of independent female emcees such as Mystic that Rap music has allowed for such self-definition to occur as Black women address substantial and stigmatized issues in their communities. Mystic says that it “feels better if I tell them my story” and thus prioritizes catharsis and community sharing. Her song allows women to come forward and “feel better;” it places significance on communal healing. Not only does Mystic use her song to heal, but she also implements it as a defense mechanism and survival technique that both wields wisdom and heals wounds. Mystic’s song speaks to issues of interlocking systems of oppression—as a member of the Black community as well as a woman.

Lauryn Hill is a highly accomplished female emcee originally from New Jersey. She was formally a member of the Fugees crew who released an album entitled *The Score*. She began her own solo career and released an album entitled *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* in 1998.

I wrote these words for everyone
Who struggles in their youth
Who won't accept deception
Instead of what is truth
It seems we lose the game
Before we even start to play
Who made these rules? We're so confused
Easily led astray
Let me tell ya that
Everything is everything
Everything is everything
After winter, must come spring
Everything is everything

I philosophy
Possibly speak tongues
Beat drum, Abyssinian, street Baptist
Rap this in fine linen
From the beginning
My practice extending across the atlas
I begat this
Flippin' in the ghetto on a dirty mattress
You can't match this Rapper / actress

Defecating On Your Microphone

More powerful than two Cleopatras
Bomb graffiti on the tomb of Nefertiti
MCs ain't ready to take it to the Serengeti
My rhymes is heavy like the mind of Sister Betty
L. Boogie spars with stars and constellations
Then came down for a little conversation
Adjacent to the king, fear no human being
Roll with cherubims to Nassau Coliseum
Now hear this mixture
Where Hip Hop meets scripture
Develop a negative into a positive picture

Now, everything is everything
What is meant to be, will be
After winter, must come spring
Change, it comes eventually

Sometimes it seems
We'll touch that dream
But things come slow or not at all
And the ones on top, won't make it stop
So convinced that they might fall
Let's love ourselves then we can't fail
To make a better situation
Tomorrow, our seeds will grow
All we need is dedication

Let me tell ya that,
Everything is everything
Everything is everything
After winter, must come spring
Everything is everything

Everything is everything
What is meant to be, will be
After winter, must come spring
Change, it comes eventually

Lauryn Hill, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, “Everything is Everything”

In comparison, Lauryn Hill’s song speaks to the historical connectivity that Hip Hop has with the musical and historical legacies

that preceded it in the Black community. She writes: “I philosophy/ possibly speak tongues” and references Egypt several times playfully in rhyme, but also asserts a link to ancient classical Black culture. Hill also incorporates Intersectionality into her song as she references the past; she describes being “more powerful than two Cleopatras” and thus promotes black *herstory*. Not only does she pay homage to the legacy of sampling in Hip Hop by referencing the past and positioning it in relationship to the now and the future—when she writes “Hip Hop meets scripture” and “touch that dream”—but Hill also highlights the importance of dialogue and community sharing much like Mystic does.

Hill also urges her community to change by stating: “let’s love ourselves,” thus repositioning attributes that are socially constructed as feminine—such as love and child rearing—and opening them up as traits that entire communities must uphold in order to flourish. This being said, it is evident that female emcees have a unique method of communicating struggle in their music and have the capacity to direct the “discursive space” in comprehensive ways.

Pass it Off: A Cipher for the Sisters

“Poetry was a place for the secret voice, for all that could not be directly stated or named, all that would not be denied expression [...] the magic of poetry was transformation; it was words changing shape, meaning and form.” –bell hooks in *Talking Back*

Hip-hop culture is at its root interested in initiating, maintaining and celebrating conversations, debates and facilitating adaptation; it is, in essence, “the central cultural vehicle for open social reflection” (Rose 18). The cipher is a key method to reaffirm meaningful community in hip-hop and create spaces for a dialectic to progress. As Pough writes,

“To cipher means to understand, to figure out. In Hip-Hop the cipher is built when people shape and build knowledge together. The cipher is in constant motion, created throughout U.S. history whenever Black women—whether expressing themselves through writing, public oratory music, or club activities—come together to discuss issues of importance to themselves and the Black community” (24).

Defecating On Your Microphone

It seems as though Black women have always worked to be included in the cipher, to direct where it is going and to prioritize certain principles. In her work entitled, *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop*, Kyra D. Gaunt describes the important role that young black girls' games have on contemporary popular music. She provides a more specific example of the concept of a cipher and describes the ways in which women can be either included or excluded from such public spaces when she writes the following:

“Ciphers are three or more emcees that improvise or ‘freestyle’ rhymes, one after the other, over a beat, usually within a tight circle. Many girls and women drop out of the game because of their fear that being sexually different may affect their ability to perform freely. In this context, who determines who leads the cipher, or who determines the ‘rules’ (such as establishing sexual topics, whether cussing will be allowed, whether references to ‘niggers’ or ‘your mamma’ are off-limits, or whether anything goes. ‘Whose game’ can also refer to the contest over who’s winning at a given moment of play (Q: Whose battle is it? A: It’s his/hers to take). It seems that men are always winning the social battle” (112).

But Gaunt’s primary concern in her book is also to position Black women as prominent influencers of Black musical expression. She goes on to write that “girls’ approach to rhymed verse, which occur in unison choruses as well as in individual expressions of identity within call-and-response formulas, are equivalent to the largely male, rhymed speech-play known as Rapping” (92). This being said, women are, as Gaunt puts it “actually attracted to their own sphere of musical practice subverted within hip-hop practice” (121). Thus, female emcees have always been part of Hip Hop, but their presence has been subverted—perhaps more so in recent years with the rise of industrial mainstream Rap.

The industrial mainstream has been able to construct “spaces” whereas more authentic spaces where comprehensive dialogue can take place more commonly occur in street ciphers. Fortunately, movements are being formulated in order to create, not only more opportunities for street ciphers, but also nurturing spaces for women and young people to develop as Rap artists. Events such as *Ladies First* (a monthly open microphone and Hip Hop showcase, which features exclusively female artists and Queer artists of color in Seattle, Washington) proves that

various female artists are continuing the legacy of refusing to adhere to stereotypical images and portrayals and creating nurturing spheres for their art.

Future questions concerning women in Hip Hop could be: What approach to the “discursive space” is more successful? Should women create their own ciphers of dialogue and reflection or should they instead work to join male dominated ciphers? Another important question is how might women gain recognition and success in Hip Hop without adhering to stereotypes?

Brave New Voices is an international Spoken Word competition and festival that features artists from all over the nation and world. During my second year as a youth poet participant, I went to a workshop conducted by Aya de Leon, which was meant to encourage women to create their own freestyle ciphering circles; the workshop was exclusively female. Within the workshop, De Leon gave young women pointers on cadence and flow and how to develop one’s own style; more importantly, she told us that ciphering and flowing is almost all about maintaining confidence. Indeed, many of us agreed that even some emcees with weak verses were able to keep a flow in the cipher on confidence alone. By the end of the workshop, all of us were taking turns making a beat and rapping; we vowed to start an all-female cipher that night after one of the slams.

Quite often, ciphers are formed when people gather outside after a community event. That night, a huge crowd of youth exited the theatre and—almost at once—a girl from the workshop with the best beat boxing skills began to go off. We all formed a circle and, one by one, we spit a few bars and felt the rush of freestyling. At first, guys began to interrupt and butt in and this seemed to cause our cipher to fall apart. When we told the guys that our cipher was exclusively female they started to complain. In the end, most dudes gave up and walked away but some of them stayed and listened. Once we had spoken our minds, we asked them to join us.

The idea of being vulnerable, sharing and healing may seem like “weaknesses” or “feminine traits” but they are in fact pivotal to maintaining movements for justice and social change. The future of Hip Hop scholarship is bright and highlights a link to community organizing and social justice collectives. In the future, I hope to conduct more extensive research into the potential for female artists to uphold such links, not only in the United States but globally as well.

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MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

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A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil: *Movimento Sin Terra*

Cristina Domogma

Abstract

The MST of Brazil is cited as an example of a successful transformative social movement. However, it is not obvious that the changes arising from its realization has resulted in the transition from the status quo that its originators would have initially envisioned. MST is likely associated with Brazil becoming an economic power, but its impact on the citizens and political elites of Brazil is more mixed. Using a case study approach, this research examines the current relationship between former leftist leaders and strong grassroots leadership in Brazil, and whether the history of the MST serves as a model of the challenges facing social movements face in Latin America. The transformation of the leadership from left-leaning to right-of-center reflects a pragmatic approach to political leadership that can be explained in terms of political science derived theories focused on political elites and sociological theory describing allegiances in terms of social capital.

Introduction

While studying social movements that promote important political reforms in Latin America, I found the nation of Brazil, and its social dynamics, as illustrated by the Movimento Sin Terra (MST – Landless People’s Movement), to be of significant interest. This particular movement not only focused on advocating for agrarian reform, but also embraced other common issues, such as social injustices and the reconstruction of the Brazilian political system. As I explored these concepts throughout the course of this research project, my belief that we need to pay more attention to that region of the South American continent has significantly increased. And as a result I am quite motivated to think more about Brazil and its role in the world as the leader and economic engine of Latin America.

Brazilian social movements, which emerged in the 70s as a way to articulate opposition to the military regime, have evolved in an interesting manner. With the introduction of neoliberal politics in the 90s however, it has been suggested by some scholars these social movements have lost strength due to the increased prevalence of NGOs.

Given the changing nature of social movements over the last 40 years, this research is designed to better understand the concurrent role of political agencies in this social transformation process to characterize

movements in order to better understand how their challenges make them so relevant and influential in other Latin American nations.

At present, it is my contention that Brazil could serve as a model for other Latin American grassroots movements. As a clear leader in the Latin American economy, it is important to have a better understanding of the importance, as well as influence, of social movements in strengthening the financial as well as political systems of these nations. Thus, I am positing that there are significant challenges reflected in how the MST's mobilization have shifted from a grassroots movements relationship to a more conservative development, and as a consequence impacted Brazil's social and economic disparity.

In this instance, President Lula's career, evaluated in terms of his emergence as a leftist, trade-union activist to a politically moderate administrator more aligned to the Brazilian *Status Quo*, will be considered in light of the larger issues currently confronting South America's industrial powerhouse. These issues include the complexity of maintaining a progressive policy in an era of globalization. This analysis of Latin America's new left, and its relationship to the emergence of Brazil as a regional power, is an important concept for understanding the challenges currently confronted by other important emerging social movements in this part of the globe.

Methods & Theoretical Framework

The heart of this proposal rests on an extensive exploration of a case study related to the Brazilian *Movimiento Sim Terra*. The intent is to better understand the emergence, structure and character of this particular movement in an attempt to assess its efficacy and persistence in light of changing economic and political factors over time. This understanding supports my ability to speak to the questionable effectiveness of this movement in light of global liberalization and its disproportional impacts on various facets of the Brazilian society. These insights are important to understand appreciate the challenges that may be faced by similar movements in other Latin American nations. Thus, when viewed in this fashion, my work is cross-national and longitudinal in nature. However, the primary focus is providing an interpretation of the events in Brazil.

With respect to the theoretical framework, I used a theory of social/mass movements and formation called the *iron law of oligarchy*, from the discipline of political economy. Thru this lens, the MST's success in expanding and promoting political reforms in the midst of the challenging circumstances, including the ascension of a former prominent union leader into power, is questioned. By identifying the implications of unionization, as demonstrated by the aforementioned

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

leader, to the average citizen living in Brazil's vast inner core during the period of popular *Lulaism*, this framework, which is used by the German syndicalist sociologist Robert Michels in his 1911 book, *Political Parties*, it is my intention to characterize the Movimiento Sim Terra movement in a fashion that will allow for the cross-national comparisons, and longitudinal assessment, that I suggested above so as to explain the complex movement in Brazil.

A Shift to the Right

The momentum gained by the MST was significantly favored by Lula's poor origins in the backlands of Northeastern Brazil to the periphery of São Paulo, where he became the main union leader in the fight against the military dictatorship. When he created the Worker's Party, the history of the Latin American left was significantly changed. However, Brazil, the largest Latin American country -and one of the richest in terms of natural resources worldwide- is confronted by an unprecedented situation in terms of its democratic history: the electoral victory of a progressive party. The *Partido de los Trabajadores* (PT – Worker's Party) won the last presidential elections, and its candidate, Luiz Ignacio "Lula" da Silva, became the first president to rise into power with an unprecedented syndical trajectory in the history of Brazil. But Lula's economic policies made impossible the realization of important reforms. The most glaring example was that R\$2 billion needed to be cut from the agrarian reform budget in order to service the national debt. This action left neither the funds nor the personnel to implement the government's reform plan. Meanwhile, the Agriculture Ministry continued to invest in large, export-oriented mono-crop cultivation, such as soybeans, over sustainable agriculture. Export agriculture, a legacy of the colonial-era plantation economy, continues to be controlled by some of the most reactionary families and politicians in the country, leaving entire families and small farmers unable to compete on the market, or confronting a food shortage never experienced before as a result of this type of land use.

MST's Discontent

Lula's mandate, which has taken leadership to advance the democratic transformation of Brazil initially intending to align his government with social movements, is favored by a populous that has a long tradition of collectively fighting for their rights. Over time, Brazil has demonstrated that it is one of the countries in the Latin American region that is well-characterized as being social conscious. Within this context, the MST has been characterized by its transcendence and

importance among Latin American grassroots movements. Furthermore, aside from the work they do in Brazil, the MST's ideals are found in a global concept, in which they foster and continuously develop a strong network with other associations and organizations that are quite diverse in nature.

The current posture of the MST relative to Lula's administration has degraded since Lula's election into power. In spite of the support he received during his electoral campaign, Lula has not maintained ties to the movements. Lula has preferred direct contact with the poor without the mediation of people's movements. The Landless People's Movement had a lot of hope in Lula. The aspirations of the Movement have yet to be realized, and as a result many in the associated organizations have been disappointed because the *latifundio* (large plantation ownership) continues to reign and land reform has not occurred. Unfortunately, the capitalist future of Brazil does not exist without land reform. Current economic policies constrain the terms of negotiation over land reform to a purely market-oriented lexicon, constructing a discourse of "negotiated land reform" to describe market-led agrarian reform. With the existing discourse, the MST believe the purpose of land reform is to boost agricultural efficiency in order to promote economic equity. The Lula's administration needs to seek an approach to land reform that would both maintain and enhance global capitalist markets in agriculture, and seek to redistribute land and wealth to the rural poor within this framework of global market capitalism. What's more alarming is that this land reform was a historic proposal of Lula's party, but there is no sign that his administration is moving forward with it.

Lula's victory can be perceived from two positive angles: on the one hand, it is expected to improve the governmental relations with the leftist groups, and on the other, Lula's career trajectory fighting from within the leftist Brazil could be used to change the discourse initiated during his presidential campaign, which has been severely weakened.

Struggle for Power: Political of Popular?

By all rights, social movements in Brazil should be flourishing. In 2002 Brazilinas elected as their president the left-wing *Partido dos Trabalhadores* leader, a party that has its roots in the militant labor and popular movements that helped bring a close to Brazil's brutal military dictatorship in the mid-'80's. Lula's presidential victory raised hopes that, some twenty years after the end of military rule, the promise of popular democracy in Brazil might finally be fulfilled. However, the current political reality in Brazil is far more complicated.

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

As a labor leader and co-founder of the PT who rose from very humble origins to the presidency, Lula, is a hero among Brazil's poor and a beacon of hope for the advance of progressive policies and reforms. However, economic and social policies seem to be a different matter. Lula's much-celebrated Zero Hunger program has been underfunded and poorly administered, and he has been cutting back on social spending to finance the foreign debt and dazzle investors with large annual budget surpluses. To please these same investors, his government's economic policy is essentially the same as that of the previous administration.

Lula appears to have set his course and the social movements would already have taken the lead had they had the strength to do so. Lula's administration could stay its present course, reopening the door for an openly neoliberal government. Regardless of how his government acts or fails to act, the MST people's movement seem determined to make their own destiny. The MST has shifted from direct action type activities to more political maneuvering. They had become increasingly reliant on INCRA (the Agrarian Reform Institute) to grant land titles.

Conclusión

Despite the apparently radical tactics of land occupations, the MST has always had a strong legal position, based on what the Brazilian Constitution, which states that unused land is supposed to be redistributed among those who would use it. While confronting diverse challenges, such adversities are an important part of their fight for the Agrarian Reform, which is absolutely incompatible with the elitist neoliberal project. They are confronted with the responsibility of developing and propagating the ethical values of a society in which justice and solidarity are fundamental practices key of the general changes Latin America seeks to go thru. The approach grassroots movements ought to take to create social change does not fall easily into the traditional categories of domestic or foreign policy improvement—pragmatism trumping over idealism. It should contain the best elements of both.

What I suggest might be called “pragmatic idealism.” While firmly grounded in values, it appreciates the complexity of the real world—a world of hard choices and painful trade-offs. This is the real world in which we must live, decide and act. I am not proposing a dogmatic list that must be checked off for each domestic/foreign-policy challenge we confront. On the contrary, these approaches embody a mindset marked by a realistic assessment of events and a practical response to them. They represent anything but elements of a rigid

ideology that forces events into preconceived notions and creates “either/or” choices that are both false and dangerous. This approach embodies a practical approach less interested in ideological purity than in solving problems. Grassroots movement’s pragmatism should inform and influence domestic policies.

Such a balanced approach can help us avoid both the cynicism of “realism” and the impracticality of “idealism.” It is based on an optimistic view of man but is tempered by our knowledge of human imperfection. While it promises no easy answers or quick fixes, this approach can better focus on restoring, protecting, and preserving the most fundamental human rights amongst the most misrepresented groups in society.

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A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist
Movements in Brazil

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Research interests: As a way to both expand my knowledge and promote innovative forms of US intervention in Latin America, I would like to explore and learn more about the other Latin American grassroots movements, such as the EZLN in Mexico, and the Mapuche in Chile.

New Face, Post Race?: The Politics of Mixed-Race Identity and the Emergence of Post-Race Discourse

Camille A. Elmore

Abstract

Racial identification in the United States has been conceptualized as a simple process, structured around categorization in relationship to phenotypical features rather than self-identification. Because of this limited and static thinking, the concept of mixed race identity seems to be radically displaced, pushed to the margins of racial discourse and left to only enter the spaces of black/or/white. This research project aims to understand on a historical level why those who are multiracial, are unable to appropriate their racial identity as black and white but are rather categorically fixed as one or the other. To help illuminate this process through a significant case study, this project examines the way in which the U.S mainstream media has constructed the racial identification of President Barack Obama, a mixed race man, as a singular black subject - thus revoking his access to accurate self-representation and appropriation of his multiple identities. Therefore, this research projects seeks to question and understand the ways in which multiracial people are unable to appropriate their multiple identities simultaneously and furthermore, how the media works to situate multiple identities into one monolithic category, limiting the rights of self-representation. In addition to the former, the latter part of this project examines the “post-race/race-less” discourse that has circulated in relationship to Barack Obama and his ability to “transcend institutionalized racism and/or racial discrimination” as a minoritized body, a type of racial discourse, this research argues, that has been prompted by the mainstream media. The methodology used in this research project utilizes critical discourse analysis of major newspapers (i.e., The New York Times, Washington Post, Seattle Times) that are used as secondary sources to analyze the media's portrayal of Barack Obama's racial identification.

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine and address the fluidity, dynamisms, and practices of identity politics and further work to push marginalized voices from mixed race communities to the front *and* center (the political is personal) of racial relations. This research hopes to deepen the understanding of mixed race identity, specifically how it is conceptualized in the mainstream press by utilizing a case study of

Barack Obama, while also speaking back to the fetishization, objectification, and negative figuration, of mixed race people – a way of celebrating and contributing to mixed race movements. Specifically, this study calls attention to the way in which Barack Obama’s mixed race identity is conceptualized through discourse, providing insight into the politics of mixed race identity through the lens of a national icon. In what ways is he limited in choosing his racial identification(s)? How does negotiation, a concept that illustrates the task of fighting for the right to have access to choice, work in this process and how is it shaped by racist discourse within the mainstream media and press? Equally, this research seeks to validate mixed race identity as a legitimate psychosocial and political category based on the theory that race is a social construct that shifts across time and space.

Where as this research project is not entirely distinct in approach from previous literature investigating the politics of mixed race identity, one difference is the examination of a national icon as a case study, which may work to either refute previous theories and findings in mixed race studies or confirm them. However this work does offer elements, a position, and lens that is uncommon entirely because I am a undergraduate student and woman of color speaking to the reality of a certain mixed race experience that exists “outside” the means by which things are most commonly represented: a struggle over relations of representation to a politics of representation itself. Moreover, through this research I hope to contribute to the anthology of work grounded in race and racism, mixed race studies and critical discourse analysis.

Stuart Hall, (1994) has argued that the struggle to come into representation, a concept that addresses the difficulties people of color face with being accurately represented within the media and popular culture, has been a struggle which has been maintained because it is predicated on a critique of the degree of fetishization, objectification, and negative figuration, which are so much a feature of the representation of the black subject. Positioning itself within this framework, this research examines how certain mixed race individuals (i.e., those who identify racially as black *and* white) are bound by the social and cultural methods deployed within U.S. racial discourse that work to situate those that are multiracial into one fixed racial category.

Just as the black subject is limited in terms of *access* to the rights of representation, the mixed race subject is equally placed within the new millennium “relations of representation” (Hall, 1994). In other words, as Blacks face difficulties with being represented by stereotypical characters in the media, mixed race people have faced similar issues by being categorized as how they are seen rather than how they actually

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

self-identify. Additionally, Hall notes that race, racism, and identity operate by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalize difference between belongingness and otherness.

Therefore, this research works to identify the ways in which mixed race people may be unable to appropriate their whiteness *and* blackness – because of their external locations as being twice raced, not once, not ‘*normal*’ – by the effects of mainstream media racial discourse that works to situate them into only one racial category, despite efforts of mixed race communities to appropriate both identities simultaneously on a national and international level.

The Racial Present

The current climate of racial politics require that identity and social structure intersect with one another to create a political framework in which difference frames inequality to reinstate the positions of dominance and resistance. In today’s society, racial stratification is always in transition, constantly and steadily transforming into a more fluid and flux infrastructure, in which minoritized bodies are situated at center. Historically, there has always been a need or arguably, a necessity to organize and categorize bodies based on “phenotype” and region, in order to permanently position those who are “superior” and “inferior”. Therefore our current understandings of cultural, personal identity and collective representation have all been fashioned in the global racial agendas that were born in modern history.

In our contemporary period, the term “race” has multiple open-ended meanings, therefore it is vital that this research defines the way in which the term “race” functions within mixed race studies and/or research. Sociologist Howard Winant offers a concise definition explaining that race is “a concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies” (x, Winant). Deeper than just acknowledging skin color and diverse phenotypes, race is an institution that encompasses identity, meaning, experience, subjectivity, exclusion and even larger agencies of hegemony, dominance, imperialism and colonization. Furthermore, with the transition from racial domination to racial hegemony, the realignment of racial politics has produced new mechanisms that contest the appropriate of difference – taking such forms as colorblindness, multiculturalism, racial differentialism and colorism. Most recently, the racial conditions specific to the United States have had an influx of influence instituted by popular culture, the mass media and national

icons. Through these mediums, race and racial politics are being repackaged as “conversations of the past”, antique subjects in which racial stereotypes have been dismantled and racism has been combated. This research argues that racism and white supremacy are hardly dead. The mechanism(s) of racial inequality have proven to be easily reinvented in order to adapt to whichever environment in which it can thrive. Despite efforts of resistance in the forms of antiracist movements and the urge to reposition the national social and political agenda, the superiority of “mainstream” (aka white) values still argue that equality has been “happily” achieved and maintained. Rather, the current racial climate is a result of a larger synthesis of challenge, continued racial conflict, and formulas of “racial reform” (multiculturalism, diversity, etc). The managers of racial hegemony continue to reproduce and reinforce normative principles and codes of behavior that are racist in nature and exclusionary to people of color. Thus it is easy to recognize that now and in the coming periods, both globally and locally, political and social systems will continue to be organized racially – race will continue to play its traditional role of stigmatizing difference: the apprehension of a “black” president, the disadvantage of mixed race blood, and the “perversion” of perhaps, black queer studies.

Inevitably, these analyses have been approached using an external lens, and knowing that the political is inescapably also the personal, it is important to take into account the meaning of race from “down below”. Often we look at certain institutions, from the standpoint of domination and a “top down” sense. Therefore, in efforts to reposition marginalized voices, race should also be considered a place of personal meaning, conflict, cultural identity and experience.

The Politics of Mixed Race Identity

The concept of racial mixture is nothing new – it has been a complicated, ‘mutation’ of multiple histories at home and abroad. As new definitions of ‘mixed race’ unfold and more inclusive vocabulary, such as, multiracial, are introduced the gist of what it means to embody ‘mixedness’ continually expands. Specific to this research, ‘mixed race’ is defined as a racial mixture of black and white. Used interchangeably with the term multiracial, the use of ‘mixed race’ works to dismantle equating a person into halves (a process that most certainly de-humanizes people), but promotes the terminology to be utilized as a way of transcending racial binaries that unflinching require a person to choose one race over the other (IE: Barack Obama is mixed race and/or multiracial, instead of *just* black). Scholar David Parker notes, “the

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

‘multi-prefix’ is used to index a more radical racial pluralism that goes beyond a simple black/white binary” (Parker, 8).

The subject of ‘mixed race’ tends to reveal and be met with deep-seated fears and resentments from conservatives who have worked to construct and sustain racial purity projects, (which are predicated on the foundations of white supremacy and positions of power) that currently function around the globe. Author David Parker writes, “the alleged threat to racial purity posed by ‘mixed race’ people and relationships continues to energize racist discourses circulating in the pamphlets and Internet sites of white supremacists” (Park, 4).

The discursive formations of mixed race or multiracial identity politics have arrived from a U.S historical context of slavery, eugenics, and racialized laws: one-drop rule, anti-miscegenation laws, and scientific racism. Combinations of these mechanisms have worked to rearticulate notions of racial purity, which follow codes prescribed by the dominant society. Therefore, multiracial groups who do not fit neatly into static definitions of racial categories because of their external locations (read bodies) being *twice* raced, fall into a space within racial politics where they are misrepresented, contested and/or completely marginalized from racial discourses. Scholar David Parker elaborates on this dynamic, explaining, “the aim to place ‘mixed race’ firmly within mainstream debates about ‘race’ and ethnic identity lay behind the conference out of which mixed race studies has emerged. The experiences of the rapidly growing populations of mixed descent worldwide are central to the racialised dynamics of social and cultural change” (Parker, 1).

While procedures such as the U.S Census disseminate the accelerated growth of dominant racial populations, new outlets, like that of popular culture discourse, and national mixed race movements help to redraw the map of ethnic boundaries. This process of inclusion and redefinition works to contribute to the emergence of a new racial category that escapes the black/white binary, providing a space in which multiracial individuals are given the option to choose their ethnic and/or racial identity regardless of how uncomfortable it makes others feel. This method stems from the complicated position in which those who are mixed race are forced to identify according to polarized categories of race, *or* their ambiguous bodies fall completely outside of the dominant racialized categories and they are left invisible. Instead of having the option to identify as ‘mixed’ (a legitimized racial category), multiracial individuals are limited to one racial “box” depending upon how they are ‘perceived’ by the dominant society. Parker illustrates this process by explaining that, “analysts’ should accept the lived experience of

racialized difference as a foundation for social identities: offspring's who are biracial mixtures with blacks are pretty much excluded from most racial categories except for black" (Parker, 8). Yet if lived experience is the criterion for judging the efficacy of a social identity, then why is it not possible for mixed race individuals to define their selves in a way that speaks to their mixed genealogy and their ongoing lives as 'mixed race' people? At a heightened moment during the 2008 presidential campaign, President Barack Obama addressed the issue of race, and his own racial makeup as a way of inserting the mixed race subject into the larger discussion of the history of race in America, Obama stated, "I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. I have brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews, uncles and cousins from every race and every hue scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible" (Obama, State of Union Speech). Although the way in which Obama racially described himself in his public speech was explicit, the underlining principles of racism allowed major news outlets and commentators to redefine Obamas' racial identification into something more tolerable for white audiences who abide to a racially polar society that fails to recognize the 'in betweens' of racial binaries.

When an instance where blackness and whiteness converge, multiracial identity is constructed, albeit, the underlining question rephrases itself within society and perhaps most immediately within the body – how do these "contradictory" elements cohesively join together? The mixed race "question" is one that still remains without a firm and all-inclusive answer.

Historically, multiracial bodies have been bound by social and political methods deployed by the dominant society to situate them into one fixed racial category and unfortunately such methods have not changed. As Stuart Hall suggests, the mixed race subject is easily placed with the new millennium "relations of representation" (Hall, 1994). In other words, representation, being defined as more than just a way in which someone is symbolized, can be a conflicting and challenging experience where multiracial bodies contest static notions of race by physically embodying the "exception". This is a process of understanding the difference between how one is socially and politically categorized versus how they actually self-identify. Additionally, Hall notes that race, racism and identity operate by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalize difference between belongingness and otherness. As history has defined the spaces in which certain groups can and cannot

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

occupy, mixed race subjects are left on the outside margins unable to sync properly based on their provided option of identifying as *either or*.

Multiracial Identity in the Media

As highly influential institutions, the news media takes part in creating the process of racial formation, while also framing groups of people to be consumed in a particular manner. These „racial projects“ work to construct and define racialized bodies as well as transform and destroy them depending on what racial ideologies are meaning to be deployed. Therefore „racial projects“ created by the news media are dependent upon particular conceptualizations of race, identity, and non-binaristic categories (read multiracial) which are unfortunately defined, upheld and reinforced by oppressive and outdated notions of race and representation. In other words, dominant social organizations, particularly the news media, play a pivotal role in portraying what race and racial groups are – or should be – at any given moment, further situating dominance and power over racialized bodies. More often than not, racial groups are then categorized inaccurately because of the stereotypical and racist manner in which they are represented within the media. Based on dominant ideologies, the ways in which racial groups are constructed in the media can reflect the current climate of racial thinking - referencing Stuart Hall's thought, identifying racial groups is not simply inserting *their* identities but rather deciding *for* them, how their identity will be used this week (Squires, 2007). Because racial identity has been conceptualized (especially within the media) as a biological, fixed and singular entity, coverage on multiracial bodies literally gets lost within the columns of new press. Unable to „situate“ non-binaristic bodies into one monolithic category multiracial issues get dispatched along color lines (Squires, 2007). In other words, because of the „multi“ that functions within mixed race identity, the news media works to place it within a fixed space (ie: African-American community) further limiting the opportunity of hybridity being possible in United States race relations.

In the case of racial identification, oftentimes the question of one's authenticity is processed through the dominance of white viewpoints and standards, thus multiracial bodies can be delegitimized or marginalized because of their inability to be placed in one specific category in which dominant practitioners can understand. Thus, framing is a process by which the media can shape the perception of racial reality in society (Squires, 2007). Alternatively, with the rise of social movements rooted in dismantling binaristic ideologies regarding race, people of color have begun to mount strong challenges to hegemonic

racial ideologies utilized in the press thus creating a space in which multiracial people finally become visible.

Yet despite being „newly“ visible, multiracial bodies have almost immediately been placed within a new position – the race „solution“ just as fast as their multi-functioning identity was previously the race „problem“. This can only lead to the question of what prompted the news media to abandon or stray from their previous notion about race and identity? As the appearance of new ethnic and racial bodies became more frequent, dominant racial ideologies encountered more challenges by progressive agendas from people of color. These „new“ multiracial bodies were symbolically speaking back to binaristic categories in three distinct ways: they presented themselves as figures who do not fit traditional modes of racial classification, they rejected the flattening of their multiple identities thus introducing a moment in which they renamed themselves (Biracial, Hapa, Metis, etc) so that they can be accurately raced in the public sphere (Squires, 2007). However, despite the ability to insert new multiracial discourse into the larger conversation on race, the news media restated its authoritative position by reiterating its ability to interpret, (re)define and construct those same identities. Thus making it clear that particular forms of resistance can also be incorporated into racial projects. This research has found that while games of dominance and resistance are at play, the very act of creating a new racial discourse works to appoint multiracial identity a position within race relations.

Research Case Study: President Barack Obama

A large portion of this research is dedicated to a significant case study specifically analyzing the ways in which President Barack Obama's racial identity has been conceptualized and mediated within the mainstream media. The purpose of the case study was to illuminate contemporary moments where mixed race identity (read President Obama) is called into question within public discourse. As the journey of Obama's 2008 presidential campaign became more publicized within various media outlets, the very nature of his presence within a historically and predominately white institution (read United States government) transformed him into popular public icon.

Scholars such as Jane Rhodes (2007) have utilized the impact of national icon(s) in order to assess how we (as a society) become “informed of the deliciously subversive notion that national icons are capable of manipulating or influencing mass culture” (p. 15). Additionally, scholar E. Patrick Johnson (2000) has noted that “national icon(s) are valuable in the respect that their actions and legacy are most

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

likely to carve an impact even in the most remote and secluded communities” (p. 49).

Icons and symbols execute a special role within the dominate and/or nation’s narrative: They impact political institutions, social movements and struggles, cultural identities, and I would argue here, racial and ethnic identities, into a exceptional moment or period of time that calls forth a collective memory, transforming into a collective identity that speaks to the formation of a national identity.

In this respect, as spectators and supporters of the Obama campaign persuaded for the emergence of a post-race era on the basis that he is a racialized body transcending institutionalized racial barriers, simultaneously those same practitioners conceptualized Obama’s identity as monolithic, singular and fixed. As America’s new “black” president, Obama was unable to appropriate his whiteness and multiracial identity as a legitimate identity marker.

At a moment when perhaps normative racial relations are challenged by the election of a „black“ president, persistent dominant ideologies utilizing a binaristic framework prevail. President Obama, who himself has identified as a „son of a white mother from Kansas and black father from Kenya“, is not only a symbolization of an amendment within the codes of race relations but also a reminder that race is fluid and flux and always being regulated by dominant society, a pronounced suggestion that race (regardless of its fictitious biological foundations) and race politics are not dead and have certainly not yet been „overcome“.

Critical Discourse Analysis

As with the introduction analysis provided on mixed race identity politics, the latter part of this research is focused on examining the way in which Barack Obama’s mixed race and/or multiracial identity has been conceptualized in the media, through looking at multiple sources of texts which have focused primarily on Obama’s racial identity, and its relationship to representation and authenticity. “Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, a critical discourse analyst takes explicit position, and thus wants to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (Van Dijk, 1996). In other words, the CDA methodology used in this study works to probe selected articles from major new sources (New York Times, Seattle Times, Washington Post) from the time period of November 4th, 2008 (when Obama was

elected as the 44th President of the United States) until January 20, 2009 (when he was officially inaugurated into the Presidential Office). Analyzing specific news articles can reveal how the mainstream press has labeled Obama's racial identity, and how that label has changed over time (from black, to half white, to mixed race, to not black at all, etc). The texts that this research has employed includes journalistic articles, new stories and features - biographies, and scholarship that have utilized Obama as their focal point for describing current U.S race relations, mixed race identity politics, authenticity and representation. Media representations of Obama's racial identity provide insights about the static racial categories the mainstream press deploys, in order to construct and "handle" the representation of minoritized/mixed race bodies. In particular, the selected news articles were utilized in order to understand the way in which Obama's racial identity was "talked about", questioned or challenged by the media.

The New York Times

In an article titled "Should We Call Obama 'black' or 'biracial'?" journalist, Nicholas Kristof (2008) calls into question how American's should label their potential next president. Kristof begins his write-up with a narrative describing his 'struggle' to determine whether or not Obama was able to be officially coined 'black', Kristof writes, "Traditionally, of course, the convention in America has been that someone who is biracial is considered black, and that's the standard that we in the news media generally hew to." What Kristof fails to mention is the amount of power the media has, which allows them to construct and equally deconstruct certain identities. By determining (read choosing) how to label Obama in his article, Kristof executed a type of privilege and power specific to the media, knowing that his labeling could potentially inform or persuade national and international audiences. Kristof goes on to mention that his choice in choosing the term 'black' over 'biracial' to describe Obama was swayed by the words of Obama himself, Kristof reveals, "The exception comes when someone has a different preference; if Tiger Woods wants to be considered multiracial, he is. Since Obama considers himself black and refers to himself as black, we generally call him black." Again, the negligence of Kristof fails to critically call into account the fact that Obama has never publically identified as solely a 'black man' and that 'naming' is at play when journalists and authors underpin issues of identity so that it is tolerable for readers and critics. Kristof finishes the piece asserting that identity politics are not as clear-cut as we would like to imagine. He states "So what do you think: is it time to revise the convention? If

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

Obama is elected, should we refer to him as black or as biracial? Would using the term biracial be more accurate and inclusive? I don't have any particular views on this and am thinking out loud" (Kristof, 2008). However, this segment is still entirely problematic. As a white man and media practitioner, Kristof fails to acknowledge the power he has in shaping Obama's racial identity with his mere thoughts. Thus, his simple and "innocent" question to the general public is rather fully loaded with numerous cultural implications.

The same cultural implications can be found in the article "For Some, Uncertainty Starts at Racial Identity" written by Adam Nossiter (2008). Nossiter begins his article describing the murky lines of Obama's racial identity and its influence in causing white southern voters to be vote against him. Nossiter writes, "Being the son of a white mother and a black father has come to symbolize Mr. Obama's larger mysteries for many voters. When asked about his background, a substantial number of people interviewed said they believed his racial heritage was unclear, giving them another reason to vote against him" (Nossiter, 2008). The inability for the author to give 'name' to the racial category 'multiracial' or 'mixed race' further allows the binaries of black and white to be present within the media (read article) and discourse amongst interviewers and interviewees. By adhering to such binaries, Obama's identity is shuffled by the opinions of the public, leaving no space for 'mixed race' to be inserted into the larger conversation on race. Nossiter cites a southern voter, "He's neither-nor, he's other. It's in the Bible. Come as one. Don't create other breeds" (Nossiter, 2008). The problem with citing such statements in an article challenging Obama's racial identity is that it positions the 'moral sin of race mixing' against the product of interracial relationships: mixed race people. It is as if the author is undercutting idea of hybridity with the sense of moral consciousness that is popularly upheld in the white south. The cultural implications are present when the author cites southern white voters critiquing Obama's racial heritage while simultaneously disavowing the importance of race in the presidential campaign. He states, "Many voters seemed to have no difficulty criticizing the mixing of the races — and thus the product of such mixtures — even as they indignantly said a candidate's color held no importance for them" (Nossiter, 2008). What this journalist fails to mention is the undertones of colorblindness that are present within his citation. While white southern voters and perhaps American's at large claim that race is not an important issue in validating the credentials of Obama, then why is his identity constantly challenged and left at stake during this process?

The conversations that occurred in various news and feature articles regarding Obama's racial heritage all became conveniently fixed on the color line. In an article written by Marcus Mabry (2008), titled "Where Whites Draw the Line", Mabry and his contributors strategically place Obama within different sections of the color spectrum according to the needs of specific ethnic communities. During this process, Mabry speaks to the way in which Obama is split between 'associations' depending on whether he is 'black enough' or perhaps 'too black'. Mabry writes, "Indeed, some people argue that one of the reasons Mr. Obama was able to defeat Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton was that a large number of white voters saw him as "post racial". In other words, Mr. Obama was black, but not too black. But where is the line? Does it change over time? And if it is definable, then how black can Mr. Obama be before he alienates white voters? Or, to pose the question more cynically, how black do the Republicans have to make him to win?" (Mabry, 2008). The very essence of questioning whether a person is qualified as black, or 'too black' allows the nature of stereotypes to flourish and recreate identities, which the media, as Kristof reveals, "adheres too". An understanding of what the term blackness does and/or can mean would quickly dismantle any arguments concerning whether Obama was 'too black' for whites and 'not black enough' for African-Americans. With a problematic answer to the 'not black enough/too black' question, Mabry offers a statement from an interviewer as a means for justifying his contestation with Obama's loyalty to 'blackness' or 'non-blackness', he writes, "White people are weary of the kinds of black people who are dedicated to indicting whites as racists. So, to be 'too black' is to carry an air about you that whites have something to answer for" (Mabry, 2008). As with his media counterparts, Mabry continues the process of challenging and contesting Obama's mixedness, and suggests that one should choose the option of 'either or'. Regardless of which agendas are at play, media practitioners, in this instance, are guilty of producing images of Obama and mixed race identity that are racist, static and limiting.

Seattle Times

The article titled, "Barack Obama: Black, White and Gray" written by Maureen Dowd (Dowd, 2008) offered the same type of inquisition regarding Obama's racial identity and whether his presence within traditionally white institutions would spark improvements in U.S. race relations. Specifically, Dowd calls into attention the powerful speech Obama gave on race during his presidential election. She writes, "Displaying his multihued, crazy-quilted DNA, he talked about cringing

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

when he heard the white grandmother who raised him use racial stereotypes and confess her fear of passing black men on the street. He tried to shine a light on that clannish place where grudges and grievances flourish. After racing from race for a year, he plowed in and took a stab at showing blacks what white resentment felt like and whites what black resentment felt like” (Dowd, 2008). Unsurprisingly, Dowd fails to acknowledge that the position of speaking about the fictitious nature of stereotypes concerning black *and* white people is certainly unique when offered by a mixed race perspective, keeping in mind that perhaps this account is somehow not skewed. Dowd illustrations of Obama’s speech on race gave readers the suggestion that he was undoubtedly speaking to two different audiences: white/black. Although the message was meant for all, somehow the truths of race and racism in the United States were lost in translation for white audiences. Dowd writes, “His speech was pitched to super delegates queasy about his spiritual guide’s Malcolm X-ism, the virulent racial pride, the separatism, the deep suspicion of America and the white man — the very things that Obama’s “post-racial” identity was supposed to have transcended” (Dowd, 2008). Splitting racial audiences on the basis of Obama’s identity seems to juxtapose racism with racial binaries: Obama speaks to his white audiences in one-way and his black audiences another way because he himself is also ‘split into two’. Dowd ends her piece condescendingly referring to Obama’s racial makeup, writing, “Gray is a welcome relief from black and white” (Dowd, 2008). As if the murkiness of Obama’s mixedness is a diversion from deciding whether he is indeed black *or* white.

Specific to the Northwest, many articles emerged arguing for a reconsideration of policies that service minorities. In the article, “Conservatives Argue Obama’s Victory Shows Legal Safeguards for Minorities Not Needed”, writers Peter Wallsten and David Savage (Wallsten, Savage, 2008) advocate such arguments, explaining that since Obama was victorious in the 2008 presidential election, clearly such policies are no longer necessary. The writers begin their article with the inquiry, “The question now is, at what point do we as a society wipe the slate clean and accept that we are equals with equal rights, equal treatment, and equal expectations, and special treatment shouldn’t be provided to anyone? (Wallsten, Savage, 2008). This question, which acts as the body of the article, is functioning here as a minor tenant of the post-race movement. The assumption that Obama’s victory quickly and conveniently ended the need for race and the acknowledgement of racism is entirely problematic. The authors quote Obama, “Still,” he said, “racial discrimination and racially polarized voting are not ancient history. Much remains to be done to ensure that citizens of all races have equal

opportunity to share and participate in our democratic processes and traditions” (Obama, Wallsten, Savage, 2008). Again, the authors persuade audiences to promote the idea that racialized policies servicing minorities are no longer needed on the basis that Obama has solved our race problems in America.

Washington Post

While many articles published in the *Washington Post* challenged or negotiated Obama’s identity, one piece in particular written by William Jelani Cobb (2008), titled, “In the Age of Obama, Still Playing the Race Card”, examines the role of ‘playing the race card’ in the newly developed Obama era. Cobb writes, “The change Obama wants is not here yet. The very fact of Obama's election in a country that once denied blacks the right to vote is a barometer of change. Obama's attempt to change the tone of American politics runs into one cold reality: Divisiveness still works” (Cobb, 2008). The journalist leaves us with the suggestion that perhaps the only way to speak to black *and* white audiences is to divide up the conversations – in a sense, Obama divides his whiteness and blackness in order to gain more credibility with certain audiences. Racial binaries are the undertone of this article, advocating that the only way Obama can solve our racial problems is to solve them in completely different ways for white and blacks. Cobb later offers that the factor of race has complicated all things political, social and mental, stating that Obama has negated from using the ‘race card’ in order not to scare off white voters and generate pro-black movements. Cobb then applauded Obama from steering clear from “plantation politics” – a mechanism used to insert the issue of contemporary acts of racism into public discourse in order to initiate white guilt and sway white audiences/voters. Unfortunately, Cobb fails to acknowledge the link Obama has to both communities, white and black, that therefore wouldn’t need to persuade certain audiences based on one or more of his ethnic identities. The way in which Cobb describes Obama is very much in a limited, monoracial way – referring to Obama as ‘black’ or African-American entirely misleads readers into thinking Obama’s whiteness is somehow erased or delegitimized if the discourse is specifically about whites, and whites only. This article along with others, divides Obama’s racial identity, making the idea of mixed race or multiracial identity unable to present or acknowledged within media publications specifically covering race.

New Face, Post Race?

With the introduction of a “new” face in American politics, all major news outlets cheerfully documented the unprecedented success of Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign. Much of the public conversation noted Obama’s effortless ability to transcend racial barriers and institutionalized discrimination, a suggestion that implied that because a mixed race African-American man was able to carry out a victorious campaign in the United States, racism and its tenants are clearly a thing of the past. Using the descriptor of David Roediger (2002) “post-race-ists”, the new reformed conservatives, are the leading practitioners in inserting the “race is over” argument into mainstream news and popular culture. The “post-race” ideology supports the movement towards the “ideal future of racelessness”. Roediger notes, “The idea that laws, social practices, and the personal opinions of whites in the United States are now “colorblind,” and the corollary that antiracism is therefore irrational, counterproductive, or even itself racist, also undergird much of the “race is over” argument (p. 12). It is not absurd to say that conservatives have increasingly become the leading advocates of colorblindness, Roediger additionally suggests that “since they have learned that race is an illusion, rather than a scientific fact, we should drop racial categories altogether” (p. 12).

Clearly, the contradictory moment occurs at the very instant when white conservatives advocate for a colorblindness society, especially since the basis of their argument widely emerged once a “black” president dismantled the mechanisms of racism through perhaps, *merit and courage*. The problem with this proposal is that it only adheres to an ideology of colorblindness that has often entailed blindness to “white racial domination” whereas racialized bodies remain hyper visible and discrimination based on race is in a sense “blinded”. A clear example of this process would be the double signifier that is at play when colorblindness is advocated on the basis on Obama’s presidency. Specific innovations of the “post-race” idea often leave unexamined questions of, how privilege and power dictate who establishes colorblindness and what identities are at stake. Roediger cites Ward Connerly predicting, “by 2070, perhaps sooner, ‘black,’ ‘brown,’ and ‘white’ will be historical concepts” (p. 13). It is unfortunate that at a moment when mixed race and multiracial voices can finally be inserted into the larger conversation about race, attitudinal shifts underpin the “race is over” argument – once again silencing narratives and pushing the possibilities of new faces to be recognized, to the margins. “Significant in this regard is the tendency of the “postrace-ists” to keep using the hoary language of biological race as though it carries no

meaning, now or in the future, to speak of crossbreeding and refer to the children of intermarriage as hybrids (Roediger, 2002). Indeed, so sure are some advocates of hybridity that mixing and morphing can dissolve race that they put spurious status but abandon all wariness when “multiracial” is invoked as a category” (p. 8). If race should no longer be a factor, than how do we describe oppression specifically tied to race, and race alone? Roediger explains, “in declaring race to be utterly malleable proponents of this idea often then turn to gender and sexuality as the “real” differences on which the future is to be founded” (p. 14). Inattention to history and contemporary moments of colorblindness racism leaves discourse of the transcended “racial past” to flourish, where biological explanations allow the very essence of race, and the history of racism to be liquidated.

Literature Review

Much of the writing on ‘mixed race’ has highlighted a distinctive form of ‘mixed race’ embodiment characterized by an intimate relationship between racialization and facialization. Facialisation refers to the designation of a limited set of facial types, how these are taken as metonyms for the racialised body, and are associated with character traits (Parker, 2001). In the case of ‘mixed race’ people, their experiences tell of how the face gets figured as the repository of racial truths and suggestive of where you ‘really’ come from. In the case of the “son of a white mother from Kansas and Black father from Kenya” falling in between these socially constructed norms leaves one open to statements which doubt corporeal integrity: “You don’t *look* half-white..” juxtaposes itself next to the statement, ‘you don’t *look quite* right’. A number of literature focused on the mixed race and multiracial experience illuminate the vigorous contestation of the recurrent portrayal of ‘mixed race’ people as inauthentic, ‘in between’ dilutions of racial essences.

Thus, the questions of why mixed race people face difficulties with trying to appropriate (which can be defined as, to make acceptable) their blackness *and* whiteness, and what mechanisms are at work to limit them to identifying as only one racial category, are answered through various types of literature.

Scholar and mixed race/multiracial activist Maria PP Root (1992) describes the way in which race and mixed race identity together are conceptualized. Root writes, “the simplicity and irrationality of our basis for conceptualizing race affects how we subsequently think about social identity. Linear models of social relations have provided the basis for many social psychological theories about racially mixed persons. The monoracial and monocultural bias of these theories is evident in

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

constructions of assimilation and acculturation models” (p. 6). Thus, race and the discursive formations of mixed race/multiracial identity are not nearly as simple as just talking about the product of interracial relationships.

Jane O. Ifekwunigwe (2004) notes that “for mixed race people, the inability to choose both black *and* white as an racial identification reflects the persistence of a vision of ‘race’ in North America that refers largely (or only) to those of European *or* African ancestries” (p. 5). This statement complies with my argument mentioned earlier which suggested that mixed race people are often and most commonly opted to identify as either or.

While discussing representation and black/mixed race identity politics, Mary Waters (1990) noted that “Many Black and mixed race Americans are highly socially constrained to identify as blacks, without other options available to them, even when they believe or know that their forebears included many non-blacks” (p. 18). This example shows how some groups may be socially constrained to accept an ethnic identity despite efforts to appropriate their dual-identities through mixed race celebration movements and scholarship ground in mixed race studies. I would relate this illustration to the experience of mixed race people, whose racial identification is consistently marked as one or the other (black/or/white) by those “outside” of the actual mixed race experience or reality. Waters further describes that even though there are no longer any *legal* constraints on choice of ancestry in the United States, it does not mean that racial identification choices are completely “free” of social control. Certain ancestries take precedence over others. In the case of the mixed race individual, one’s self-identification as black *and* white might be viewed as skeptical and probably not accepted if one “looked” more black than white, according to prevailing social norms.

Juxtaposed to my analysis offered by Ifekwunigwe and Waters, Barbara Tizard (2002) offers a contrasting counterargument, arguing that “mixed race people are displaced outside of the boundaries of black or white, they are socially and culturally given no options. Tizard argues that “mixed race people have long been positioned in contradictory ways – as black and as different as black as well as white people. The specific terms commonly used to describe people of mixed race tend to pathologise those who cannot easily be fitted into the taken-for-granted racialized binary opposition. Thus ‘mixed race’ ‘maroon’ ‘mulatto’ and ‘half-caste’ all demonstrate essentialism and bipolar thinking” (p. 36).

To expand on mixed race/multiracial literature, scholar Miri Song describes a certain turning point in mixed race/multi racial conversations, stating that, “In the USA, some analysts have celebrated

the very existence of ‘mixed race’ people as embodiments of social and cultural transgressions, whose lives make a mockery of distinct racial categories. Maria Root has even declared a ‘bill of rights’ for multiracial people, in which she exhorts ‘mixed race’ people assert the identities which they have chosen for themselves, however uncomfortable or confused these may make others” (p. 4).

The literature reviewed highlights the ways in which mixed race identity has been conceptualized and contested within the last decade and speaks to the prolonged progression towards legitimizing the multiracial category as an appropriated and celebrated identity marker, and further illuminates the contemporary racist and hegemonic systems that are embedded within U.S. race relations. Thus, the structures that remain intact that work to define racial categories as static, and non-intersecting are revealed. The purpose of utilizing such literature from the authors selected is a way of paying tribute to research that celebrates mixed race identity as a legitimized racial category that is fluid, flux and always in transition.

Conclusion

This research examined the discursive formations of mixed race identity politics, addressing how and why mixed race subjects are challenged in their attempts to identify as black and white simultaneously. Critical discourse analysis of major new source publications found that the U.S. mainstream press and media, a powerful force at large, works to situate those who identify as mixed race into a single monolithic racial category through the mechanism of public racial discourse, one that is rooted in historical notions of race as being singular, static, and fixed. Therefore, mixed race people such as President Barack Obama are ‘talked about’ as “black” subject(s), an action that entirely disregards his white identity. Furthermore, the analysis of the ‘post-race’ conversation called into attention the tools that have allowed such a phenomenon to emerge and be advocated widely within the public sphere. The results of this project found that the foundation of ‘post-race’ thinking has been contingent on the unprecedented success of Barack Obama being elected to the highest position of the United States as a ‘black’ man. This “Post-race” discourse argues that Obama’s ability to “transcend institutionalized racism and/or racial discrimination alone, reveals the end of racism and a need to move towards a “post-race” society, a tenant of a new formation of racism: colorblindness. The findings of this work found that the racial projects of ‘post-racists’ (Roediger, 2008) are extremely problematic for the progression of contemporary U.S. race relations and for the inclusion of

A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

minoritized/mixed race bodies to be inserted into the larger race conversation, a space which would otherwise allow mixed race/multiracial communities to be acknowledged, accurately represented and eventually pushed to the front and center of United States race relations.

Limitations

A few limitations occurred during the course of when this research was in progress. Because a major part of this project depended on major news outlets, many articles specific to Barack Obama and race were muted during the United State's economic crises and public announcement of a nationwide recession. The shift of discourse moved from heavy coverage on Obama and his ambiguous racial identity to economic and war-related issues.

This project also takes into account the danger of solely focusing on mixed race identity defined as black and white. It is acknowledged that the 'dangers' of 'mixed race' discourse might allow itself to overlook those with histories going beyond black and white mixture. However, piece of literature is unique in that it featured a case study on a subject who is indeed mixed race/multiracial that is defined as black and white. Moreover, the purpose of this project was to highlight the complexities of mixed race identity and create a space in which such narratives could be pushed to the front and center, a way of perhaps (un)silencing historically marginalized voices.

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A Case Study Assessment of Political Pragmatism of Populist Movements in Brazil

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Building Resistance: Architecture & Anarchism / A (Sub)Cultural Landscape

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Abstract

My research around the connection between political theory and constructed material form begins with the assertion that small groups of people, linked by a common guide such as a belief system, have a significant impact on the shape of vernacular architecture and cultural landscapes in the United States. My intent is to raise questions about praxis within the ongoing anarchist movement and to better understand how the shape of the built environment around it is important for the success of the movement. The organizational structure of the Rhizome Collective located in Austin, Texas self-identifies with basic tenets that I have found in historic as well as contemporary kinds of anarchist theory, and by conducting a case study/ post-occupancy evaluation of the landscape itself I have constructed an interpretation of the relationship it has with the ideas that went into its design and fabrication.

My analysis is based upon my experiences with participation in and observation of programming and practice on-site, as well as architectural drawings produced and photographic data collected at The Rhizome Collective. As a researcher, I provide analyses from both architectural and (sub)cultural perspectives to support my feeling that this specific, anarchic model for life in the city can contribute in a unique and perhaps invaluable way to the larger cultural landscapes and architectural discourse around sustainable types of residential and mixed-use form. With this project I link three components: mixed-use vernacular architecture, Anarchist theory, and discourse on Cultural Landscapes, with respect to their being facets of the complex politics embedded in the making of the built environment, a process that can aid people in building their own resistance to the world as is, and help them to realize the one they envision.

Introduction

As city dwellers of the post-industrial, post-modern era we are charged, just as those who have come before us, with observing and responding to the condition of the environment in which we live, but we do so in a way that is altogether different. As a person of my time and of the city, I say that we now observe and respond to the way systems of government and power affect our lives and the lives of people around us,

rather than deal directly with the affects of the wild unmitigated, open spaces of unsettled land known well by natives and early settlers of all kinds. And, as citizens of a now settled, established, and governed state we situate our observations contemporarily, but give consideration to the historical path by which we have arrived. In doing so, we are left with evaluations that weigh present issues and effects that can be traced through our shared histories and political development.

We come as individuals of many forms, with agendas personal and political, to coexist in cities. We are familiar with the presence of systems of governance and management in our daily lives, although individually our comfort with them may vary quite extremely. Our decision to act upon our evaluations of the natural and political environment is very valuable; it shapes and determines the trajectory of our lives. Until we add to or alter the places we live, respond to our environment, meet our needs and make clear our intentions for inhabitation, we fall short of a full establishment of ourselves in relation to the land and political or social context of our time. Once we do so, we set forth a series of placemaking actions that represent innerworkings of contemporary cultural elements and their dynamic with space. Essentially and repeatedly, *form follows function*, whether it is for practical, ideological or political purposes.

As can be easily observed by a quick survey of general thought and scholarship, the historical development of political theory and practice extends indefinitely into the past. It is arguably a series of actions and reactions like the one I've described. My focus however, is around the way political theory provides a reference for a group of people who aim to challenge current institutions of government and power, and how the built form this group of people creates can be a tangible tool for forwarding the goals of the theory to which they collectively adhere. My perspective is current, ongoing, and from below -rather than a retrospective from some fixed high point. My intent is to raise questions about praxis within the ongoing anarchist movement and to better understand how the shape of the built environment around it is important for its success.

In no way am I looking to set down rules, nor do I want to try to delineate absolutely the tenets of anarchism and its architecture finitely. Rather, I find the ways in which humans shape their place in the world to be participatory, ongoing and spontaneous, which compliments many of the principles of the kind of anarchism I discuss quite well. The malleable constructs of landscape studies as a discipline are compatible with the push for 21st century anarchist theory to reflect the many postmodern applications it now has. As has been demonstrated by

people who have helped to evolve the disciplines of landscape studies and anarchist thought, the process of integrating human life, its politics, and the natural environment yields new and complex, yet organized and broadly united, networks of built form that articulate important parts of the intricate collective identity held by a people in their time.

The places we dwell, our homes or residences, simultaneously stand on their own while also contributing to the makeup of larger places. They represent those who live or have lived there, and relate in a unique way to the rest of the city which it is part. Both home and city are *place*, simply expressed in different scales. For example, a named city is a place as is a given address or home within it. Both are spaces designed to meet human needs, and so reflect human values. It is my thought that both the home and the city befit the name or title of *landscape* well. Although they may operate or be organized differently, or appear at scales of differing size, they are made up of similar components. In his exploration of Landscape as a term, *The Word Itself*, J.B. Jackson proposes a definition of *landscape*: "...a composition of man-made or man-modified spaces to serve as infrastructure or background for our collective existence..."¹ He goes on to reflect upon his definition, reminding readers and thinkers that "*background*...in our modern use of the word means that which underscores not only our identity and presence, but also our history."²

I wish to expand upon this notion of landscape by articulating my belief that each place, or landscape is situated within the conceptual meaning of the term in a unique way, finding its own place in the breadth of its expansive definition, enriching it. In this way, a landscape expands and contracts, zooming in-and-out appropriately with the scale of the landscape in view. The wide scope of variation across discussion and kinds of representation used within the field of landscape studies, reflect the very world it aims to view.¹ And on another note, the diversity of constructed landscapes speaks for itself and simply requires the presence of a number of means for interpreting and communicating a message about it.

There is a continually developing relationship between the material landscape itself and its human design and use. Interpretations around the significance of this relationship, also human constructions, add another dimension to it. To describe this dimension broadly, and for their purposes as human geographers, or architectural historians with

¹ Jackson, John Brinkerhoff. *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

² *ibid.*

strong affinity for human presence, J.B. Jackson has coined and other scholars of the built environment like Carl Sauer, Paul Groth, and Dolores Hayden have contributed to the evolution and enrichment the iconic term *Cultural Landscape*.³

Dolores Hayden opens her essay included in Groth's *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes, Urban Landscape History: The Sense of place and the politics of space*, by saying "Every American city and town contains fragments of historic cultural landscapes intertwined with its current spatial configuration."⁴ I aim to add particular examples as to how this is done in a specific place, under conditions provided by applications of dual-power anarchist theory. Anarchist theory, unique in its participatory applications and lack of serial doctrines, has gone under-recognized by scholars across the academy,⁵ which inspires my usage of (*sub*) *cultural landscape* for this case to reflect the fact that despite its lacking presence in academic discussion, I feel as though anarchism thrives in the world currently, and has in worlds past.

If a cultural landscape study reads built form as an indicator for major cultural patterns both current and historical, then a (sub) cultural landscape would be the study of a more subtle materialization. The site that hosts a subculture may be less noticeable or perhaps peripheral and even ephemeral. Its volatility could be attributable to the fact that it is not center-, and often counter-cultural. The sub-culture around anarchism engages the landscape and seeks empowerment by enacting intentional, relevant modification of it. Because we know sub-cultures to exist to question and challenge the majority, institutions built up in their support are rare. For this reason, noting representations of dominant as well as minority approaches to modern urban life could only help to provide a more whole, and perhaps fairer testament of what the makeup of our society consists of. Too often are thoughtful and significant contributions to the development of life, political, cultural, architectural or otherwise, marginalized by the elite or privileged few who determine what will

³ Groth, Paul, "Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study" in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977)

⁴ Hayden, Dolores. "Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space" in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977)

⁵ Graeber, David and Andrej Grubačić. *Anarchism or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century*.

<http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/9258>. (accessed June 4, 2009)

either come to the attention of the public, or testify to history of the world in which they've lived.

The story of spatial production and politics is often provided to us by architects, planners, historians, politicians and scientists who likely have some interest in defending the status quo if only to protect their authority. The overt practice of active shifts in paradigmatic design is not new to the story of urban fabric, and neither are systematized ideologies nor the fact that they are often regarded as persuasive determinants of shape and form. The story gone untold, however, is one that speaks of how small, seemingly insignificant practices in building that meet the conceptual tenets of an age-old theory could potentially upset, subvert, completely dissect and dismantle, and ultimately replace an unjust, authoritarian system with one characterized by decentralization, autonomy and egalitarianism.

The low-perspective study of vernacular (small-scale, local/regional) architecture opens the discussion to allow for contributions from frequently overlooked areas of settlement, both rural and urban. Vernacular studies explore how a structure or building typology reflects the resources found in its environment -including both materials and available skills and techniques. And so I take this opportunity to tell of the relationship I've found between the contemporary anarchist movement and one detailed case of vernacular architectures within it. They relate, and it is my aim to discuss the connection between big ideas, small spaces and where they merge to create what is essentially a contemporary example of a little used term, *anarchitecture*⁶.

Certainly, it would be difficult and futile to argue in terms of numbers how much support anarchism as an ideological political theory has generated since its official inception whereby men like Mikhail Bakunin and J.P. Proudhon inscribed anarchist principles and personally swore by them as they were laid out in text. And nearly impossible to decipher how many groups of people or civilizations across the world have upheld some of the most widely accepted tenets of the anarchist theory, without so much as uttering the word, simply because it makes little sense to indoctrinate that which functions easily without doctrine or

⁶ For my purposes, Lebbeus Woods and Brian Heagney will take credit for the usage of this term, as it is both of their work to which I refer when I use it.

dogma to enforce.⁷ I would like to discuss anarchism, anarchists and how they operate contemporarily in urban built environments, but not without some reference to what kinds of ideas and situations help to give a more whole account of its evolution.

In many ways, the common municipal model with which many of us who live in cities have become familiar unites people of the city for better or for worse, by establishing a system for the large-scale management of daily life. The municipal government takes on a role that entails the determination and allocation of resources used to sustain life in the city. I argue that this power relationship between government and people, between city, home and person, raises questions and elicits active response from anarchists, and that innovative responses can be found in the politicized, (sub) cultural landscapes that result.

The work I set out to do here is an effort in examination of life and form, of looking at self and situation, ideological concepts in design of space and form, and as well, the interpretation of the resultant landscape. I examine with the basic premise that these relationships exist already, and that I am simply inserting myself them so as to turn around and insert it into a larger discourse. I am in a sense building a bridge that does not exist, between conceptual and physical spaces that do, however separately. The relationship between these places determines the structure of the bridge itself, but the extremities -the physical and ideological realities and discourses stand on their own and it is my desire to simply put the two into conversation. I offer descriptive analysis from both an architectural and (sub) cultural standpoint. I do so to give this anarchic model for life in the city a voice that contributes in a unique and perhaps invaluable way to the dominant, cultural landscapes discourse around ideal types of architecture.

Fragments from books, articles and open sources –

There is no scholarship that I know of that clearly, outwardly and actively links contemporary anarchic praxis to small built landscapes in an effort to gauge how responsive the shapes of living spaces are to the personal or small-group politics beheld by their designers and occupants. However, the groundwork for the provocative relationship between them has been laid with the extensive discourse that has developed around each of the three topics I've surveyed and drawn together with my study: architecture, anarchism and cultural landscapes discourse. The increasing

⁷ This is a primary argument made by David Graeber in his pamphlet *Fragments of an anarchist anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004)

amount of literature and conversation around reading landscapes within their original political or cultural context has provided the kind of framework necessary to read into pieces of anarchist theory in relation to the (sub) cultural landscape that it has expressly helped to create. And, the open tradition of the landscape studies discourse in built form is discussed in a way that leaves room for contribution from contemporary thinkers, visionaries and designers. By moving through models for analysis and interpretation and into site-specific evaluation, I simply hope to unite formerly divergent disciplines and to raise new questions about the direction and impact of small, urban landscapes in regard to furthering the ideas from which they are generated.

John Brinkerhoff Jackson set into motion a new way for scholars to view and interpret American landscapes in the United States. He developed methods that used observation and analysis that both tell a story of landscape development and to offer up inquiry about its current state. In his series of lectures that have been collected to form a book, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, he advocates for the utilization of the landscape itself as a text, which has evolved into a burgeoning, interdisciplinary field of cultural landscape studies. With his work, J.B. Jackson has both influenced fundamental definitions of terminology and deeply affected general attempts for understanding the relationship that exists between humanity and the built environment. He speaks to the histories and identities that lay within the landscape, and allows for the built environment to represent human interactions with, and adaptations of, natural spaces.

Although the site of my study is very different from those explored by Jackson, a fact I find appropriate given the respective eras in which we live or have lived, many of the principles that guide his view of the landscape are useful in informing my own interpretations. For my purposes, the natural spaces for my purposes are located within urban landscape, and are layered with many stories. I specifically address the physical results of politicized responses to broader issues of governance and municipal land and resource management. I aim to discuss an evolving, emergent political theories' response to an established and well-developed system already in dominant practice, and to raise questions about how this response can be charted through analysis of the changing built environment. The thread that weaves my work into Jackson's is a fine but important one, as by the process both forms of study respectively undertake in attempting to convey the meaning that we see in the built environment, we make statements that are meant to speak for the land and the complex relationship it has to the people who live there.

Since J.B. Jackson's time, which spanned from the mid- to the late twentieth century, cultural landscape studies has evolved to a point where contributions to the discourse can be found in a variety of forms. Paul Groth, one of the many heirs to Jackson's well-laid approach, outlines the framework for understanding cultural landscapes that has appealed to the passions of innumerable scholars across a spectrum of disciplines. In his essay, *Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study*, an introduction to a collection of essays he co-edited with Todd W. Bressi, *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, Groth advances cultural landscape studies to contemporary discourse by using cues from the discourse and referencing Jackson to describe subtle detail within current frameworks and naming the widely ranging, era-appropriate sites to which they might apply. The collection of pieces itself exemplifies the broad range of style employed in description and analysis of the relationship between built form and the groups of people who have contributed to its shape. The authors take on social issues they find embedded within the landscapes they study, but also examine the process by which we produce knowledge in our analyses of the built environment and its people.

Works included in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* call attention to the dominance of visualized values in the realm of landscape study⁸, but let it be noted that the majority of texts use visual cues of the studied site that provide a spatial reference for the reader or audience. Experiencing space and the abstract qualities invoked by simply *being there* is a difficult thing to translate well, or with confidence that the message will reach its target with any accuracy. This is the message I take from the editorial efforts of Groth & Bressi, and in summation of my reading of the texts within. And so for my sake, and the sake of those I wish to engage with my work, I intend to be thoughtful about the connections I make, and clear about how I've arrived at any significant analytic intersections.

I lay the foundation for my analysis with parallel tenets found across texts and tellings of anarchist theory or tradition, and then move to specific applications and implications that converge with cultural landscape studies in distinct ways. There are perhaps many parts of our urban, human lives that can be read through the anarchist lens, and our architecture -the landscape of our built environment, is merely one of

⁸ Here I am referring here to Chapter 7: Where the one eyed man is king: the tyranny of visual and formalist values in evaluating landscapes by Catherine M. Howett, Chapter 10: The Politics of vision by Anthony D. King, Chapter 17: The Visible, the visual and the vicarious: questions about vision, landscape and experience.

them. The tendency for people to read form this way is either very limited or underrepresented by the amount of literature available on the topic, and the way it has been done varies solely on the vision of the landscapes' reader. Both Lebbeus Woods and Brian Heagney in *Anarchitecture*⁹, and authors Scott Kellogg and Stacy Pettigrew in their book *A Toolbox for Urban Sustainability*¹⁰ do it, but in extremely different ways although they'd likely agree on Woods' thesis: "Architecture is a political act... The long version: all innovative architecture engages ethical issues that have profound political consequences."¹¹ Lebbeus Woods, in his book filled with essays and elaborate visual images of designs for urban spaces puts classical models for built form and urban organization up as demonstrations of use and production of human knowledge, and argues for a thorough reassessment of canonical architectural objectives. As an anarchist, Woods in his short essay, *Heterarchies*¹², finds the concept of *hierarchy* in architecture to be domineering and regressive. Alternatively, he proposes the genesis of a more purposeful, although intentionally *incoherent* field of knowledge and action in architecture, which he refers to as the heterarchy. With *heterarchies*, he sets up an entirely new trajectory for human ideas on space and form: "Knowledge is no longer that inertial body of facts with enforces stasis, but is in fact the impetus to and energy driving change on every level of society and culture."¹³ Woods includes a glossary at the end of his book as a guide complete with relevant neologisms and newly described meanings that go along with familiar terminology.

Many terms coined or revitalized by Woods, although used very differently, relate well to the kind of architecture and micro-infrastructure set up by Kellogg and Pettigrew in their book, a *Do-it-ourselves Guide* to a radical typology of sustainable urban practice. For instance, they advocate for an egalitarian grass roots movement that

⁹ Woods, Lebbeus. "Anarchitecture" in *Anarchitecture*. (London, St. Martin's Press, 1992), Heagney, Brian. *Anarchitecture*. Self-Published, 2004.

¹⁰ Kellogg, Scott and Stacy Pettigrew. *Toolbox for Sustainable City Living: A Do-It-Ourselves Guide*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2008)

¹¹ Woods, Lebbeus. "Anarchitecture" in *Anarchitecture*. (London, St. Martin's Press, 1992)

¹² Woods, Lebbeus. "Heterarchies" in *Anarchitecture*. (London, St. Martin's Press, 1992),

¹³ *ibid.*

Woods would consider heterarchical. However in line Kellogg and Pettigrew may be with Lebbeus Woods' abstract conception of a subversive, libratory architecture the majority of this book describes application (design, fabrication, installation, use) in detail -with some explanation as to *why*, but mostly deals with *how*. It addresses the ongoing mitigation of power by the governed who are concerned with their municipalities' management of resources and essentially, their future.

Kellogg and Pettigrew speak to the unique qualities of the movement they advocate for by directing their attention to that which is *radical*, or, of the root. For example, their treatment of food systems deals with fundamental issues such as urban land acquisition and healthy soil rather than speaking only to those who presumably have land upon which to grow their food. And they demonstrate their ability to see the politics of land ownership from many perspectives such as poverty and scarcity, hazardous waste, public policy, and gentrification. In their guide, Kellogg and Pettigrew walk through proposed methods for reclaiming the systems upon which we rely for the things we need, and do so by addressing social and practical issues around Food, Water, Human Waste, Energy and Soil Treatment (Bioremediation). They call urgently for the kind of action that creatively fits with their philosophy of Dual Power Anarchism, and have acted themselves through their creation of the site (The Rhizome Collective) which I study, where they've lived, and in this book describe.

To say that my reading of input into the development of anarchist movements and theory is complete, exhaustive or comprehensive would be a misrepresentation of my research, mainly because of the near impossibility I believe there is in doing so. A vast and amorphous pool of resources around the topic exists, perhaps because of its longstanding presence in popular movements over time, but I would argue that this is a reflection of the concept itself what with its being characterized by voluntary association and proactive, participatory action. I have however made an earnest attempt in sampling different kinds of significant sources on the topic, and although I am confident in the distilled version of content available that I've provided, I am certain that there will be room for further contribution (whether my own or otherwise) of ideas on anarchism.

My sources range from anthologized Situationist International¹⁴ articles that helped to incite revolution in Parisian urban spaces in 1968,

¹⁴ Knabb, Ken, trans., *Situationist International Anthology*. (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981).

to 'zines or video interviews found currently at free, open sources like zinelibrary.net, website links at indymedia.net, or youtube.com and other online forums for archiving or discussing anarchism and its practice. Accessing public online sources is like listening in on a detailed conversation and beginning to understand unbound range of participating perspectives. For this reason, I have selected only sources that have contributed significantly to my thought processes on understanding what anarchism means to people. Pamphlets, a time tested source of public information are invaluable accounts, specifically those written by contemporary Anarchist scholars, David Graeber and Andrej Grubačić. None of my sources specific to anarchist theory have been the same, in kind or in content, but they do contain ideas common to the ones I have chosen for my analysis. They have inspired me to give myself a starting point at trying to understand what to think of anarchism and how it is understood, embraced and practiced.

Graeber and Grubačić have collaborated on a pamphlet entitled *Anarchism or The Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century*, within its pages they not only identify themselves as part of the anarchist movement, but also speak as contemporaries, from within it. They identify enduring cornerstones of anarchist theory and speak to their contemporary applications in practice, for instance, the connection there is between direct democracy (a long standing tenet) and consensus decision-making (a common practice of the contemporary anarchist collective model). I have found this concise and important text as central to my research into anarchist theory because of its location in time, its argument for the acknowledgement of an active, thriving anarchist movement, and because I find that my own place within this movement relates well to the basic perspective held by the authors, that "anarchist ideas and principles are generating new radical dreams and visions."¹⁵

I intend to go into greater detail with my analysis, not only about dreams and visions, but their physical realization and as well, to speak to form and that which has guided its design, and successes or failures in implementation. I form my analysis of the anarchist (sub) cultural landscape conceptualization of urban contemporary living space with these findings. And while the research up to now examines these topics as they stand alone in larger context, or by way of other empirical circumstances, I believe it is necessary to link these concepts by their practice. I view contemporary Anarchist thought in the form of a site, for

¹⁵ Graeber, David and Andrej Grubačić. *Anarchism or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century*. from <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/9258>. (accessed June 4, 2009)

evaluation of shape and use, and for the sake of gleaning yet more information about the way anarchists in 21st Century American cities extend their ideas to their living spaces.

Anarchism to Postanarchism

Anarchists, for a long time, have been everywhere. Scholars like David Graeber propose that they have been and still are much more prolific than we could possibly be aware of or quantify because the basic tenets of anarchist theory are so practical for sustaining communities. He argues that there are groups of people all over the world who practice the principles that form core values of anarchist theory, but simply have no use for the identifier.¹⁶ For instance, the fact that everyone in a small town or village congregates for the purpose of coming to agreement on the solution to a common problem does not make them explicitly anarchist, but that their successful, egalitarian methods suggest that consensus decision-making (a process common to anarchic practice) is in place, and works.

Although Graeber's argument helps us to understand the replicability and subtlety common to practical anarchist applications through time -it is also consistent with the openness that characterizes 21st century anarchism, or postanarchism¹⁷, "which attempts to explore new directions in anarchist thought and politics," and contends that "classical anarchist philosophy must take account of new theoretical directions and cultural phenomena..."¹⁸

The need to give *anarchism* or the *anarchist* a name began with thinking men in places like Russia (Kropotkin and Bakunin) and France (Pierre-Josef Proudhon) where, like many places in the world, inscription can take precedence over practice. Graeber's argument fits well with what other thinkers and writers, now and retrospectively, consider to be one of the most unifying traits of anarchist theory - participatory action. Anarchism requires it. For this reason, although many texts (and in some ways this is one of them) have been produced in

¹⁶ Graeber, David. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004).

¹⁷ Or "a host of other names: autonomism, anti-authoritarianism, horizontality, Zapatismo, direct democracy.."etc. (Graeber & Grimace, 2008)

¹⁸ Newman, Saul. "Editorial." *Anarchist Studies*, 16 no. 2 (2008) <http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/anarchiststudies/archive/vol16no2ed.html> (accessed June 4, 2009)

attempt to outline basic principles for those who want to read about it, it remains flexible, adaptive, and fluid in form.

The implementation of anarchism -anarchy, contrary to its popular representation, does not require mass chaos for application, nor is it by virtue of its cause is it wholly disorganized and lacking of coherence. In fact, implementation of part or all of the theory has through time been thoughtful, intentionally radical and revolutionarily effective. Anarchists have a very consistent request of authority figures, and that is justification or straightforward demonstration of the way their governance benefits the governed. If this cannot be demonstrated or if the justification is found to be unsatisfactory or unsound, which is many times the case when comparing the goals and the means of government to those of the masses they govern, anarchists then find it necessary to dismantle or replace the authority with viable alternatives that may more satisfactorily meet the demands those formerly marginalized.¹⁹

Although united, applications of anarchist theory have never been identical in shape or impact. The diverse populations who have in some way selected anarchism as a theoretical guide or taken anarchy as an inspiration reflect its lengthy history as well as its adaptive utility. Many cohesive, progressive groups of people within, for example, the early American labor movement, new settlements in the American Pacific Northwest, Europe's radical avant-garde (1950's-1960's), and contemporary social/political movements -both global and domestic to the United States. All of these groups have in common the determination that the use anarchist principles and tactics to reach a common goal would be most appropriate and effective. I believe that the endurance and ubiquity of anarchist thought suggests that they were right.

For my purposes, the synthesis of classical anarchist operations into a postanarchist frame is simply to illustrate the particular kind of personal freedom of interpretation and application anarchism breeds while keeping intact a few elemental factors despite adaptation or deviation. According to Newman, postanarchism works with rather than against classical principles to radicalize and localize them in way that is relevant for contemporary use, thereby "extending the limits of anarchist thought by uncovering its heterogeneous and unpredictable

¹⁹ Anarchism 101 with Noam Chomsky.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2G6kf7XM9Nk> (accessed June 4, 2009)

possibilities."²⁰ Found in their pamphlet that deals specifically with 21st century anarchism, Graeber and Grubačić's description on the maintenance of these longstanding anarchist tenets is apt and consistent with less concise explanations:

"decentralization, voluntary association, mutual aid, the network model...Above all, anarchism as an ethics of practice -the idea of building a new society 'within the shell of the old' -has become the basic inspiration of the 'movement of movements'...which has from the start been less about seizing state power than about exposing and dismantling mechanisms of rule while winning ever larger spaces of autonomy and participatory management within it."²¹

What the terms that makeup this loosely held code of anarchist ethics come to mean for each situation in which they are practiced are probably best discussed by those who implement them. However, some clarification on common practical applications is, I think, a valid inroad as later I'll discuss not only operational tendencies of new, postanarchist social movements, but as well, relate architecture as a spatial demonstration of values that are employed as work toward the end goals.

Decentralization is a pillar of anti-authoritarian movements like anarchism because of the necessity for a nonhierarchical, horizontal support system that anarchic practice sets up. Decentralization is about a fair, egalitarian distribution of power rather than a cyclic change of power from one set of hands to another. This kind of model is often called horizontal or rhizomatous because there is no hierarchical ladder to ascend, or watchful upper strata to answer to. It is planar and interconnected. Upper management is ideally eliminated (a factor that may offer some insight into why anarchism is routinely dismissed and invalidated by almost anyone who holds a position with power over other people) under a small, decentralized network and collective cooperation takes its place.

Voluntary association maintains the parts of anarchist movements that are necessarily participatory and libratory. Although

²⁰ Newman, Saul. "Editorial." *Anarchist Studies*, 16 no. 2 (2008) <http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/anarchiststudies/archive/vol16no2ed.html> (accessed June 4, 2009)

²¹ Graeber, David and Andrej Grubačić. *Anarchism or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century*. from <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/9258>.(accessed June 4, 2009)

association and participatory practice may work toward self-reliance and autonomy, anarchism is not a model for instituting freedom, just as it is not a goal to seize power -neither is it to push indoctrination for something as precious and specific as personal liberty. The very idea of doing so limits freedom absolutely. Association in the anarchic sense operates more like an open forum for activity that performs best in an experimental, accessible, and engaged environment to which voluntary contributions and withdrawals are welcome.

Mutual-Aid, according to Jeff Ferrell (far from Bakunin, a 19th Century Anarchist who coined and defined the term with a book on the topic), "...implies a sense of common purpose forged out of the ongoing, collective battle against authoritarian domination, and thus a living fabric of community relations woven just tightly enough to offer comfort and self-determination, but always left loose enough to ensure difference."²² When upheld, mutual aid is ongoing like all things anarchist, because it reflects and accommodates the needs of individuals, groups and networks that constantly change, adapt and cooperate. It is the method for support taken on by anarchists, it is a promise that can be silent, spoken, or shouted depending on the situation -but generally, it guarantees ongoing solidarity.

The horizontal network is the form anarchist solidarity must take if it is to avoid invoking the old hierarchies and authoritarian politics from which it seeks quick and vast departure. The network model is responsible for the terminology, grassroots -the rhizome, a decentralized root structure. In relation to anarchism, it develops from below and is made of a multitude of intentional people, a critical mass that is well-established, interconnected, difficult to decipher and uproot, its resilience is almost a by-product of its existence what with its being so innately intricate. The network exists in, under and throughout society as a current, and is often sub-cultural as the kind of democracy it cultivates is *direct*, while the kind with which we are most familiar requires navigation through a chain of command, bureaucratic red tape and a daunting time investment to make even a statement or pose a question, let alone be heard or make change. The network is made of a combination of ethics and practice carried out by people within it. And to recap, the people within it are voluntarily there to situate their autonomy rather than be governed without consent, engage and practice creativity, and to create an environment where others have the opportunity to do so as well.

²² Ferrell, Jeff. *Tearing Down the Streets: Adventures in Urban Anarchy*. (New York: Palgrave for St. Martin's Press, 2001), 32.

The enduring core values and flexible peripheral ideas that makeup anarchism allows for small anarchist groups to be supportive and symbiotic, but as well, autonomous and appropriately specific. These concepts have made up a point of reference throughout the evolution of anarchism in practice and theory, and we've arrived at a point with the anarchist movement where it is embedded in expansive postmodern social justice organizing. It is found in the grassroots that have been growing all over the world, and throughout history. And postanarchism has allowed for anarchic adaptation to the now. For instance, when Graeber and Grimace talk about building a new society in the shell of the old their discussion intersects with a form of 21st century anarchism²³, Dual Power Strategy –this *building* is one face of power. The other part in the duo is deconstructive and relates directly to the anarchist line of inquiry and inadequate response on behalf of authoritarian justification of itself. Simply put at Indymedia.net:

“...grassroots dual power is a situation wherein a self-defined community has created for itself a political/economic system which is an operating alternative to the dominant state/capitalist establishment. The dual power consists of alternative institutions which provide for the needs of the community, both material and social, including food, clothing, housing, health care, communication, energy, transportation, educational opportunities and political organization. The dual power is necessarily autonomous from, and competitive with, the dominant system, seeking to encroach upon the latter's domain, and, eventually, to replace it.”²⁴

The alternative institutions are those I aim to discuss within the spatial context of the community cohered by the Rhizome Collective , as imagined and realized by Scott Kellogg and Stacy Pettigrew as well as participatory members. The site of the collective itself represents and includes their work around innovating social and material relationships, the landscape as integrated into a part of everyday life, sustenance and resistance.

²³ Graeber, David and Andrej Grubačić. *Anarchism or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century*. Accessed June 4, 2009 from <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/9258>.

²⁴ Dominick, Brian. An Introduction to *Dual Power Strategy*. <http://sandiego.indymedia.org/en/2002/09/2403.shtml>, (accessed June 4, 2009).

Anarchitecture in purpose and practice

Texts of all kind are available for readers of anarchist theory, but they are few and far between those that discuss the way in which architectural design reflects the values or forwards the goals of anarchism. The few that have published notions of this kind have cleverly fused not only the theory of anarchism with the practice of architecture, but also the terms themselves thereby proposing a movement toward, *Anarchitecture*. Conceptually, *Anarchitecture* straddles the two fields by taking the practical elements ordinarily carried out by the designer: (a) production of space and infrastructure, (b) design, fabrication and installation of need-meeting structures within municipal borders and policies (c) application of visual rendering and physical labor, -and imagining the way they happen in the mind and by the hand of the anarchist: (a) decentralized distribution of power from imagination to realization (b) voluntary association with identity and task (c) meeting of needs by mutual aid, support and cooperation through the network model (d) the production of an environment conducive to the genesis of autonomous, creative individuals and egalitarian communities. According to Lebbeus Woods, anarchitectural design is by nature, *heterarchical*.

Heterarchy is defined by Woods in way that invokes the network model, "HETERARCHY: a spontaneous lateral network of autonomous individuals; a system of authority based on the evolving performance of individuals."²⁵ And there is a similarity in the way Woods defines architecture to that of the brief description of anarchism ('the movement of movements')²⁶, given by Graeber and Grimace it reads: "ARCHITECTURE: instrument for the invention of knowledge through action; the invention of invention." What becomes then becomes anarchitecture (heterarchical architecture) is an open question left for autonomous individuals of their time to answer, to construct, to invent.²⁷ Brian Heagney writes, "Anarchitecture is essential for a healthy

²⁵ And as for its antithesis, hierarchy, as defined by Woods, "HIERARCHY: a predetermined chain of authority that works from the top down

²⁶ Graeber, David and Andrej Grubačić. *Anarchism or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century*. Accessed June 4, 2009 from <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/9258>.

²⁷ Woods, Lebbeus. *Anarchitecture*. (London, St. Martin's Press, 1992)

relationship between the object [architecture] and the subject [the inhabitant, the user, the individual]."²⁸

The purpose of anarchitecture is to do with built form what the anarchist movement aims to do to politics -to question, challenge, subvert and/or change. The way to do this with architecture is conceptually the same, but in application very material and of the realm of the everyday. Woods has formulated his proposal for this shift in architectural practices -design, build and habitation, as a response to the majority architects who resign to "this highly commercial era, who accept commissions and clients that affect public life [and] are in fact committed to supporting the existing structure of authority as embodied in institutions of commerce and of its supporting political systems." And in his critique, he builds in a new design that calls for new social forms that are "essentially anarchical societies, lacking in a centralized political structure, centering instead on 'the individual' as the irreducible atom of community and culture."²⁹

When dealing with a theory like anarchism that is most notably characterized by active participation and practice, a spatial representation makes sense, as space is the stage for action. Members of the Situationist International made such a case as they set such a stage in streets all over Europe, critiquing the mechanized spectacle setup by capitalist bureaucrats in cities and the subsequent demise of human creativity into a state of massive and inactive urban boredom. Architecture situated their movement, as "the simplest means of *articulating* time and space, of *modulating* reality and engendering dreams...producing influences in accordance with the eternal spectrum of human desires and the progress in fulfilling them." They called for "new, changeable decors," they envisioned cities and sites within them as the seat of dreams, using the then prolific Le Corbusier's words against him as they, like Woods, imagined the "architecture of tomorrow," to be "a means of modifying present conceptions of time and space, both a means of *knowledge* and a *means of action*...spaces whose "appearance will change totally or partially in accordance with the will of their inhabitants."³⁰

In the case of the Rhizome Collective, the modifiable architecture imagined by Chtcheglov is specific to living space within an

²⁸ Heagney, Brian. *Anarchitecture*. (Self-Published, 2004), 15.

²⁹ Woods, Lebbeus. "Anarchitecture" in *Anarchitecture*. (London, St. Martin's Press, 1992), 8-9.

³⁰ Chtcheglov, Ivan. "Formulary for a new urbanism" in *Situationist International Anthology*, Ken Knabb, ed., trans. (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, no copyright.), 3.

urban municipality and the kind of action required for its design, fabrication and installation is open, visionary and anarchist. As such it carves its own space into the bowels of authoritarian governance on a localized level, and ideally the implications of such activity ascend the hierarchical chain of command to the national, or even global level simply by using architecture as "a tool extending individual capacities to do, to think, to know, to become, but also to pass away, to become an echo, a vestige, a soil for other acts, moments, individuals."³¹

Working to build the world we want to live in...The Case of the Rhizome Collective

"...our efforts for a sustainable society will be rolled back and undercut if we don't address the roots of the problem, and aim for their transformation."³²

Since it is participation in an ongoing current, an active anarchist movement, that I discuss, the goal is to build an environment where living by these ethics is possible and common. Anarchitecture, the material manifestation of 21st century, dual power, and postanarchism operates to these ends in the following ways:

- Anarchitecture is concerned with members of the community.
- Anarchitecture is concerned with the relationships between these members.
- Anarchitecture encourages healthy, equal and coexisting relationships
- Anarchitecture expects and encourages changes in these relationships.
- Anarchitecture provides the means for people to voice their concerns.
- Anarchitecture is designed for change; the test is designed to be re-written.

³¹ Woods, Lebbeus. "Anarchitecture" in *Anarchitecture*. (London, St. Martin's Press, 1992), 8-9.

³² Spannos, Chris. *Participatory Society: Urban Space & Freedom*. May 29, 2009. <http://www.zcommunications.org/znet/viewArticle/21529>. (accessed June 4, 2009)

It must be re-written. Perspectives change as individuals change. Our perspective as a people will change. There are no static laws. Therefore, there are no *laws*.³³

- Anarchitecture accommodates life in lawlessness at all scales by encouraging spontaneous, autonomous innovation.
- Anarchitecture has innumerable points of entry
- Anarchitecture responds to concerns by addressing them directly
- Anarchitecture responds to hierarchy with heterarchy
- Anarchitecture is vulnerable to creative forces

Here, I discuss and convey is what I've found and photographed in this contemporary (sub) cultural landscape that is made up of a working conceptual model for 21st century anarchism and practical experiments in anarchitecture.

The Rhizome Collective has a mission. It reads as follows:

“We are working to build the world we want to live in. In our worldview, the dominant values of competition, greed and exploitation would be replaced with cooperation, autonomy and egalitarianism. We believe that all struggles against oppression and for self-determination are connected, and that it is important to construct viable alternatives while simultaneously fighting for social justice.”³⁴

Essentially, I am asking how the Rhizome Collective works toward their mission by building anarchitectural forms. There are a few strong points in their mission statement I feel are best highlighted as I look further into the practices of the collective, they are: autonomy and self-determination, egalitarianism, the importance of constructing viable

³³ Heagney, Brian. *Anarchitecture*. (Self-Published, 2004), 15. <http://zinelibrary.info/search/node/anarchitecture> (accessed June 4, 2009).

³⁴ Rhizomecollective.org (accessed June 4, 2009)

alternatives to oppressive institutions, and the duality in simultaneously occurring action and results of action. I use their statement as a platform from which to discuss the foundation it establishes for the Rhizome Collective as they contribute to the meaning of existing anarchist thought with their praxis, formulate new ideas, and build them into their immediate environment.

Radical sustainability has been developed and employed so that as a whole, their small collective can be run more autonomously, effectively embracing the goal of self-determination as an objective for an anarchic *Dual Power Strategy*. A specific priority in the way the collective shapes space within the urban environment is through the practice of *radical sustainability*, and so all of the demonstrated tactics that follow will somehow fit into this anarchitectural model for freer living. I view the following components of their implementation of a radically sustainable landscape: Site- Spatiality and Materiality, and Purpose- Concept, Context.

The makeup of the broad concept of radically sustainable practice consists of many small practices incorporated into a livable landscape, but as mentioned, it is influenced and formulated by a perceived need for its very existence. It is different from mainstream sustainability tactics pushed to consumers by market capitalism in that the people its development have begun at the root cause of the issues it addresses, rather than symptomatic manifestations. It is holistic and balanced, ensuring future stability in its processes -truly sustainable. According to Kellogg and Pettigrew it means "rebuilding and reorganizing homes, neighborhoods and communities in order to create a world that is both sustainable and equitable. It is fundamentally an approach to enable people who do not have political power to gain control over basic resources."³⁵ The terms of that to which radical sustainability responds may seem abstract, as often they are limited to purview of political opinion and discussion -but the implications of public policy and active resistance to it eventually land on the ground as can be witnessed in the social lives of the governed, and the impact of radical social justice movements.

In 2006, Derrick Jensen published a first volume of two that make up *Endgame*. His work speaks to the problems and challenges of survival the people our era face and how perpetuating this civilization as it is not only unsustainable, but also securing the brutal demise of every

³⁵ Kellogg, Scott and Stacy Pettigrew. *Toolbox for Sustainable City Living: A Do-It-Ourselves Guide*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2008), xiii.

living species on the planet. Jenson prefaces his book with twenty premises, or points worth weighing over the course of reading *Endgame*, Premise Six makes this claim “This culture will not undergo any sort of voluntary transformation to a sane and sustainable way of living. If we do not put a halt to it, civilization will continue to immiserate the vast majority of humans and to degrade the planet until it (civilization, and probably the planet) collapses. The effects of this degradation will continue to harm humans and nonhumans for a very long time.” (Jensen, 2006) What I take from this statement is an address to the condition of denial that predominates the mindset of humanity as a whole, it implies a passive existence that is chosen as we continually decide not to act against domination³⁶, of our own accord, intuitively. It implies that overwhelming majorities of people are unable to take responsibility for the way that we live –despite the fact that this is all we have -this time. - This land. It then becomes up to us how much we are willing to participate in the process of living now.³⁷

As cities develop and change shape with the growing populous, one way of simply facing our simultaneously occurring personal realities can be to consider Jensen’s Premise Eleven, “From the beginning, this culture –civilization –has been a culture of occupation.”³⁸ We occupy. We reside, and live, and traverse, enter, exit, use. The undernetting here is that we are heavy and spacious creatures, whether it is the clout of our morals or laws, or, our physical presence –we are here, somewhere upon an earth with other people and other living bodies.

Sometimes Jensen uses this premise as a tool to explore power and the conceptual worth of human life, asking questions about who decides and who plays along. He points out the current paradoxical asymmetry of power –most of which is held by the few and the so-called wealthy, while the majority having less money are left with little to do to survive but adopt the long-time legitimized morals of the top of the hegemonic hierarchy³⁹. And by making the choice to keep our

³⁷ Jensen, Derrick. *Endgame: Vol. 1 The Problem of Civilization*. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006)

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ Please consider the words of Situationist Raoul Vaneigem: “A man’s illusions about himself and others are not basically different from the illusions which groups, classes and parties cultivate about themselves and in themselves. Indeed they come from the same source: the dominant ideas, which are ideas of the dominant class, even if they take an antagonistic form.” In *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (1983)

challenging questions to ourselves or amongst ourselves, we perpetuate a system that is incompatible with not only our dreams and visions, but also our very survival.⁴⁰

However, Premise Sixteen, first line: “The material world is Primary...”⁴¹ refers to our physical lives that make up the world around us. In other words, we are real, this is happening. I find this to be a challenge to revel in our own materiality, to co-exist as active and excited people, and to shape this world with rugged devotion to imagination and ultimately, actualization –essentially, acknowledging the paving stones while envisioning and embodying the beach below. The way we imagine our world is architectural in organization, but this does not necessitate rigid borders, zones and trespassing laws which tend to be enforced with paradigms, paper, money and violence. It is architects like Woods, Heagney, Kellogg and Pettigrew that design without the destructive prescriptions that further the failing system, and still have the strength and courage to envision a world without capitalism before they submit to the fear of the end of the world itself. It is thinkers like Graeber & Grimace that unite people in hope and dreams that include the past, operate now, and influence the shape of the coming future.

Approaches to building form begins with space and moves through the process of envisioning, eventually giving life to an idea of the way we see fit to transform this space around us, and finally to constructing a place to occupy. Designing a landscape where the place itself shifts to support our weight and accommodate our needs is anarchitecture -loose enough, but strong enough. Autonomy and Mutual-Aid, heterarchical pillars of anarchist thought and practice are built into the design of the landscape on-site at the Rhizome Collective and have helped in the construction of a shortlist of design criteria for radically sustainable practice: affordability, use of salvaged or locally abundant materials, simplicity, beauty, user serviceability, ease of replication, and decentralization. When all of these criteria are intact, they help to defeat and defend against monopolization, a clearly well established hierarchical model, "...thus ensuring continuing supply, democratic control, and overall quality..."⁴² of basic resources.

⁴⁰ Jensen, Derrick. *Endgame: Vol. 1 The Problem of Civilization*. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006), 239.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, xi.

⁴² Kellogg, Scott and Stacy Pettigrew. *Toolbox for Sustainable City Living: A Do-It-Ourselves Guide*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2008), xv and rhizomecollective.org.

Upon acquisition of an old, burned-out East Austin, TX warehouse in 2000 by private purchase, the work to build a home began. Their use of a salvaged building, which had been neglected for years, to situate a movement that has 'building a new society in the shell of the old' as a goal speaks for itself. It is metaphor in practice, and it is purposeful. Salvaging old buildings by finding new uses for them keeps both cost and waste materials low, thereby lessening the reliance upon municipal waste management and opening up avenues for creative play with that which already exists in form.

Creative interaction with space and material at this level is a current for a greater libratory movement as there is no disposal and a great amount of innovation required in its use and functionality. This improvised model for constructing living space creates a relationship not only between the architecture, its material space and the builder, but between builders as well, especially because in the case of the Rhizome Collective, they collaborate on creating a huge amount of openly shared, communal areas.

Common Space

"Architecture pretends to be singular...The singular space is non-architectural; it is theoretical, created by the subject, imposed upon the object, and only for a brief period of time. The viewer of any space has power over the architecture; the viewer can re-write the text of architecture...Architecture remains plural, architecture remains communal."⁴³

The very notion of the open plan and communal space is compatible with anarchism and anarchitecture because it sets up a more vulnerable, freer landscape. Essentially, a space that fits criteria of Woods' *free-zone*⁴⁴, where dialogue precedes authoritarian monologue, and where the only authority is that which is constantly changing and fleeing within the landscape as it freely shifts. The space itself, the object shifts according to use by the subject, thereby creating ideal relationships between people and the space they build as according to scholar architects like Heagney and Woods.

The reason for leaving large, empty spaces in the layout of landscape is openness, both aesthetic and practical. In the context of anarchitectural living spaces, which encourage autonomy, free-

⁴³ Heagney, Brian. *Anarchitecture*. (Self-Published, 2004), 12.

⁴⁴ Woods, Lebbeus. "Anarchitecture" in *Anarchitecture*.

Building Resistance: Architecture & Anarchism

association, egalitarian relationships and decentralization -it is essential. Coming and going freely is an autonomous act, and as it is done by all who call the space itself home, a complex, non-linear, horizontal trail of inhabitant passage is created. The warehouse site of the Rhizome Collective hosts an overwhelming amount of open communal space, built-in not just for transient passage of residents but as a gathering place in which all people are welcome to share, as is demonstrated in plan below (figure 1.):

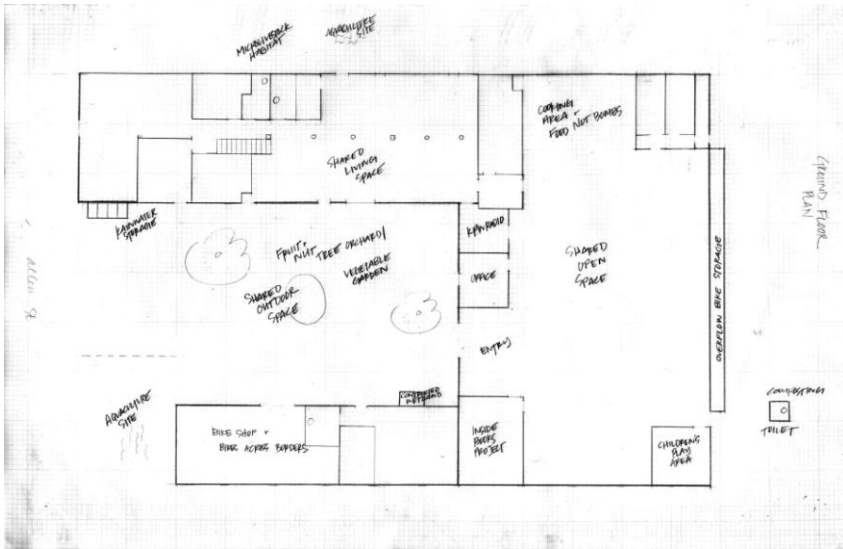


Figure 1. First Floor Plan of Warehouse Site

Shared space at the Rhizome Collective is found inside and outside, and is accessible simply by stepping onto the property or entering the building at almost any point. The largest parts of the site are open spaces, and the largest shared interior open space -labeled above as *Shared Open Space*, sets up the network model on-site in that it houses a shared kitchen that contributes to Food Not Bombs, the Inside Books library created for the distribution of reading material to incarcerated people, KPWR -People's Will Radio, The Austin Independent Media Center and Art and Revolution and as well a place where public performances, demonstrations and collective spokes council meetings (consensus decision-making proceedings) are held. This is the primary interior meeting place for people in attendance at the Radical Urban Sustainability Training (RUST), an outreach project where members of the collective spread the message about the things they do on-site to

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

people who are welcome to come from the broader world to learn about anarchist Do-It-Yourself ethics and practice. RUST serves as a demonstration of methods by which the goal of creating 'viable alternatives to oppressive institutions' is met. In this way, the Shared Open Space, represented by the series of images below (figures 2., 3., and 4), encourages horizontal networking, learning and demonstration and the creative open thinking required for the process of meeting the goal itself.



Figure 2. Shared indoor space



Figure 3. Shared Living Space



Figure 4. Shared Outdoor Space

The spaces left for modification, or spontaneous occupation and open-ended use, at the Rhizome Collective underscore the emphasis on ephemeral placement and welcoming *change* in any attempt at creativity, and they reflect the lawlessness so crucial to the free environment that anarchists work to build. This series of images demonstrates the openness of the building's plan, and speak to its important contribution to the landscape both serving and reflecting anarchist/post anarchist values.

The way in which the open plan and free landscape at the Rhizome Collective serves their purposes in allowing for the type of creativity that fuels the development of viable alternatives meant to replace oppressive institutions are numerous and physically evident throughout the site. The importance of viable alternatives is validated by the widely held perspective of anarchists and social justice activists who are concerned that municipal institutions are continually careless with valuable natural resources that we all need to survive, benefit only a capitalist/elitist economy in the United States and justify themselves at the expense of those they claim to serve. For the Rhizome Collective, the result of our flawed and failing system is an opportunity to create

innovative solutions to real problems, both massive and personal, and to evolve their Radical Sustainability model for design and building.

The resources discussed and secured in specific ways by radical thought and dialogue, design and action are the fundamental human needs that we require to live happily and comfortable in cities. For the purposes of my discussion of the case of the Rhizome Collective, they include: healthy food, clean water, reliable shelter and renewable energy. From the first, they exist in the natural environment as soil, sun, air, and water. It is the process of taking resources from their state in nature and using them to sustain ideal human life that anarchitecture and radical sustainability strive to mediate in a way that fosters cooperation, autonomy and egalitarianism.

Soil & Food

"Considering how far removed most modern city dwellers are from the process of raising good, even the simple act of growing a few vegetables on the fire escape can be a huge step toward self-reliance."⁴⁵

The relationship between the earth and our food supply is probably the most straightforward, as we are all aware that our food grows from the ground, or on trees that do, or from animals that dwell upon it. The ground itself is sacred in that we rely upon it in a way that cannot be denied, yet access to clean, fertile soil and rights to land are questionable in our current state. Urban farms are few and far between, certainly fall short of providing a reliable food supply for the cities in which they are located, and sprawling cities jeopardize local farmland making for a situation where huge amounts of energy are required to distribute food to urban populations. Because of the expense there is in continuing to use an increasingly scarce natural resource in food transportation and distribution the importance of improving the relationship between people who need healthy food every day and local land for growing reveals itself. This can be done by lessening the amount to which we rely on a system that routinely fails to meet the needs of the people, and instead securing these resources for ourselves. This is why the model for radical sustainability focuses in-part on the root cause of inadequate supplies of healthy food to city dwellers -access to land and soil quality.

⁴⁵ Kellogg, Scott and Stacy Pettigrew. *Toolbox for Sustainable City Living: A Do-It-Ourselves Guide*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2008), 2.

Securing land and making it accessible for use without dealing in terms of money is itself an issue, and requires a great restructuring of private property policy in urban municipalities. However, because it is within the shell of the current capitalist system that dual power strategy operates -the practices that will reveal the flaws of the current system by demonstration of widely beneficial alternatives seem to be restructuring privately owned homes and neighborhoods so that they become a decentralized, cooperative network that uses the land to its potential without compromising the community already intact. This is the grassroots solution that requires probably the most gradual, experimental and participatory process because changing acknowledgement of the problem to creating a holistic, viable solution takes time and care. Here we have a model for securing a resource that fits well with anarchitectural notions of concern for community and healthy, egalitarian relationships within them. Other responses to securing land for growing healthy food come in the form of land trusts and urban farms which can guarantee stability and even stimulate localized economies by creating the need for workers who want to help to feed themselves and their neighbors, thereby addressing community concerns directly rather than through a questionable bureaucratic process.

Once land is secured, the next step is to confirm its condition. The Rhizome Collective has been experimenting with a fitting method for remedying toxic soils. They highlight the importance of on-site processes for the sake of keeping costs low, and the use of low-tech, low-cost materials. Bacterial remediation like the use of compost and compost tea can be used in widespread application because of the ease in its production, and mycoremediation, which uses fungi, and phytoremediation which uses plants are other methods that come recommended by the Rhizome Collective for degrading toxic compounds found in the polluted soil common to cities.

The best example for use of these techniques in securing clean soil for food growth is found in the shared outdoor space of the Rhizome Collective:



Figure 5. Outdoor Space Path and Garden



Figure 6. Aquaculture Ponds⁴⁶

The space represented above was converted from an asphalt parking lot to a garden space with vegetables, fruit and nut trees, and aquaculture ponds that produce edible plants and fish on-site. The space was made available for gathering as well as growing, thereby providing an environment that would nourish both the relationships between people at the Rhizome Collective, but also their bodies as they reclaimed their food source to some degree

⁴⁶ Figures 5 and 6 were taken by an unknown photographer and were retrieved from <http://rhizomecollective.org/node/7> June 4, 2009.

Water, Clean & Collected & Conserved

"People concerned with environmental sustainability and social equality should deeply question the origin of their water."⁴⁷

The Rhizome Collective is located in a fairly arid climate, and so their emphasis on collecting what rainwater they receive is impressive and significant as are purification and conservation techniques for securing water for everyday use. With each flush of the toilet, or release of water from a city faucet we send a message to our city government that we need them not only to provide us with fresh water regardless of its source, but also to clean it and keep it safe to use and consume. Doing so is costly to both city management, the urban population and the natural environment whether usage of this precious resource is paid for by city taxes, or in the form of a direct bill. The efforts made by the Rhizome collective send a different message and that is that they are aware of the dire long-term and short-term effects of thoughtless water waste, and that they are willing to pave a new path to liberation from yet another dominant yet questionable institution by coming up with viable alternatives applicable in some way to the large community of people who currently live in U.S. cities and consume or waste alarming amounts of water on a daily basis.

By allowing the rainfall onto city rooftops, flow into gutters, through a downspout and into a storm drain we complacently let water, a precious, life sustaining resource go to waste. And oftentimes the water, by the time it flows through the storm drain and into what is oftentimes a local body of water, carries dangerous pollutants that threaten local ecosystems which function to maintain a healthy, natural balance despite the fact that cities are packed with people who often take it for granted. Because poor people in cities cannot afford to take much for granted or to be wasteful, the struggle to create a system for ensuring a secure source of clean water for all people is very much tied into the struggle for equal rights to survive. The work done to ensure the life and quality of life for all people despite their economic status embodies the anarchist ethics of practice, it is of the material world and has a hand in the high purpose of egalitarian co-existence. If the water either collected or cleansed by either the installation of a rain barrel or construction wetland and process is coupled with a small food growing operation on site (please see figure 8), then the relationship between securing water

⁴⁷ Ibid, 64.

and producing food for the community where we live is strengthened by its direct link rather than weakened by the expense of transport and municipal management.

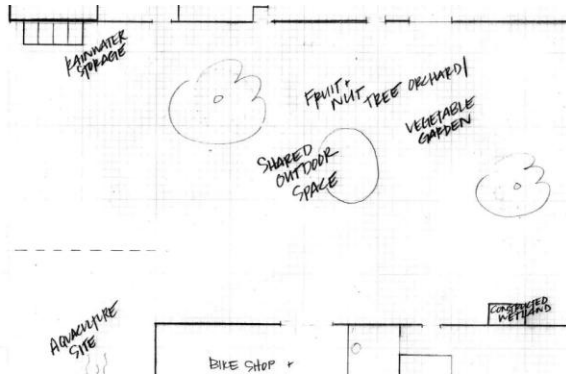


Figure 7. Partial plan indicating location of Water storage and treatment structures

The practical techniques for dealing with water supply and use are those which may be familiar, however at the Rhizome Collective the demonstration of how to take common practice and lower costs of installation and operation is crucial in meeting criteria like replicability and serviceability which offer a great deal of personal or small group autonomy. For instance, in the case of on-site rainwater collection and storage, as well as with constructed wetlands (less common), salvaged or reused materials makeup the instrumental portion of the design. Supplies for the installation of a basic rain barrel system and extended water storage capacity include: A clean, food grade 55-gallon barrel or large plastic garbage can, a 3x3 foot window screen, a used bicycle inner tube, standard piping to plumb multiple barrels and wood if a structure is required to house the barrels as they lay on their sides as is demonstrated below:



*Figure 9. Harvested Water Storage Structure*⁴⁸

There are three methods of purification and/or filtration built into the anarchitectural landscape at the Rhizome Collective. They are constructed wetlands and solar ultraviolet disinfection and on-site composting, and each contributes to conservation in a specific way. I have not found these low-tech solutions in use anywhere but on-site at the collective, but there is no reason I can think of why they could not be replicated and utilized with appropriate variation and at different scales almost anywhere. All three methods simply require sunlight, water and salvaged materials.

Solar ultraviolet disinfection of water requires no energy aside from that which is given off by the sun, and perhaps that which is required to build a small structure at a specific angle. The latitude at which the site is located so that the structure built for this purpose receives the most exposure since maintenance of high temperature by the water is required for its disinfection determines the angle. In this extremely small- scale representation, water is kept in clear or

⁴⁸ Both the information about this structure and the photograph used in its illustration were taken from Kellogg, Scott and Stacy Pettigrew. *Toolbox for Sustainable City Living: A Do-It-Ourselves Guide*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2008).

translucent bottles, held in place by corrugated aluminum and angled by a plywood structure.



Figure 10. UV Disinfection structure

The Constructed Wetland on-site at the Rhizome Collective removes reliance upon municipal water treatment, an expensive process -and instead puts the task of cleaning and re-using greywater into the hands of those who use fresh water for every things like doing laundry, washing dishes or brushing teeth. Their most impressive design treats water from their washing machine and consists of : three bathtubs, threaded jar lids, silicone adhesive, adapters and connective piping, 55 gallon barrel, nylon stocking, window screen, 90 degree pipe elbows, caps, rocks and wetland plants.



Figure 11. Constructed Wetland

The Composting Toilet at the Rhizome Collective (figure 12.) may not be as glamorous a design as the constructed wetland, but its conception and installation in an urban setting is a huge feat in exercising intention and autonomy. The composting toilet treats blackwater, essentially eliminating the waste of water that goes along with flushing the toilet after each use. Unfortunately, composting toilets, are extremely uncommon because of legal and social questions raised by the same municipal structure that, rather than trust people to act in their own best interest in a safe and responsible way, bills people in cities so that they can continue to encourage wasteful habits and support their own upper-management existence Kellogg and Pettigrew, therefore highlight the importance of doing this, and doing it right so as to create conditions compelling enough for prohibitive laws around human waste composting to be challenged, and water successfully conserved.



Figure 12. Composting Toilet

Shelter, Walls

When the Rhizome Collective first called the warehouse home, it was in desperate need of the kinds of repairs that would make it hospitable. It was perhaps a challenge as well as an opportunity to creatively shape a small part of the world. Cautious and thoughtful design, and work intensive, low tech walls were built into the space to accommodate private living spaces and to create a desirable dynamic for the common space already discussed. The use of raw materials, transformed into structural elements is again, a direct relationship between mind, hands and medium. Many people can take part at once while walls are constructed so as to use the building process as a teaching tool and a gathering space to share in the process of modifying the built environment.

The construction of the second story of the Rhizome collective entailed devoting a part of the warehouse space to create personal living spaces, and I think that the fairly small amount that was devoted to bedrooms to the importance of privacy but highlights the emphasis put by the collective on common spaces. (please see figure 13, and note that the shaded area indicates the space used for private bedrooms built into the second story Nevertheless, the care put into the bedroom spaces is significant as it is worth noting that walls, details like window framing and painting techniques are oftentimes low-tech, hand made and beautiful. Each bedroom is different and includes the comforts now assumed to be necessities in cities, like sizeable windows for adequate

daylight, space enough to accommodate one or two people and their things.

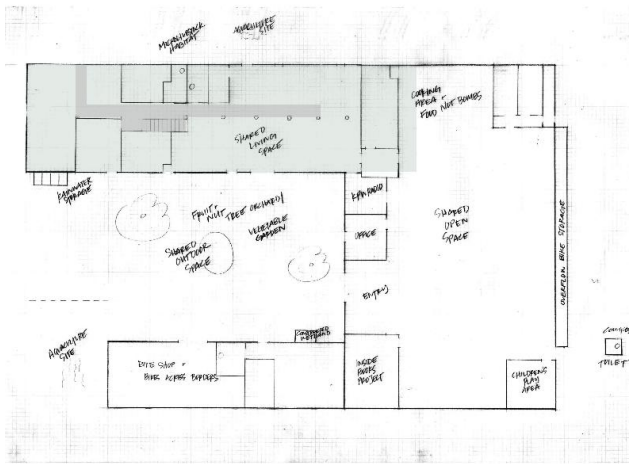


Figure 13. Rhizome site in plan with bedroom space indicated

The methods used at the Rhizome Collective for modifying space include straw bale, cob, and slip chip, slip straw and clay-based aliz paints. The clay, sand and straw, an agricultural waste product used in construction is often left visibly rough rather than refined and polished, adding to the character of each space and its creator rather than reflecting dominant trends in mass production. Although time and work intensive, the amount of energy that goes into the production of these types of structures and treatments is considerably less than in concrete, steel, lumber and gypsum and new wood lumber -all very common to the construction industry.⁴⁹ (rhizomecollective.org)

Below is a series of images representing the types of building techniques found in bedrooms, and creative details that indicate what kinds of methods in construction and craft are used to modify space in a way that beautifies it while at the same time maintaining the values that go into radically sustainable, design and production.

⁴⁹ Rhizomecollective.org (accessed June 4, 2009)



Figure 14. Aliz finished cobb walls



Figure 14. Window Frame



Figure 17. Construction of cobb wall⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Unknown Photographer. Retrieved from <http://rhizomecollective.org/node/7>.



Figure 15. Handmade Door Catch



Figure 18. Handmade Natural Building Blocks

Autonomous Energy

"The energy source must be renewable and non-polluting in nature, decentralized in structure, and most importantly, give total control of its processes to the people who are using it."⁵¹

The necessity of energy and energy production for sustaining life in cities is not up for debate, however for most of us the question of how we effectively and responsibly meet this need remains open. Although there is a multitude of responses, many of them have a common flaw and this is that most of them are simply a change in the kind of mechanism being produced rather than the means of production themselves. There is no root change, no fundamental shift in initiating yet another system for energy production and distribution that keeps production out of the hands of those who consume. Whether the new 'green' or sustainable choice is a common solar panel or wind turbine, both are expensive and out of reach for the majority of people in cities using energy. Mass-produced in factories, both require enormous amounts of energy in production themselves, and demand ongoing maintenance on complex components. Radically sustainable solutions that meet design criteria and reflect anarchist ethics fall under the broad category of Autonomous Energy.

According to Kellogg & Pettigrew, "Autonomous energy comes from sources where the means of extraction, development, maintenance, and disposal can be managed completely on the scale of a village-sized community, or by an equivalently sized neighborhood in a city."⁵² The

⁵¹ Kellogg, Scott and Stacy Pettigrew. *Toolbox for Sustainable City Living: A Do-It-Ourselves Guide*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2008).

⁵² *Ibid*, 138.

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

Rhizome Collective is not independent of municipally managed sources for energy and electricity, but rather work *within* it so as to create alternatives *to* it that are more in line with the kind of self-determination anarchists desire.

On site, the Rhizome Collective self-manages and utilizes a diversity of tactics including: Passive Solar Architecture, Biofuel production, small-scale wind turbines and self-generated energy via bicycle. Passive solar technologies require the assembly of a structure or object that will effectively use the heat of the sun's rays as a way to generate focused heat as an alternative to fueled designs. For replicability and user serviceability, designs developed by the Rhizome Collective can consist of mainly salvaged materials and the heat they harness is then put to tasks like warming food for eating or water for cooking and bathing. This kind of technology creates an easily managed, direct relationship between source and service -does not waste resources, and is after construction, free for all.

Here are some examples built at the Rhizome Collective:



Figure 19. Solar Oven



Figure 20. Biogas Production Apparatus

Biofuel use by the Rhizome Collective is worth addressing because of the zero-waste, do-it-yourself horizontality the production process invokes. It is an addition to the host of infrastructure that works toward self-reliance set up by an Anarchitectural Dual Power model for living. Use of biofuels is possible for cars as well as household appliances -two modes used continually and at a huge scale in cities and households. This

resource can be made at home from organic material, although its practical usage requires some advanced skills.

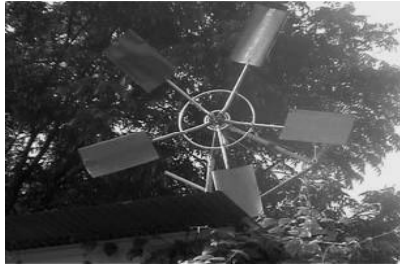


Figure 21. Bicylce-part Windmill⁵³

Construction and installation of a recycled bicycle-part wind turbine is another low-tech experiment with energy production. As with biofuels and gasses, this structure requires somewhat advanced knowledge for serviceability. The need for energy -essential to movement and heat, is not necessarily new, but increasingly complex. The complexity of the process of extraction and conversion is privately owned, and distribution extremely centralized and demanding of consumers. However, one undeniable source is that of our own bodies -we burn calories and require fuel to do anything and so our own movement is key in meeting needs. Biking in cities makes sense because more or less all that is required is a bike and a reasonably smooth road, it leaves precious resources alone, costs next to nothing and requires that we exercise (essential to health, yet easily avoided by city dwellers). Acquiring a bicycle to do so quickly in the city is made easier by organizations like Bikes Across Borders (BAB) at the Rhizome Collective. BAB repairs bicycles for the local community and as well ships them abroad to places where the surplus of bicycles or the time and tools required to service them may not be as abundant. After intensive repairs are made, maintenance can be done fairly quickly and painlessly by almost anyone.

Where to go, what to do: further consideration of building daily life

"People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is

⁵³ Images for figures 19, 20 and 21 were retrieved from <http://rhizomecollective.org/node/7> on June 4, 2009.

positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth”⁵⁴

The Rhizome Collective addresses the grave problems we face everyday with empowerment and self-reliance, and ensures for themselves a freedom that allows people to meet their needs in a way that is compatible with their values. By invoking the Dual Power model as they build a home, they reclaim both the source and means of production of resources essential to life in cities while simultaneously undermining a hierarchical system that privileges few and impoverishes many.

If we are to take responsibility for our own needs, in this time, in city space, it follows that we must take up practices that greatly reduce or remove reliance upon self-justifying municipal institutions, the Rhizome Collective simply demonstrates the challenges as well as promising possibilities that arise in the process of redefining their relationship with power and the politics of space. They do so actively while supported conceptually by others with common critiques and goals who initiate conversations in cities globally. For instance, Chris Spannos of Z Communications said this in a speech he gave less than a week ago in Athens, Greece: "The question is not if we should cut-back on overall affluence and reduce our collective environmental footprint, as most would agree, but how we can redistribute decision-making power and control so that those currently at the top have the same consumption ceiling as the rest of us. Decisions about who should cut-back on their consumption levels today and how to reduce carbon levels for an environmentally sustainable future tomorrow should be made by all according to how they are affected---self-management." As we face a world rife with the problems of privatization of natural resources, industrialization of pristine natural landscapes, supply-demand relationships, commoditization of the organic/green agenda, we can return to some of the radically sustainable principles exemplified by the Rhizome Collective.

The stimuli or environmental conditions that help to form collective's vision for the world and the actual design and installation of residential landscapes on-site in the East Austin warehouse district have been discussed as tangible indicators for collective goals and anarchist theory. I am interested in opening a discussion for viable alternatives to the limited options given to city dwellers by a government that is more concerned with the preservation of the current capitalist system and

⁵⁴ Vaneigem, Raoul. *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. (Welcombe, England: Rebel Press, 1983), 26.

upper management than it is with meeting actual needs at a human scale. What I hope for is to consider new questions and challenges for the world as it is now, and to reconsider solutions about how architecture and dissemination of information about sustainability in the urban environment can change its form in a way that leaves occupants of the city and its cultural landscapes more autonomous.

At this point, I find it extremely important to note that even as I've used the Rhizome Collective as an extraordinary model for radical sustainability and as an inspiration for hope in an architecture of the future that reflects the identities and desires of those who use and inhabit its spaces -it has come across not only the minor challenges in the experimental phases of new designs, but a much larger one as well. The warehouse space depicted and studied above, the same space that has evolved for ten years to the benefit of a large number of people (to say nothing of positive ecological effects): members, allies, activists, people in need of the kinds of services that social justice organizations provide, workshop participants, is now vacant. As city governments justify themselves, they often in the process perpetuate their own problems. Members and organizations housed on-site at the warehouse space were ordered to vacate for building code violations, essentially stripped of their home in under two weeks time.

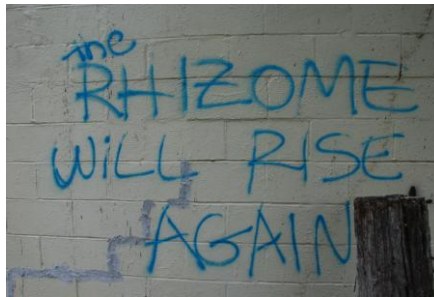


Figure 22. The Future of the Rhizome Collective

However, because of the strong network that operations such as theirs establish, the collective itself has a future and the challenge presented by a destructive capitalist system that seems to create more problems than it can solve. It is simply a conflict of class and power, but the strength there is in numbers of self-managed, empowered people committed to active participation in a movement for justice and fairness generates a response that functions despite attempts to destroy its very existence. A setback is simply another opportunity to assess, reflect, innovate and act -a task the Rhizome Collective and the model to which

it adheres have proven itself worthy of. The question of space, in the anarchitectural sense, is always open -and indeed, always changing.

Lebbeus Woods, reflects on conflict in his essay *Turbulence*, "Architecture that transmits the feel of movements and shifts, resonating with every force applied to it, because it both resists and gives way - architecture that moves, the better to gain its poise - architecture that insults politicians, because they cannot claim it as their own -architecture whose forms and spaces are the causes of rebellion, against them, against the world that brought them into being -architecture drawn as though it were already built -architecture built as though it had never been drawn."⁵⁵ The importance of invoking anarchitectural concepts that suspend normative beliefs, senseless bureaucracy and socialized constructions for the purpose of inquiry and challenge is radical and practical as well as highly political and hard to understand, making anarchitectural structures or spaces extremely fluid and resilient. It is perhaps an old practice, but each time is newly done, it is in inception abstract yet extremely significant for work done to the end of realizing a world beyond that which already exists.

As Jensen says in his work, the material world is primary⁵⁶ ...it is the world we inhabit, and if we are creative and bold -we experiment with the power we have as individuals to build a world that represents our own values. We forge a new place to live, rather than occupy the shambles of system propped up on its own flawed rationale. We make our own truths rather than accept those simply given as absolute or assumed humanitarian law exposing dominant values for that which they simply are, laws written by the government so as to continue to own the governed.

Anarchist (sub) cultural landscapes are non-linear and complex not because of a problem with the development of a coherent ideology, but because of their ongoing refutation of indoctrinating a prescriptive way for ideal living. Indeed this has been a strength in that anarchism endures changing conditions, and itself changes conditions. Or, as David Graeber states " Those new forms of organization are its ideology. It is about creating and enacting horizontal networks instead of top-down structures like states, parties or corporations; networks based on principles of decentralized, non-hierarchical consensus democracy.

⁵⁵ Woods, Lebbeus. "Turbulence" in *Anarchitecture*. (London, St. Martin's Press, 1992), 40.

⁵⁶ Jensen, Derrick. *Endgame: Vol. 1 The Problem of Civilization*. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006), xi.

Ultimately, it aspires to be much more than that, because ultimately it aspires to reinvent daily life as whole.⁵⁷

The culture of resistance to the defective top-down model passed down through the hierarchy to the masses be is brought about by people responsive to their needs and how they are met creates a unique landscape decorated with beauty and attention to functionality and sustainability. The landscapes themselves do, or arguably *should*, shape the way we interpret them when we try to tell the story of how they came to be the only we know them, as a salient part of everyday, of today, of home and city and country. As benefactors of the past, we are given the gift of place. By our own actions, by really participating in the building of our world, we are reminded that we belong here, to our time -and our politics belong to us.

Acknowledgements

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⁵⁷ Graeber, David. "The New Anarchists"
<http://www.newleftreview.org/A2368> (accessed June 4, 2009)

Detecting Crossover PCR Using A Double Encoder

Nicholas Gomez

Abstract

In addition to DNA sequence information, PCR can provide useful data on the methylation states of cytosine bases, which are important in regulation of gene expression. In animal cells, methylated cytosine is almost always found adjacent to guanine, thus forming mCpG. When double-stranded DNA is amplified, methylation information can be obtained for both strands of a DNA molecule. Some of the most intriguing data are those that indicate a hemimethylated state, in which a cytosine is methylated on one strand but not on the complementary CpG. Hemimethylated sequences can represent an important transition in methylation. Transitions between DNA methylation states are critical to many biological processes, including during development (1). Here we present a new method to distinguish true hemimethylated CpGs from those that arise by spurious crossover events during PCR amplification. We ligate molecular barcodes and batch stamps to each end of a double-stranded DNA molecule. These molecular codes provide positive identification of sequences that did, and did not, result from PCR crossover events. Identifying PCR crossover events can establish more accurate sequence and methylation information relevant to health and disease, including Fragile X, ICF, and Rett syndromes.

Introduction

Forensic scientists commonly use Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) as a method for amplifying and sequencing DNA samples left at the scene of a crime. One simply has to turn on a television and view the many crime dramas to see how these sequences are used. DNA evidence is becoming a common method to providing evidence for a person's innocence or guilt. However, errors in PCR do occur and one such case, the high profile double murder of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman, proved that errors in PCR could ultimately discredit the validity of the evidence.

The prosecution claimed blood spatters found at the scene of the crime implicated O. J. Simpson as the murderer. However, the defense argued that the DNA samples had been incompetently handled by police officers. In addition, the defense argued the laboratories responsible for the testing had shown previous incidents of errors. Ultimately, what the prosecution believed to be a solid piece of evidence, turned out to be

worthless due to the defense attorney's strong testimony discrediting the laboratories.

Our proposed method will help eliminate errors and provide higher degrees of authenticity during PCR amplification. The double endcoder will help ensure murderers, as well as other criminals, are not released back into society. With our method we will be able to confidently identify contaminant, redundant, and recombinant sequences.

Our primary goal is not an application in criminal forensics but rather double-stranded methylation patterns within DNA sequences. Such methylation patterns have been shown to be important in the development of many disease phenotypes. Methylated alleles are transcriptionally silenced; unmethylated alleles are potentially active. For example, our lab is interested in the methylation sites of the FMR1 promoter. Patients who have methylated versions of this gene exhibit a phenotype referred to as Fragile X, a disorder causing varying degrees of mental retardation (2).

Of particular interest are instances where one strand of DNA is methylated while the complementary strand is unmethylated—a state referred to as hemimethylation (Figure 1). This phenomenon is interesting because it possibly represents a transition between methylation states, such as between fully methylated DNA and unmethylated DNA. Finding sequences rich in hemimethylation is important because it lets us study a fundamental regulatory process.

Our lab has previously developed methods to authenticate both single and double-stranded sequences (3). Such authentication methods can detect PCR contamination and PCR redundancy but are not generally diagnostic for crossover PCR artifacts. Our proposed method will allow for the detection of crossover events by labeling the ends of each strand of DNA with a complementary barcode. In the event of crossover contamination, the two barcodes will no longer match. Thus, we will be able to exclude invalid hemi-rich sequences from our data sets.

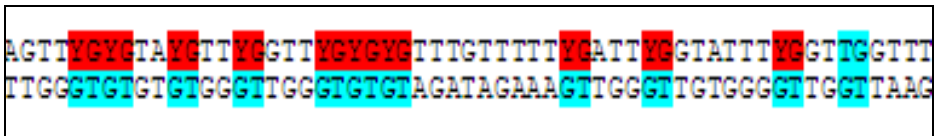


Figure 1. Sample Hemimethylated Sequence. A portion of a DNA molecule showing a typical hemimethylation sequence. The red bars represents methylated nucleotides while blue represent unmethylated.

Method

Synthesis of Endcoder

Our method is comprised of two oligos that share a short 12 nucleotide (nt) annealing sequence. One of the oligos, the top coder (53 nt in length), consists of a restriction enzyme cut site, a barcode, an annealing sequence, and a primer binding site. The second oligo, the bottom coder (25 nt in length), consists of the complementary annealing sequence as well as a second primer binding site. The two oligos are first annealed to each other creating a partial double-stranded DNA duplex (Figure 2).

In order to achieve a fully double-stranded DNA fragment, Klenow polymerase is used to extend the bottom coder after annealing. This step also provides the complementary barcode on the bottom coder which is necessary for detecting crossover events during PCR amplification. The endcoder is now complete with complementary barcodes and the necessary primer binding sites.

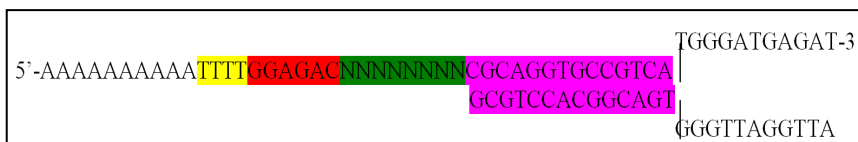


Figure 2. Annealed Endcoder. The top sequence is the top coder containing a poly A tail for proper enzyme digestion. Followed by a sticky end (yellow) developed to anneal to the target DNA, the enzyme recognition site (red), an eight random base barcode (green), the complementary fourteen base annealing site (magenta), and a primer binding site (white). Bottom coder contains the annealing sequence (magenta) and a primer binding site (white).

Ligation of Endcoder

In order to ligate the endcoder to the target DNA we must first digest the complete endcoder with a restriction enzyme BsmAI. This digestion creates the required overhang necessary for ligation to the target DNA molecule.

BsmAI binds the enzyme recognition site engineered within the duplex and cleaves the DNA creating a four base Thymine overhang (Figure 3A). The target DNA, genomic Lambda, is also subjected to the same enzyme, BsmAI, creating a complementary four base Adenine overhang. These sticky ends are then ligated together with the enzyme T4 ligase leading to the final ligation of the endcoder to the target genomic DNA (Figure 3B).

Hairpin ligation

The key for detection of crossover PCR is labeling both ends of the target DNA molecule with a unique barcode. We have synthesized a DNA hairpin that ligates to the 5' end of our target genomic Lambda fragment. The hairpin serves two main functions. First, it is a mechanism to ensure the two DNA strands remain connected after bisulfate treatment. Second, the hairpin is another mechanism to detect redundant and contaminant sequences by the incorporation of its own molecular codes. The hairpin was designed with a sticky end complementary to BsmAI treated Lambda DNA. This sticky end allows the hairpin to be directly ligated to BsmAI digested Lambda DNA (Figure 4). The complete hairpin and endcoder ligated complex is subjected to bisulfite treatment.

Treatment with bisulfite

Bisulfite treatment is a common technique used to analyze methylation information in DNA molecules. This process converts all unmethylated C residues to uracil while methylated C remains unconverted (4). Any unconverted cytosine in the sequence is attributed to a methylation event.

Bisulfite treatment destroys the complementarity of the sequences due to the cytosine to uracil conversion. This allows the double-stranded molecule to “unzip” and form a linear molecule. The ligated hairpin ensures the two strands remain together by acting as a “molecular hinge.”

The linear molecule is then amplified using PCR. The PCR products are then transformed into E. Coli and cultured for sequencing. The results are then analyzed for crossover PCR events.

Discussion

Crossover PCR events can occur during PCR amplification. The process involves an enzyme “jumping” from one strand to another during synthesis. This jumping could cause the synthesis of hemimethylated sequences by mistake. Our method allows the researcher to confidently identify this type of error by comparing the barcodes of the products. An authentic hemimethylated sequence will contain complementary barcodes as a result of the endcoder. However, if the barcodes are not complementary we can confidently identify the sequence as a result of error.

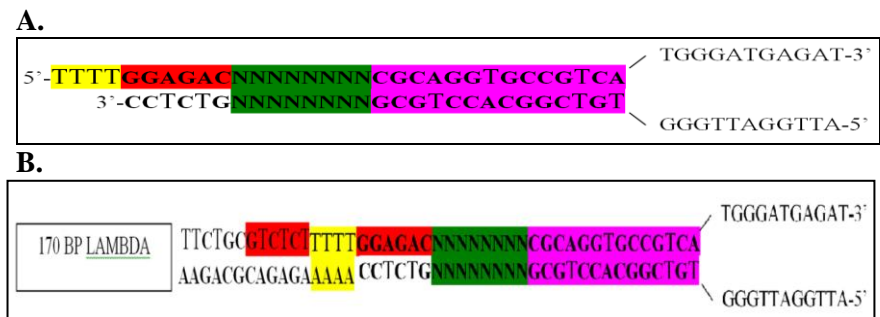


Figure 3. Endcoder extension and ligation. A) The endcoder is extended using Klenow polymerase to synthesize the complementary barcode on the bottom strand. The duplex is subjected to restriction digestion by BsmAI in order to create the overhang needed for ligation to target molecule. B) The endcoder is subsequently ligated to the lambda genome fragment containing the complementary overhang.



Figure 4. Hairpin structure and ligation. A) The hairpin was developed to detect contamination and redundant sequences via the seven base barcode (green), and the seven base batch stamp (white). The overhang (grey) is complementary to the Lambda genome. B) Represents the complete labeled molecule. Target DNA molecule ligated to hairpin linker (left) and endcoder (right).

This new method will allow us to confidently authenticate hemi-methylated sequences. Currently, our methods do not allow for the distinction between spurious crossover events and true hemi-methylated sequences. With the double endcoder we can positively and definitively identify hemi-methylated sequences and further study this interesting biological phenomenon.

Application

Our intended goal is to authenticate sequence and methylation patterns derived from PCR amplification. This method will allow us to identify crossover events and remove them from our data set. Any remaining hemimethylated sequences will prove invaluable to the study of transition states of methylation processes. The authenticated sequences will allow researchers the ability to confidently identify hemimethylated sequences during the development of embryos and diseases.

In addition to its use in research the double endcoder can be applied to forensics. We have previously shown that PCR contamination and crossover events do arise (5). Criminal forensics commonly use PCR to amplify DNA products, which allows for the possibility of contamination and spurious sequences arising from crossover PCR. If our proposed double endcoder is used, a higher degree of authentication will be reached.

Conclusion

Our method design shows promise. Unfortunately we have been unable to produce positive results. This is a complex method with many potential pitfalls that can prevent us from achieving the desired results. Currently we are optimizing and analyzing each step of the process.

We have optimized the first step (annealing of the two oligos) to provide a much greater yield of positive products. Presently we are developing an assay to test for complete extension by Klenow polymerase. Without the extension the complementary barcode would not be synthesized defeating the purpose of our method. A proper assay is important in verifying the products synthesized by Klenow polymerase.

Our proposed method would prove invaluable in authenticating data. As with all new methods troubleshooting and optimization must take place. I am optimistic that our issues will be solved and the project will ultimately become a success. Scientists inherently are puzzle solvers, and this project is like a jigsaw awaiting the solution.

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Acknowledgements

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Thanks to the Laird lab for allowing me this opportunity to work independently and thanks to Winslow Johnson, Diane Genereux, and Charles Laird for all their support and helpful comments.

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Trumping the Race Card

Jessica Guidry

Abstract

This project is the culmination of two years of research, synthesis, and analysis of ideas surrounding the use of visual art's language (syntax) to "speak" about qualitative and quantitative issues and data. In this essay I deconstruct the deep history of the concepts and methods that are used to measure and rank human worth. This history is specifically salient in the visual arts as the methodologies used to depict perspective and scale are rarely questioned as products of an imperialistic Euro-centric history. Therefore a latent irony is present when visual arts are used to depict people of color and other subaltern groups. Furthermore, methods of measure that have been employed over the course of history, are again used and replicated in our modern society in the form of testing and negative visual representation. I have attempted to expose how the reinscription of a patriarchal heteronormative white dominated society is perpetuated through the use of "color blind" measurement; that de-jure promises of American equality and upward social mobility are in fact biased, and fossilized, creating a hard and fast crust to the upper strata; and that the rungs for upward mobility meant to elevate disadvantaged people were made from the same tree that some ancestors were hung from.

This essay will differ from others in this journal because not all of the references used can be expressed in words. Only the visual images suffice to explain the theoretical ideas, so please take time to not only read the written language here but also hear the words spoken by the images.

Data, Mapping, and Voice

“When you are powerless, you don’t just speak differently. A lot, you don’t speak. Your speech is not just differently articulate, it is silence. Eliminated, gone. You aren’t just deprived of a language with which to articulate your distinctiveness, although you are; you are deprived of a life out of which articulation might come.

-C. MacKinnon¹

¹ C. MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourse on Life and Law* 39 (1987) cited in *Translating Yonnonidio by Precedent and Evidence: The*

While at the University of Washington I have had the opportunity and the privilege of learning the discipline of painting and drawing along with African American History and Critical Theory. Much of my academic research has centered on the distinct disadvantage that people of color and other marginalized groups have in our society. While my thoughts were liberated by these newly acquired knowledges, I also became concerned by the means through which this knowledge was procured.

I was aware of my lived experiences and those of the majority of people without access to higher learning. I thought that the ideas and histories I was learning could be very useful to the wider public. For sight-abled people, visual images are a powerful tool of translation; many of us are unable to fully understand something until we are shown an image of it. In the late 1980s it was documented that television provided 3,600 images per minute per channel.² This statistic highlights the capacity most cognitively and sight-abled people have to understand complex ideas, relationships, concepts, and emotions through an image or series of images. Television and media advertisements capitalize on the fact that people, notwithstanding their age, sex, race, gender, class etc. can be given a large amount of information in a short amount of time. This provides a strong reason why the role of visual arts and artists, and other producers of visual images within our society should be re-evaluated and scrutinized.

In my work I problematize two distinct yardsticks: one, which is a tool of visual measure and the other, a tool of social measure. For the purpose of this article I will examine where these yard sticks took shape and where they intersect. The yardstick of visual measure will be discussed in terms of data and Western visual arts canons. The yardstick of social measure is expressed by ranking, tracking, and social mobility. These tools measure human worth, and while there are differences between the two, the units of measure are inherently biased because of their patriarchal, white-dominant, hetero-normative roots.

Social inequity and communication in relationship to data became especially pressing when I attended a lecture given by Associate

Mashpee Indian Case. by Gerald and Kathryn Milun. Chap 6 in *Critical Race Theory; the Cutting Edge* second edition, ed. Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic. Pennsylvania, Temple University Press.2000 p 53

² Castells, Manuel. 1996. *The rise of the network society.* Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers.

Trumping the Race Card

Professor Dr. Angela Ginorio. Dr. Ginorio used visual expressions of data to discuss gender and racial disparities in higher education. I was so inspired by her lecture I tracked her down and I have since had the great honor of having her as my mentor and advisor for almost two years. It was not until I had this one-on-one guidance that I could develop the language to formulate my thesis. It was Dr. Ginorio's rare sensitivity to my inexperience with higher learning that created a nurturing environment to gain the theoretical and verbal tools needed to articulate my ideas. And as C. McKinnon stated: this articulation gave not only a voice to my ideas, but also injected voice into my own body, hand, tongue, mouth.

I thought of common ways that information and data is and has been expressed in popular and dominant culture. (*Fig 1-2*)

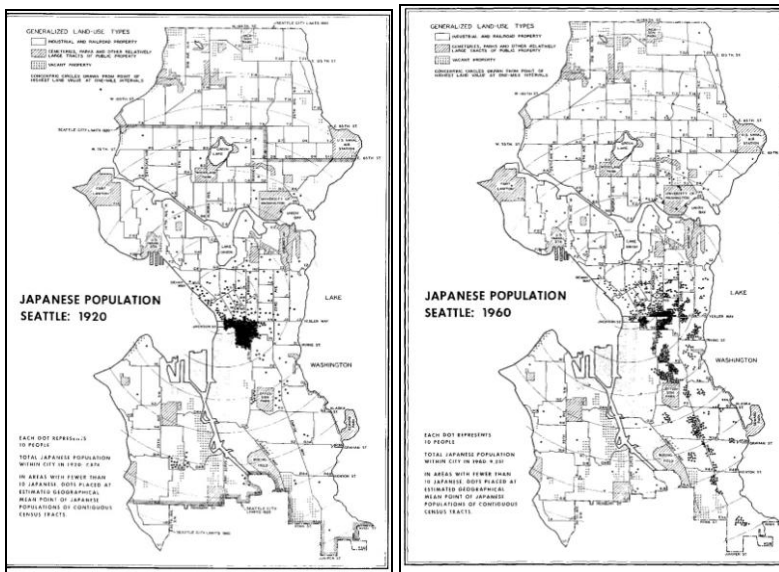


Figure 1 Seattle Segregation Maps

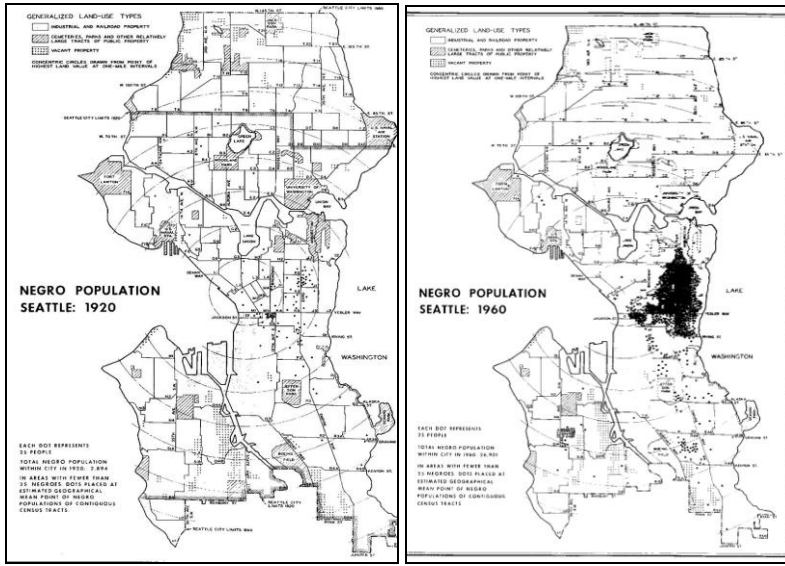


Figure 2 Seattle Segregation Maps³

I examined how we use the visual language of measurement to rank peoples' lifestyles, advantages, disadvantages, and human worth. (fig 5)

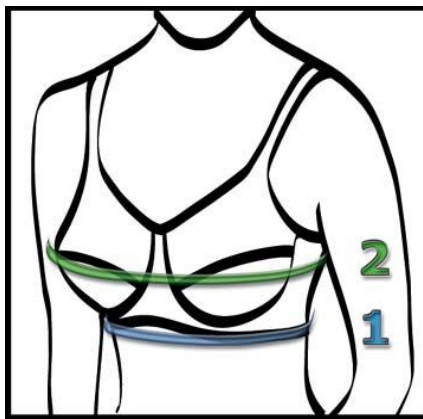


Figure 5⁴ There are also methods by which non-dominant culture expresses data and information. (fig 6)

³ Figures 1-2 from Segregation maps from Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, University of Washington (James N. Gregory, director) <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/about.htm>

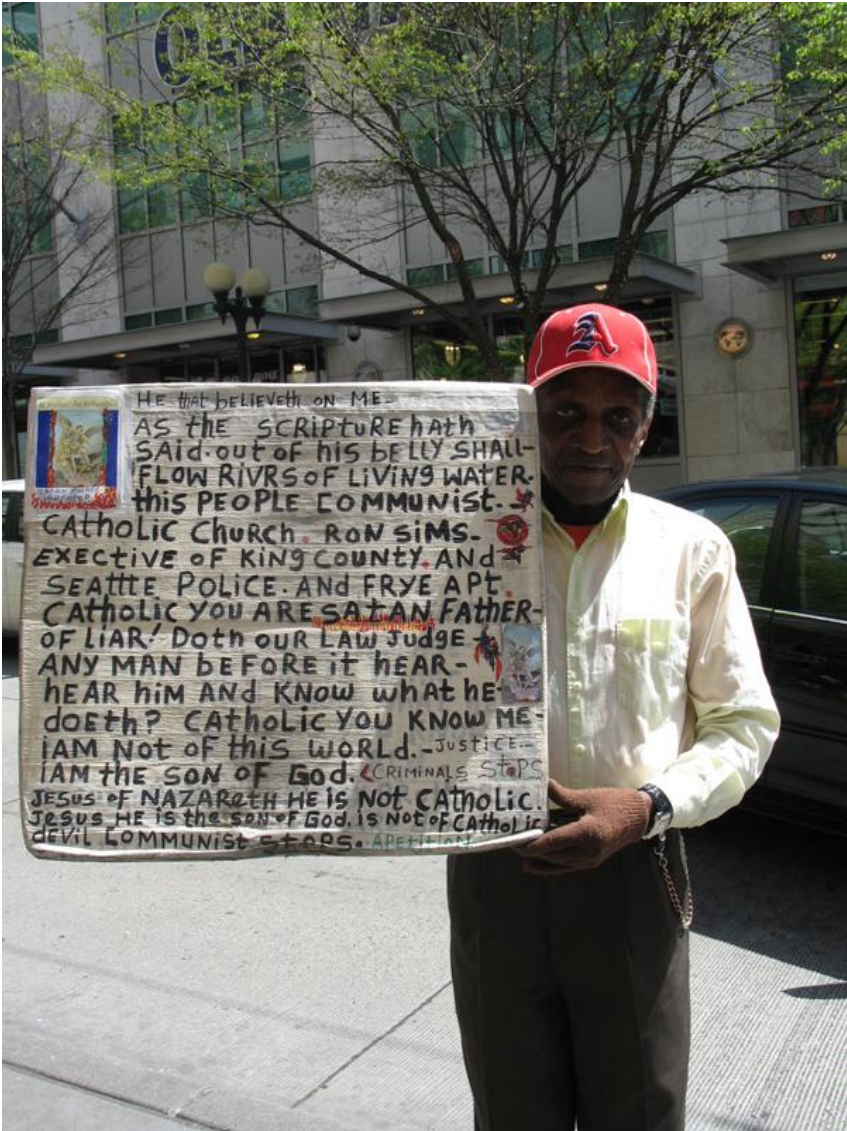


Figure 6 (Frye Apt Guy, downtown Seattle, WA photo taken by the author)

⁴ Breast Form FAQ website, “how to measure for a bra” : www.eskimo.com/~bloo/bformfaq/measure.html accessed on 6/02/09

When examining visual expressions of human measure and ranking we can SEE complex ideas and phenomena. If a critical and thoughtful lens is used to view everyday visual objects, one may be able to extract meaning beyond the intent for the image. Looking at these census maps we can see what racism looks like (*figure 7*), measure things like white flight, (*figure 8*) and answer theoretical questions such as “what is the pattern made by genocide”?⁵ (*figure 9- 10*)

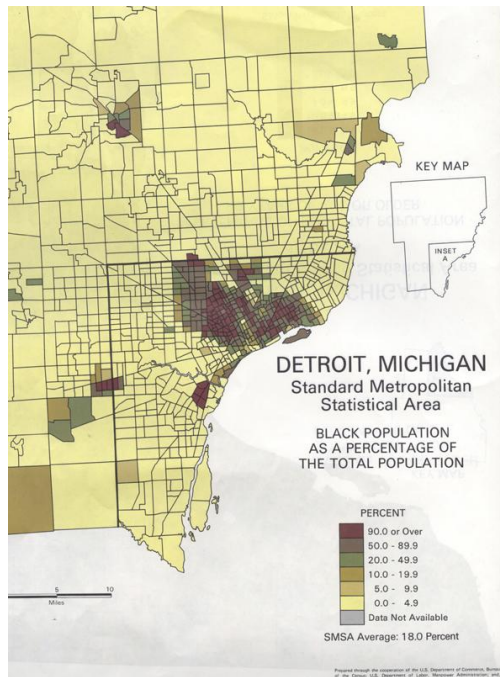


Figure 7⁵

⁵ US Census Bureau Map, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area: Black Population as a percentage of the total 1975

Trumping the Race Card

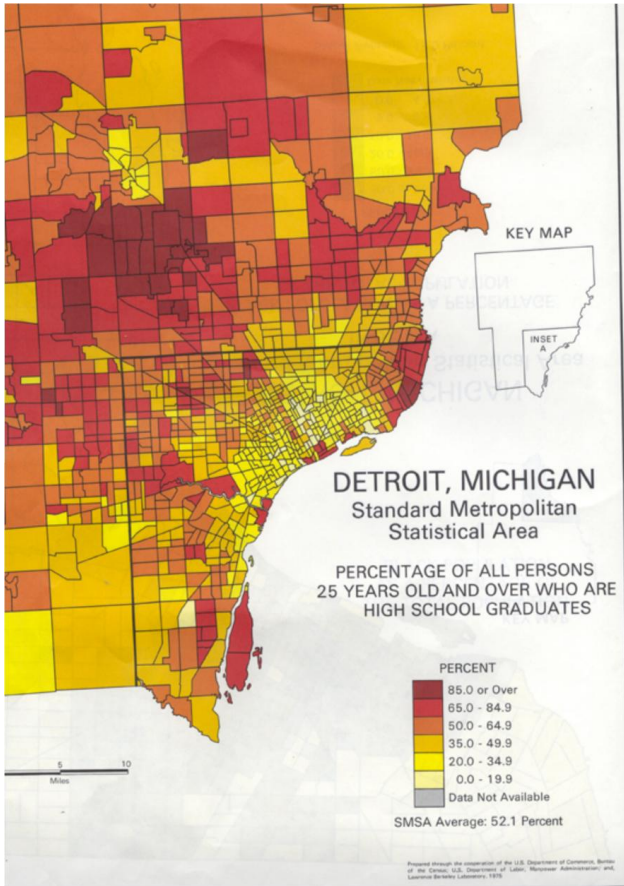


Figure 9, White flight⁶

⁶ US Census Bureau Map, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area: Percentage of all Persons 21 years old and over who are High School Graduates 1975

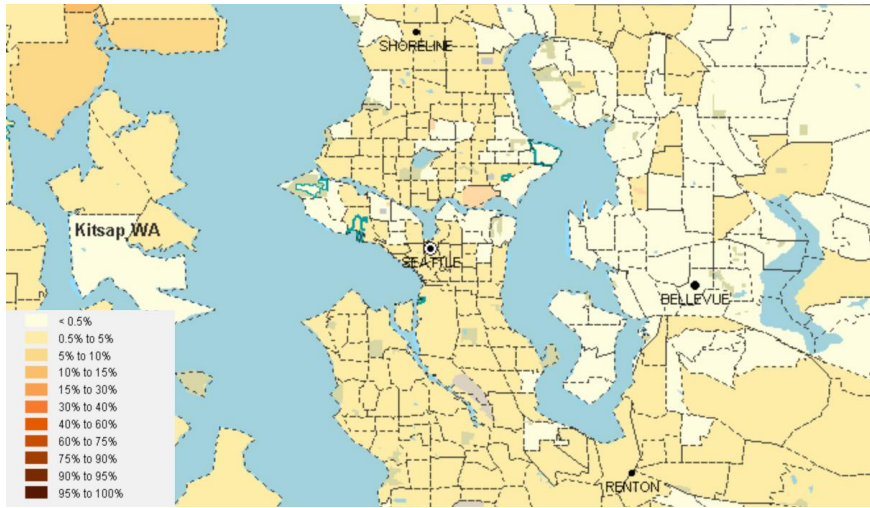


Figure 10, Percentage of Native American Population, Genocide⁷

Mis-measure, and Visual Representation of a Multi-Dimensional Person upon a Two-dimensional Surface

The Italian Renaissance artists were obsessed with representing a three-dimensional world upon a two dimensional space. These minds devised various methods of organizing, interpreting, and reiterating the perception of space.⁸ (figure 11) There was a fascination with the human body and its functions; the people of this movement in a sense fell in love with their SELF- hood.⁹ (figure 12) The Renaissance dovetails into the age of Enlightenment, exploration, and the American Revolution.¹⁰ (figure 13)

⁷ figure10:map unknown source

⁸ figure 11: Albrecht Durer, wood block print of perspective device

⁹ figure 12: Leonardo DaVinci, *Vitruvian Man*, c.1487. Pen and Ink with wash over metal point on paper

¹⁰ figure 13:Unknown Artist, source:
<http://www.1776web.com/trivia.html>

Trumping the Race Card



Figure 11

Underlying this era of wealth, luxury, and freedom for some is the enslavement and wounds of Others. (figures 13,14) ^{11 12}



Figure 13

¹¹ image taken from website: www.mrhinton.org/Slavery.htm, accessed June 2, 2009

¹² Slave revolt, image taken from website: www.aaregistry.com/detail.php?id=2029 accessed June 2, 2009

Racists of the 19th century developed pseudoscience such as monogenism, polygenism, phrenology, and crainometry. Josiah Nott and George Gliddon measured skull size and brain weight, and their data was manipulated and fabricated in order to justify of the enslavement and genocide of Africans and Native Americans.¹³ (figure 17)

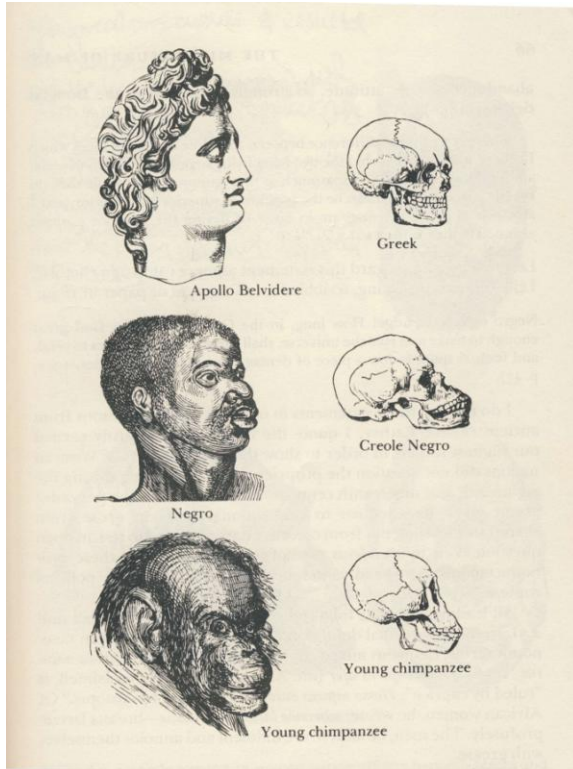


Figure 17

In addition, Gliddon and Nott used their pseudoscience to organize human rankings and marked an assurance of the maintenance of white privilege and supremacy. This biased method of human ranking gave birth to the IQ test and has its implications in many modern day forms of testing, ranking, and tracking.¹⁴ (figure 18)

¹³ Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York, London: WW Norton & Company) 65 (image 2-1)

¹⁴ figure 18 authors Unofficial University Transcript

Trumping the Race Card

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON UNOFFICIAL ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT

Page 1 of 2

Prepared on 4/21/2009

Jessica Miki Guidry

06/26/76

Arts & Sciences ART (PAINTING & DRAWING)
COMP HIST OF IDEAS

SENIOR

CURRENTLY ENROLLED (SPRING QUARTER, 2009)

* ANY ALTERATION OR MODIFICATION OF THIS RECORD *
* OR ANY COPY THEREOF MAY CONSTITUTE A FELONY *
* AND/OR LEAD TO STUDENT DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS. *

ETHNICITY/RACE: ASIAN
SPECIAL PROGRAM: EOP 1

DETAIL OF TRANSFER CREDIT:
SEATTLE CENTRAL CC, WA (2 YEAR SCHOOL)
ATTENDED 1995-1999

ANTH 202 PRIN SOCIOCL ANTH	5.0	3.4
ART 1XX	4.0	4.0
ART 1XX	4.0	4.0
ART 1XX	3.0	4.0
ART 2XX	4.0	4.0
ART H 1XX	5.0	4.0
ART H 201 SURV WEST ART-ANC	5.0	2.4
ART H 202 WEST ART MED & REN	5.0	3.0
ASTR 101 ASTRONOMY	5.0	3.1
BIOG 100 INTRODUCTRY BIOLOGY	5.0	2.1
ENGL 131 C-COMPOSITN: EXPOSITN	5.0	2.8
ENGL 182 C-RESEARCH PAPER	5.0	3.4
HSTAA 2XX	5.0	3.4
JAPAN 111 1ST-YR JAPANESE		1.9/R
OCEAN 101 SURVEY OCEANOGRAPHY	5.0	2.0
PHIL 120 INTRO TO LOGIC	5.0	2.0
PHIL 120 INTRO TO LOGIC	5.0	2.0
POL S 202 INTRO TO AMER POL	5.0	2.6

WINTER 2006		ART	3
ART 190	INTRO TO DRAWING	5.0	3.3
ART H 204	SURVEY OF ASIAN ART	5.0	3.2
ESS 100	DINOSAURS	2.0	2.8
QTR ATTEMPTED: 12.0		EARNED:	12.0 GPA: 3.18
QTR GRADED AT: 12.0		GRADE POINTS:	38.1
CUM ATTEMPTED: 12.0		UM EARNED:	12.0 TTL EARNED: 12.0
CUM GRADED AT: 12.0		GRADE PTS:	38.1 CUM GPA: 3.18

SPRING 2006		ART	3
ART 290	BEG DRAWING FIGURE	5.0	3.8
ART 292	BEGINNING PAINTING	5.0	3.6
ART 496	U/GRAD INTERNSHIP	2.0	CR
QTR ATTEMPTED: 12.0		EARNED:	12.0 GPA: 3.70
QTR GRADED AT: 10.0		GRADE POINTS:	37.0
CUM ATTEMPTED: 24.0		UM EARNED:	24.0 TTL EARNED: 24.0
CUM GRADED AT: 22.0		GRADE PTS:	75.1 CUM GPA: 3.41

AUTUMN 2006		ART	3
ART 292	BEGINNING PAINTING	5.0	3.7
ART 390	INTERMED DRAWING	5.0	3.6
ART H 381	ART SINCE WW II	5.0	3.7
QTR ATTEMPTED: 15.0		EARNED:	15.0 GPA: 3.67
QTR GRADED AT: 15.0		GRADE POINTS:	55.0
CUM ATTEMPTED: 39.0		UM EARNED:	39.0 TTL EARNED: 39.0
CUM GRADED AT: 37.0		GRADE PTS:	130.1 CUM GPA: 3.52

SCHOLARSHIP STATUS: DEAN'S LIST

WINTER 2007		ART	3
ART 390	INTERMED DRAWING	5.0	3.7

Figure 18

Human measures take many forms. While the units may differ, the images provide impactful injuries to the conscious and soul, which are passed on generationally¹⁵ (figure 19)

¹⁵ Image taken from Life Magazine Article "How to tell Japs from the Chinese" Dec. 22nd, 1941 Vol 11 pp 81-82



Figure 19

This essay will not elaborate on the resistances and movements that were formed by “mis-measured” group. However the artwork presented in the end is intended for the purpose of elevation by means of a de-colonization of the methodology of measure. It is significant though

Trumping the Race Card

to mention that there have been and continue to be resistances to human ranking. These movements are essentially acting to rupture borders, and rhetorically shattering the rectangle of “The Race Card”.

There have been attempts made by mainstream, dominant culture to rectify the pain that human measure has caused. These attempts have taken various forms. Some efforts have worked to affect change and bring about justice. Yet other trends prove to flatten power relationships in the name of equity. Notably Multi-Culturalism and Color-Blindness have been used to falsify realities.

De-Constructing Color-Blind Multi-Culturalism

The current politically correct approach to quell tensions between dominant and non-dominant identities is that of color-blind Multi-Culturalism. Color-blindness is a form of what legal Professor Neil Gotanda calls “non-recognition” with three nested elements:

“First, there must be something which is recognizable as a racial characteristic. Second, the characteristic must be recognized. Third, the characteristic must not be considered in a decision. For non-recognition to make sense, it must be possible to recognize something while not including it in making a decision”.¹⁶

This logic-defying non-recognition of history and de-jure power relationships, coupled with the individualistic rhetoric strategy of the utterance “common good”, makes any movement against multiculturalism appear disruptive and even unpatriotic. Some research I conducted proved that the concept of Multi-Culturalism is the grandchild of American Democratic Pluralism. In addition, Pluralism enjoys a historical connection with Pragmatism. This is because the formation of the American Government grew alongside the ideas of Darwin and William James-- a period of time that saw the “Americanization of both philosophy and Political Science.”¹⁷ Pragmatist William James based his

¹⁶ Neil Gotanda, “A Critique of “Our Constitution is Color-Blind” chapter 4, *Critical Race Theory; the Cutting Edge* second edition, ed. Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic. Pennsylvania, Temple University Press.2000 p 35

¹⁷ John G. Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity: Political Science and the Discourse of Democracy* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004) 103.

ideas of pluralism on embracing two opposites, religion and science, which later branched out into political pluralism.¹⁸

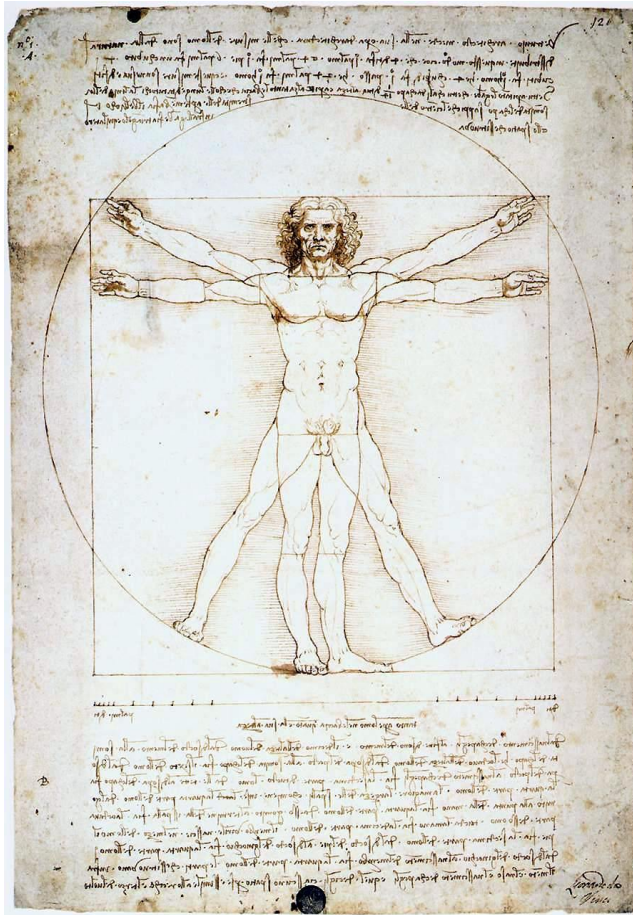


Figure 12 "Measure of Human Body"

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 103

Trumping the Race Card



Figure 13, Revolution



Figure 14. Revolt

Already within this short examination we have found this form of pluralism to be flawed when using multiculturalism to bridge the gap between “races” and cultures. Flawed, because this form of a “federated republic” is based on pluralist politics assumes that the two opposites are of equal value. It is elementary to point out that the value of whiteness in comparison to what it means to be “non” white is not reciprocally opposite. They are contingent in value, one is set as a standard and the Other must attempt to assimilate.

Thus, the power inequity when “embracing the opposites” of white and non-white, does not adhere to the laws of science (political or apolitical). The divisions between each class are not cellular divisions within a singular organism, they do not work in symbiosis. Rather it is a parasitical relationship, one historically draw power from the oppression of an-Other. The people of the new U. S. republic came together in solidarity finding FREEDOM from the British Crown-- free to practice the religion of their choice and take part in the democratic process, while simultaneously enacting genocide against Native American Indians and enslaving Africans. After this period in history came time for more *de-jure* equality, with the emancipation of Black Americans and a separate but equal America. Separate but equal has acted as lid atop a civic humanism-democratic -liberalistic framework, and from it comes the notions of individualism and self-determinism. Individualism, and “bootstrapping” is ever acting as the yardstick, by which groups wishing to be incorporated into the American Dream would measure their levels of successful assimilation. The increments of measure, of course, are capital and currency (monetary and social). In both Pluralism and Multiculturalism, *sameness* is encouraged as culture is plasticized and commoditized into souvenirs. This approach permits racism because success depends on the assimilation. Professor and author Dr. Philomena Essed, critiques multiculturalism, saying that, “Multiculturalism is the application of the norm of tolerance... Therefore, cultural tolerance is inherently a form of cultural control”.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid. 69. Philomena Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism*. (London: Sage, 1991)

Bingo, the Race-Card, Flipping the Script



Figure 20, 2008 digital print on translucent paper

Everything discussed thus far has been steeped in a discourse that is not easily understood by our community outside of the moat surrounding academia. I personally am just starting to have the understanding needed to tease out these ideas. The real “ah ha” moments have come when I can use the structure of a theoretical discourse to link my ineffable situational and empirical knowledge to a voice of elevation. I thought to myself “what is a type of universal language that can be used to circumvent the academy, and thereby force these theories to speak in a colloquial language?”. The answer to this became quite apparent- I would use visual images as a translation. I have done this translation by way of a “Robin Hood” form of procurement and delivery. My hope is that these visual images may be able to provide that link for members of my community to have voice, and be empowered by their knowing.

I wondered how I could use a visual arts interpretation in order to measure the distance between privilege and disadvantage. I had an idea of the theoretical and empirical expanse, but could I use visual art to actually track the spatial journey between the two?

I thought a colloquial language could be used to engage my audience. From there came the idea of games, thinking of the discourse of drawing. I wanted a game that produced marks and settled on the working class gambling game of BINGO. I was fortunate to find an intellectual partner in McNair Scholar, Shantel Martinez, as she helped me think through some of the historical and theoretical issues of this project.

I did some research, (*figure 21*)²⁰ and we formed a survey, assigning each square in the bingo grid a question. You will notice that all the cards have the same numbers. This is meant to critique color-blind multiculturalism that assumes that despite your race, gender, sexuality, and ability that the playing field is level and that the rules are fair. (*figure 20*)



Figure 20, digital photo taken by author 2008

Most recently I went from a paper version of the BINGO game to an online survey and revised some of the questions. (*fig 22*)²¹ For example I give a nod to Peggy Macintosh in G55: which states True or false, When I go to the grocery store, I can easily find a band-aid, and or make-up, matching my skin color, and products considerate of my hair texture .

With the guidance of installation artist and UW Lecturer Timea Tihanyi I have gone deeper into the visual arts aspect of this project. She gave me the permission to use artistic license. I had been so preoccupied with the obstacles of making people understand my interpretation of the

²⁰ Photo taken by author at a bingo hall (Seattle, WA) 2008

²¹ *fig 22, Screen Capture of Online survey*

<http://students.washington.edu/guidrj/home.shtml>

Trumping the Race Card

data that I forgot the sacrificial nature of art, meaning the audience's interpretations will always differ from the artist because it is seen from the personal perspective of the viewer. She helped me to realize that I was not limited by the framework of quantitative or qualitative approaches, in fact I could use the data collected in the survey as a reference, like a still life for a painting.

Now I could tangibly travel the distances inside the disparities of inequality with my hands and build a body of work that is more about process than objects. Like a scientist in a lab I have tested and experimented with various mediums and methods of discussing the difference in responses to the questions on the survey.

In *figure 23* I use drawing, and as I go between the participants responses, ²² I am forced to vary my mark making techniques. The further away the true and false responses are the quicker I must pull the charcoal over the surface of the paper. The closer the responses are to a racialized center the darker the line gets and more friction is required to make the mark.

In addition to traditional drawing methods and materials, I also experimented with the process of other materials. Most of the materials I used proved to be more "common" than high-art. *Figure 24* pins and sewing thread. *Figure 25*, documenting a drawing using video, on the outside of a door.

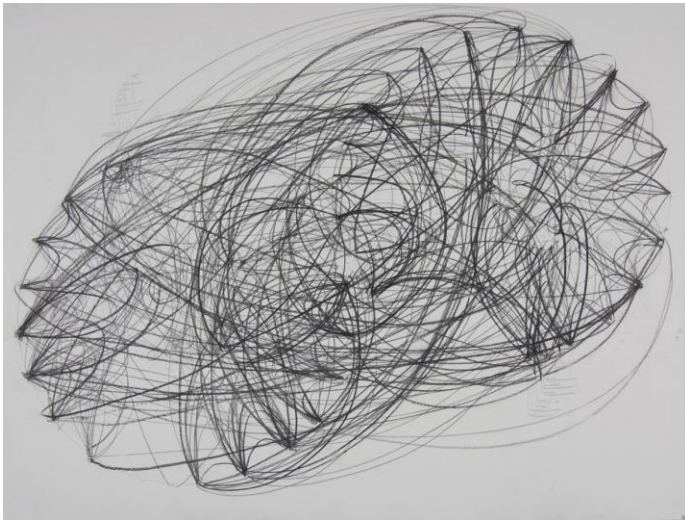


Figure 23. Charcoal and Graphite on Paper, Mapping by Individual Response, 2009

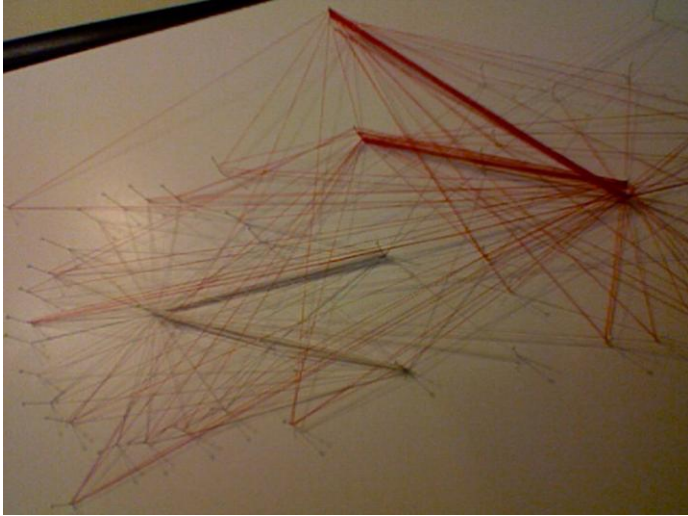


Figure 24. Pins and Sewing Thread on Scrap Mount Board.



Figure 25. Oil stick, Black Bandana, Video 2009

Trumping the Race Card

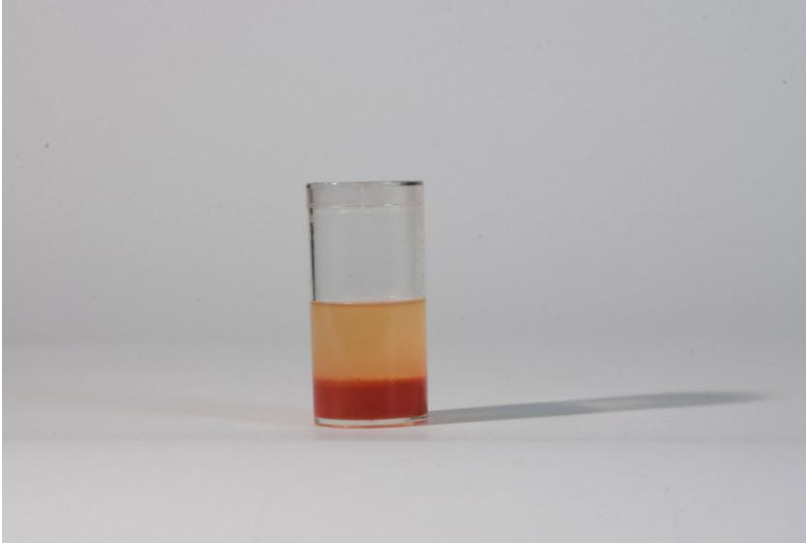


Figure 26, plastic poker chip container, Wesson Vegetable Oil, Water, Food Coloring, 2009

Figure 26. I use Oil and water. I used a corresponding number of cubic centimeters per frequency of response; red water for people who identified as a Person of Color/ non-white, and Wesson Vegetable oil for those who did not identify as a Person of Color/ non-white. What was most interesting here is that the even though the oil was put in last, of course it rose to the top. And even after the container is shaken or been transported, after time the separation will return. I have also been told this looks like urine and blood, both liquids are loaded with potential meaning.



Figure 27, Sumi ink, vegetable oil, water, red food coloring, and feet on paper, 2009

Figure 27-30 Here I walk the responses of participants who describe themselves as people of color.

Trumping the Race Card



Figure 28 , Sumi ink, vegetable oil, water, red food coloring, and feet on paper, 2009



Figure 29 Sumi ink, vegetable oil, water, red food coloring, and feet on paper, 2009



Figure 30 Sumi ink, vegetable oil, water, red food coloring, and feet on paper, 2009

I thought of the historic, long, and arduous journey.....*Upwards...* (fig 31)



Figure 31. Sumi ink, vegetable oil, water, red food coloring, and feet on paper, 2009

Underlying each process in the making of this body of work has been a feeling of humility and anxiety that comes in doing the smallest of deeds in the faith that it will affect an

enormous malady. While I have stood quietly in my studio, gathered my materials, and made preparations to make work, there is always the moment before the execution where I contemplate the seeming futility of the contextual matter that I work with. Before studying under Timea Tihanyi (MFA), these moments had the potential to stifle and halt the process. I was so concerned with making people GET what I was “saying” about human measure that I was not allowing the viewer any license for personal interpretation and experience.

In a song often it is not the words we hear first, it is the cadence, the beat, the pitch. In some Art, it is the *meaning* that is actually abstracted in the presence of physical relationships; color to color, tone to rhythm, line to value. In my work these relationships to the material and to the process inevitably ended up trumping the meaning behind it. What a strange irony this is, since my anxiety was around this idea of subverting the race card, and questioning notions of human measure. I realized that the possibility of losing meaning could in-fact create a path for the viewer to find meaning. While I stand in the studio, prepared to make, it is as if I must force myself to dive off this well-known cliff of meaning in an attempt to free myself of my own bias, and allow the intention behind the work to be guided by the materials themselves. Until I take this dive, I am prey to get tangled in the confines of measure that I wish to unfurl.

Perhaps there is another way we should measure man?

Martin Luther King Jr. described the three dimensions with w/ to measure a person's life..... the length of man , the push forward to achieve personal ambitions, The breadth of man> as the outward concern for others And the Height of Man as the measure of ones “upwards reach towards god”.²³

Data Analysis

Please find some analysis of the data procured in the online BINGO survey in the appendix.

²³ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. *The Measure of Man*, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press) 1988. 36-37

Trumping the Race Card

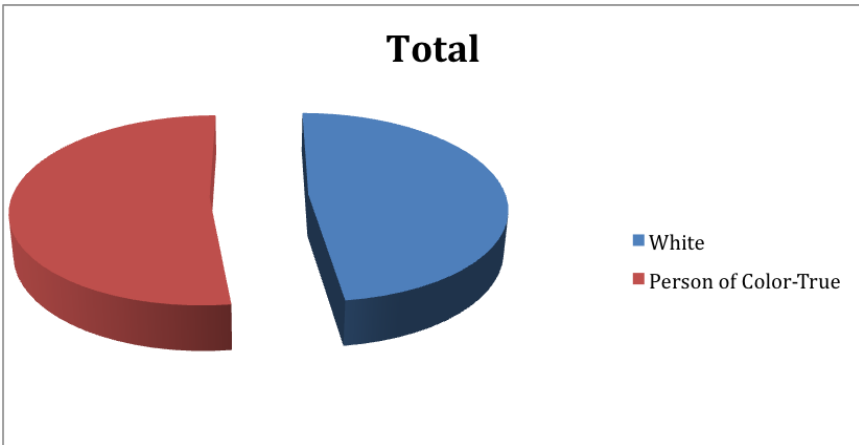


Figure 32. Response to Question B5: “I consider myself a person of color/non-white person”

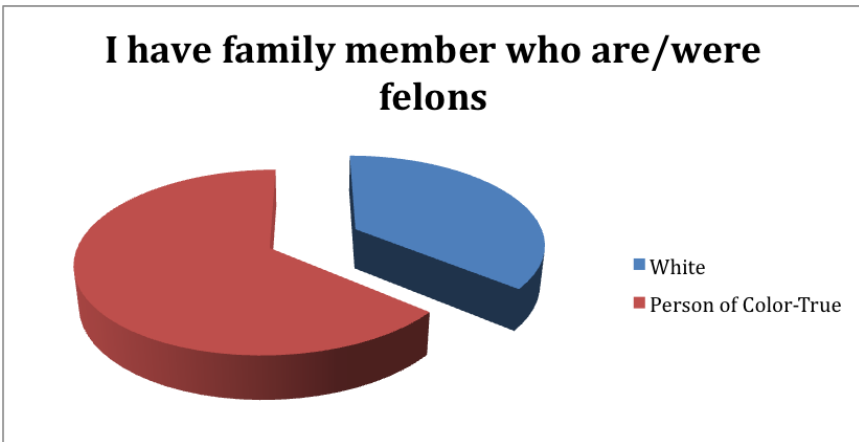


Figure 33. Response to Question I30: “I have not had any family members disenfranchised by the criminal justice system (incarcerated/on probation), including myself”

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Appendix A

BINGO QUESTIONS

B5: I consider myself as a person of color/ non-white person

B12: I think that people can truly be color-blind and that racism doesn't really exist anymore

B14: I have not been sexually exotified because of my “race” or ethnicity. (example: someone saying “you know I love Asian Women”)

B8: People do not seem to be suspicious or surprised of my successes, or intentions, they pretty much trust me.

B9: I have never been racially profiled by the police, and or ignored/ judged by police because of my race/ethnicity

I20: I have personally experienced racism at the U.W (covert or overt), and or felt uncomfortable or intimidated in class because I am a racial/ethnic minority.

I30: I have not had any family members disenfranchised by the criminal justice system (incarcerated/ on probation) (including myself)

Trumping the Race Card

I17: I do not have any family members who identify as Queer (Gay, Lesbian, Transgendered, Bi-sexual, Intersexed) or have alternate gender identities. (including myself)

I24: My primary care parent(s) guardian(s) have been able to help me with homework and college entrance exams and choices and are United States Citizens

I25: I do not have a family member who is younger than 19 and is a parent. AND/OR I (or someone in my family receives)/ has never received welfare assistance.

N36: Even with a college degree I will only make a portion of what a white male will earn. (According to income disparity statistics)

According to the 2006 US Census Bureau

>White Men with a Bachelor's Degree earned a yearly median personal income of \$55,129

>White Women with a Bachelor's Degree earned a yearly median personal income of \$36,0176

>Black Men with a Bachelor's Degree earned a yearly median personal income of \$41,889

>Black Women with a Bachelor's Degree earned a yearly median personal income of \$41,263

>Asian Men with a Bachelor's Degree earned a yearly median personal income of \$51,448

>Asian Women with a Bachelor's Degree earned a yearly median personal income of \$37,057

>"Hispanic"/Latino Men with a Bachelor's Degree earned a yearly median personal income of \$43,791

>"Hispanic"/Latina Women with a Bachelor's Degree earned a yearly median personal income of \$34,302

Demographics on Native American and Other Ethnicities were not listed for this grouping of statistics

Question 12.

N33: I do not experience discrimination because of my gender identity/ sex/ sexuality or disability

FREESPACE: I am a straight white (sexed) male. (*participants type in response*)

N42: The authors of assigned readings for my classes predominantly represent my race, gender identity and "ability" (example: white "able" bodied straight)

N43: the media represents People of my race, and sexuality favorably. There is an overrepresentation of my race and sexuality on TV, and who are fashion models.

G53: When people hear me speak they are surprised about how "well spoken" I am, or compliment me on my ability to speak English. I (or someone in my immediate family) has had to take an ESL class, or been discriminated against or harassed because of my, (his or her) accent/language. (Including Ebonics)

G50: Social services are available and accessible in my native language.

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

G54: No one has ever called me a fag/dyke/queer etc. (because of my sexuality/gender identity) I do not have to correct un-proper pronoun use (he/she) in social situations.

G56: No one has ever called me a jap/chink/slant/ towel head/ terrorist/ n-word/darky/ghetto/ FOB/A-rab/ wet-back.

G55: When I go to the grocery store, I can easily find a band-aid, and or make-up, matching my skin color, and products considerate of my hair texture.

O73: I am a first generation college student, and receiving financial aid, and have a job (or a child/ren) in order to support myself through college.

O69: I have health insurance. (Not DSHS or Medicare), & I do not have a (dis) ability.

O70: In my socio-economic class, race, and sexuality there is not a high occurrence of HIV/AIDS.

O67: In my family we never had to worry about financing our eating or clothing or traveling habits.

O66: I AM the change I want to see in the world

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Trumping the Race Card

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I plan to continue this line of research into graduate school. I have been accepted into the University of Michigan Masters of Fine Arts program on a full scholarship. I hope that my education will enable to place myself in a position to create art centered charter schools, or curriculum for disadvantaged and incarcerated teenage youth. Therefore after my Masters of Fine Arts degree, I intend to peruse a PhD, and serve on an advisory board of some sort in relation to Art, Education policy, and youth.

The Quest For Meaningful Pedagogies: Cambodian Americans in Higher Education

Jimmy Lal

Abstract

It is critical to examine the contexts and circumstances of each Asian American group at length to better understand their communities today. Cambodian American students face social and academic challenges because of their underserved needs, lack of relevant curriculum, and misrepresentations of their community in U.S. institutions of higher education. This study explores the educational experiences of Cambodian American students at the University Of Washington (UW) through interviews with Cambodian American students and UW faculty. This research project examines two main things: 1) How Cambodian-American students make meaningful connections between their lives and education, and 2) How the perceptions, reflections and recommendations of faculty in higher education can create and improve pedagogies that are culturally responsive to the needs of these students. A significant outcome of this research is a proposed syllabus for a course on Cambodian American History and Culture that will be shared with all research participants. This project will both facilitate meaningful connections between Cambodian Americans and higher education and contribute to the growing literature on culturally relevant education.

Introduction

Asian American immigrants come from different historical contexts, time periods and regions of Asia.¹ Unless one has explored Asian American history and culture, or has directly experienced these historical events, it is unlikely that one is aware of the circumstances and contexts that led to their immigration and settlement into America. For example, Southeast Asian Americans are often lumped into the larger racial category, Asian Americans; a category that in itself can present

¹ See Nakanishi, D. T., & Nishida, T. Y., “Growth and Diversity: The Education of Asian/Pacific Americans Introduction”, *The Asian American educational experience: A source book for teachers and students*. (New York: Routledge, 1995). Pp. xi-xx

many misleading perceptions and overrepresentations of success for other specific Asian American groups.²

When one looks at this from an educational standpoint, a detrimental effect of this aggregation is the invisibility of Southeast Asian American communities who have unmet educational needs and resources. For example, in many books regarding multicultural education, Cambodian Americans are scarcely mentioned.³ Many Cambodian Americans come from a history of colonization, war, and resettlement. They are faced with underserved educational needs, lack of culturally inclusive curriculum, and misrepresentations of their communities in higher education. To better understand their social and academic difficulties, one must consider the social, cultural, and historic factors that have shaped their experiences immigrating to and settling in America.

Few studies have attempted to give explanations for the difficulties that Cambodian American students face in higher education. All too often Cambodian Americans are overlooked in statistics and demographics—especially within the broader Asian American category. As a result, many of their voices are unheard and their needs are left unmet—which are destructive implications to their communities.⁴

There are many stark differences between Asian American communities. The July 2007 edition of the U.S. Government of Accountability Office's (GAO) Report on "Higher Education: Information Sharing Could Help Institutions Identify and Address Challenges Some Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Students Face," reports the estimated percentage of Chinese and Japanese Americans who have college degrees, respectively, are by 53% and 43%, and their respective average income levels approximating at \$56,000 and

² See Ngo, B., & Lee, S. J. Complicating the Image of Model Minority Success: A Review of Southeast Asian American Education. *Review of Educational Research*. 77 (4), 415. (2007).

³ Banks, J. A. *Multicultural education, transformative knowledge, and action: Historical and contemporary perspectives*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1996).

⁴ Um, K. *A dream denied: Educational experiences of Southeast Asian American youth: issues and recommendations*. Washington, DC: Southeast Asia Resource Action Center. (2003).

\$59,000.⁵ On the other hand, the estimated percentage of Cambodian Americans with a college degree is 13%, with an average income level approximated at \$32,000. According to this study, there is a correlation between average income levels and college degree attainment. Though this correlation is not a topic of specific analysis within the study, these reveal how lumping specific Asian American communities as a whole (e.g. lumping Chinese and Japanese Americans with Cambodian American communities) can obscure radically different levels of educational and income attainments.

If educational resources are allocated to specific communities in need, then accountability, analysis, and close scrutiny is required to recognize the differences in degree attainment and its correlation to income distribution. In this paper I argue for a framework that integrates invisibility, culturally responsive pedagogy, and immigration and settlement context. I offer an analysis of data from five interviews, three with Cambodian American students, and two with university faculty. This paper creates a more holistic picture of the obstacles that Cambodian Americans face in higher education, and offers possibilities for overcoming them.

Theoretical framework

Immigration and settlement context

From the late 1970s through the early 1980s, Cambodia went through a period of unrest that resulted in a civil war fused with turmoil and remnants of the Vietnam War. Many Cambodians fled Cambodia to escape the tyranny of Pol Pot's regime (the Khmer Rouge), and the genocide that happened afterwards. In this period of violence and chaos, education for the general population of Cambodians was out of reach because the Khmer Rouge made sure that "...intellectuals were dishonored as devotees of foreign rule and bourgeois civilization"⁶, and since most Cambodians were forced into labor camps to do manual labor, few ever had the chance to be educated until they left the country. In due course, a huge number of Cambodians immigrated to America as

⁵ See Figure 4: Estimated Percentage with at Least a 4-year College Degree and Their Average Income by Asian American and Pacific Islander Subgroup in 2005 in the U.S. GAO-07-925 Report

⁶ Weinberg, M. *Asian-American education: Historical background and current realities*. Sociocultural, political, and historical studies in education. (Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1997). Pp. 160

refugees; most of these refugees were peasants and farmers with low levels of formal education.

Understanding their reasons for immigrating to and settling in America provides a context of the circumstances of Cambodian Americans and is an indicator of immigrant's children's performance in school. Furthermore, it is important to understand their circumstances because it affects the present Cambodian American communities today.

Considering the majority of Cambodian Americans have only been living in the U.S. for approximately the past twenty years⁷ it is important to understand the circumstances and diverse backgrounds that Cambodian American refugees bring with them to America. Establishing this history allows us to investigate how their circumstances—including their limited educational background and low socioeconomic status—can create challenges for attaining success in American education.

Invisibility

The dangerous implications of lumping Southeast Asian Americans under the larger bracket of Asian Americans may create erroneous beliefs like the model minority myth, where "...Asian-Americans were [seen as the] most successful American minority... as leaders in education, community cohesion, family relations, occupational attainment, family income..."⁸ Though the concept of the model minority is certainly a myth and is an inaccurate depiction, the repercussions are real and its effects are destructive on communities like Cambodian Americans.

In Roberta Wallitt's "Cambodian Invisibility: Students Lost between the 'Achievement Gap' and the 'Model Minority,'" Wallitt describes the risks of internalizing the 'model minority myth,' which leads to "believing that Asian students are high achievers [who] can lead teachers to make assumptions that render the lived experiences of

⁷ United States, & Suchan, T. A. (2007). *Census atlas of the United States: Census 2000 special reports*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

⁸ Weinberg, M. *Asian-American education: Historical background and current realities*. Sociocultural, political, and historical studies in education. (Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1997). Pp. 313

Cambodian students invisible...⁹ Wallitt warns us the internalization of the model minority myth can lead to the invisibility of Cambodian American students who are masked under the successes of others:

Dangers inherent in this myth are substantial... Asian-American students who are assumed to be “successful” will not be recognized as needing help in school...some Asian groups (notably Japanese and Chinese) have tended to achieve exceptionally well in schools, others (especially Cambodian and Laotian) have struggled academically (4).

Therefore institutions of higher education should integrate critical awareness of this issue into their programs and classes to address and eradicate invisibility. An approach such as a culturally responsive pedagogy is essential.

Culturally responsive pedagogy

Dr. Geneva Gay, professor at the UW College of Education’s Curriculum and Instruction program defines culturally responsive pedagogy: “...as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them”¹⁰

The need for teachers to become culturally aware of the student body they are teaching is absolutely vital. Gay’s ‘culturally responsive teaching’ model is one significant way for teachers to develop a concrete relationship with Cambodian American students’ personal lives. Gay recommends ‘validation’, where teachers recognize students are from different cultural values and environments.

This pedagogical approach would suggest that educators must have an understanding about the immigration and settlement context of Cambodian Americans, and recognize that invisibility may disrupt

⁹ Wallitt, R. Cambodian Invisibility: Students Lost between the "Achievement Gap" and the "Model Minority". *MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES*. 10 (1), (2008). Pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ Gay, G. *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2000). Pp. 29

learning for Cambodian American students in higher education.¹¹ Consequently, a culturally responsive educator would acknowledge and validate their students –thus recognizing their students in ways that decrease invisibility and increase visibility.

Methods

There is a scarce amount of literature written about the experiences of Cambodian Americans and their access to higher education. Evidently, continuing research such as this study is needed in order to create better learning environments in higher education institutions. The primary and vital aspects of this study stem from interviews with three Cambodian American students and two faculty members at the University of Washington. These interviews have provided rich stories and voices that often go unheard in discussions surrounding higher education.¹² The information gathered from the interviews establishes a better understanding and a clearer image of the multiplicity of identities and experiences found in the Cambodian American community at the University of Washington.

For the purposes of this study, the following questions were kept in mind when conducting these interviews: How can higher education institutions create and improve pedagogies that are culturally responsive to Cambodian Americans' needs? And how may these experiences inform a culturally responsive pedagogy?

Findings and Discussion

Student interviews

These interviews provide a wealth of perspectives that are not typically shared and discussed in classrooms. By documenting these Cambodian American students' experiences, we've begun to explore and

¹¹ Wallitt, R. Cambodian Invisibility: Students Lost between the "Achievement Gap" and the "Model Minority". *MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES*. 10 (1), (2008). Pp. 9

¹² Kiang, P.N. "Stories and Structures of Persistence: Ethnographic Learning through Research and Practice in Asian American Studies," in Yali Zou and Henry T. Trueba (eds), *Advances in Ethnographic Research: From Our Theoretical and Methodological Roots to Post-Modern Critical Ethnography*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. (2002). Pp. 223-255

directly tackle the challenges that face this community in higher education.

All three Cambodian American students –Betty, Susana, and Laura¹³ are 1st generation college students. They are also involved with the student club – Khmer Student Association (KhSA). KhSA’s mission is to pursue “...education at a higher level of institution while preserving and instilling the Khmer culture in current and future generations.”¹⁴ This mission statement resonates consistently with the suggestions made by each student in the interviews.

Betty, Susana, and Laura indicated their parents came to America under dire circumstances—their family left Cambodia because of war and genocide, and temporarily resettled in refugee camps until they were sponsored to the United States. This is an example of the immigration and settlement context framework that helps us understand how the family’s immigration circumstances influence their lives today.

These interviews also tracked the educational backgrounds of the students’ parents. Tracking parental educational background is vital – it is an indication of the amount of exposure to and support they have in the U.S. education system.

The breakdown of parental educational backgrounds:

- One parent had a baccalaureate degree – Betty’s father, who received his degree at age 61 in Political Science.
- Two of the parents completed their high school education,
- Three other parents had backgrounds in education that varied from elementary through high school levels.

Most of these 1st generation college students do not have the support and resources needed to navigate the University of Washington campus. They also have had no prior affiliations with higher education institutions nor did any of their family attend college.

Commonality: Parental expectation, Classroom Education, Communities

All of these students indicated their parents thought college and getting a college degree is a means to become successful in life. Additionally, all students mentioned their parents advised them to

¹³ Betty, Laura, and Susanna are pseudonyms used to ensure interviewee confidentiality

¹⁴ See <http://students.washington.edu/khmer/>

become a doctor – a profession that is typically associated with prestige and wealth.

Laura is debating on whether she should pursue the Nursing program at the University of Washington. When I sat down with Laura, and asked her about her parent's expectations about college she said:

They don't know much about college I'm actually the first one in my family to go to college... first one of the five... and I'm actually the youngest... so for me... they, they wanted me to go university... and that's all they said... it's just go to university and get a degree and they think that's pretty big.. and of course I'm gonna go further than that... it's just that they expect me to work hard in school... and to become like a doctor or something like that... they have a lot of high expectations even though they don't know much about college.

Betty – an undecided major student, said her parents:

they think that... in order to succeed in life... you have to go to college and get a degree. And they want me to be a doctor... but... I don't know... (haha) that's what a lot of parents want... I guess. I think that they expect me to graduate from here, get a job, and help support them as well, myself, and siblings and stuff like that. And I think that's what they want out of...

Susanna's response was slightly different – it is likely her father's experience in college and receiving a degree contributes to it:

“you gotta be a doctor, lawyer, you know all that kind of stuff..” so it was kind of like you know that thing was always persistent in my mind um... but I think now... you know after he got his BA... he just kinda wants us to.... You know to do what we can after we graduate but he encourages after we get a BA to continue our education.”

They're really happy. Um... You know they just... especially with my daddy he's education focus so... just wanting us to like... experience things...

... he said you know I really want you to experience things and – anything educational for him is good.”

The Quest For Meaningful Pedagogies

As we see in these three quotes, parental expectations are not only expressions of what they want for their children, but also reflect their own experiences or lack of experiences with higher education.

Classroom Education

Invisibility and inadequate coverage of Cambodian American history and culture in a curriculum are two major subjects my interviewees addressed. All the students felt there was misrecognition of their cultural identity, and as a result, they felt invisible on campus.

“... I think it was only this year that touched upon Cambodians... and that’s with Prof. Tolken’s American Asian studies— it was on Southeast Asians refugees and immigrants, you know... he does touch a lot upon Cambodian refugees and stuff like that, and immigrants especially during the war and stuff.

It makes me hopeful that you know... I’m learning about this, and I want more students to have access to this, cause you know when um... when something represents you, you’re just really excited about it...” – Susanna

Representation is a keyword that Susanna highlighted in our interview; she felt more Cambodian Americans need to be represented on campus. One means of doing so is to create accessible classes for all UW students to learn more about Cambodian American history and culture.

When asked about her experiences in classes that discussed Cambodian American history and culture, Betty indicated a lack of coverage about Cambodia within Asian American Studies classes:

“Well not a lot... but they covered Cambodia because mainly it is based on Southeast Asia and... the other Asian American class I took... I think... they didn’t cover much about Cambodia... they just briefly went over it...

...a lot of refugees here don’t have the opportunity to go to school and what not... and so their kids do... and I think their kids should be informed on... the history of Cambodia... and how we came to be here...”

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

Betty makes an interesting point about the importance of having Cambodian history and culture available in the classroom. Many of the refugees that immigrated to the United States (like the students' parents) didn't have the opportunity to attend higher education. Cambodian American students should have the opportunity to learn about Cambodia's history, and about the experiences of Cambodian Americans. This is aspect of invisibility – the lack of these topics should be made available to be discussed in length within ethnic studies/Asian American classes.

Just like Betty, Laura also indicated the lack of time spent on Cambodia in Asian American classes:

I took a— so the 1st quarter here at the UW, I took a... Southeast Asian Studies- I believe is what it's called with Jolien Arlen... um... and then most we touched up on ... it... it really shocked me that they even mention a little about like the Khmer rouge and stuff... but that was the only thing they mentioned... it's just that and right into Vietnam and other subjects.

... they speak a lot on like the history of the holocaust and like same in high school too they always spoke on other genocides but never about like the Cambodian genocide-- I feel like that's just as important and just as you know tragic as any other... I mean yeah...

Laura felt the subject on the Khmer Rouge and genocide was not adequately covered, and needed to be discussed and explored more in class. The Khmer Rouge period needs to be covered in-depth when discussing Cambodian American history because it is a pivotal point of history that changed the lives of many Cambodians that came to the United States as refugees.

Student community

To increase the visibility of Cambodian Americans on campus, Laura discusses her experiences in KhSA:

But um... I think... not a lot of people know about Cambodians, they don't even know about KhSA, and so being involved in my first year of college I later thought that - I thought that uh, being— becoming an officer of the club was a really good idea, and the next step in

The Quest For Meaningful Pedagogies

telling people about what KhSA is, so that I can raise awareness that there are Khmer students on campus and this is our culture and this is what you know... or what language we speak and just educate them... because they know a lot about like... a lot of the more popular Thai, or like Vietnamese, Chinese and stuff like that. But a lot of people don't know about Cambodians...

KhSA's community space and Laura's participation in KhSA has led her to meet other Cambodian Americans on campus. Moreover it has led Laura to increase awareness of the Cambodian American student body, and the issues that surround the community.

Both KhSA and Laura's purpose are empowering Cambodian Americans who feel invisible and lost on campus. Betty reminisces on her first experiences with KhSA:

Before I came to college I didn't really hang out with much like Cambodians... Because I moved to Alexa, and they didn't have a lot of Cambodians at my school. There's like a handful but there was a lot of like Caucasian and Hispanic... and ... then when I came here [at the UW]... I met a few people and then I got involved in that KhSa club... and then since then I've hung out a lot with other Cambodian Americans... we definitely share same background and stuff like that.... same culture it's interesting.

KhSA's work and contribution to the university's community is significant since it fosters a comfortable learning environment where other Cambodian Americans can relate to one another and support each other too.

Faculty Interviews

Both of the faculty who were interviewed teaches in the American Ethnic Studies Department. Gathering a faculty perspective on these issues has provided multiple insights – including their experiences and interactions with Cambodian Americans, how their course materials and teaching styles reflects the needs of Cambodian American communities, and how future educators can develop teaching methods that are inclusive of Cambodian American students in classes.

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

Dr. Carey¹⁵ spoke on his interactions with Cambodian American students in his classes:

[They are] mostly first or second generation or 1.5 generation students... so they're unique in that sense, especially that that angle about not knowing... like a lot of teachers don't know much about their history... not a lot of books are available out there... the information is not readily available. And... um... You know and then when you're a minority in the classroom, chances are you won't speak up that much right? And so... yeah that's like... a big sort of gap in education and curriculum – I myself you know experience in my classes.

Dr. Carey raises an important point—since most educators don't know much about Cambodian American history and the history is not covered much in classes, there is a sense of invisibility at the academic level that is reinforced. As a minority in a classroom, Cambodian American students may be hesitant to raise their hand to ask and also answer questions.

I think it matters a lot when students you know... and this is not true only for Cambodian Americans when students you know sort of recognize their own histories as a part of the class or there's a sense of value that the teacher sort of impresses upon students uh when a material about their own history and their own culture is presented in class... um... you know it's both a sense of you know I guess, a race self-esteem and self-consciousness but at the same time some pressure because they know that they are gonna to be asked...

This emphasis on race self-esteem and self-consciousness is a critical component of identity development. A culturally responsive pedagogical approach would foster a classroom environment that recognizes the histories, culture, and community of all members of the student body. A Cambodian American History and Culture class would foster race self-esteem and self-consciousness – a sense of empowerment

¹⁵ Dr. Carey, Boyle, and Tolken are pseudonyms used to keep interviewee confidentiality

for Cambodian Americans. These features would improve many of the issues my student interviewees have pointed out.

My other interviewee, Dr. Boyle, alluded to the fact that awareness about cultural nuances is key when teaching a history and culture class:

I think just the fact that I know Khmer, I don't say 'kha-meer' it shows that I'm at least interested. Because it shows other people – a lot of us come with bad self-esteem because we're so ignored, but when they hear somebody else is interested even though I'm not an expert per se right?

Dr. Boyle also emphasizes that educators should not put pressure on their students nor put them into positions in which they are felt like representatives or spokesperson of their culture and race:

Just making sure that they are aware and that they don't put the burden of knowing everything about Cambodians on Cambodian Americans... I know the worst I hear from a lot of my students, and I experience this myself. Suddenly you get to the chapter on Cambodia, and somebody asks the one Khmer student in the class, 'is this true?' like that person is going to know through the DNA. You know?

Conclusion & Significance

This study gives us a glimpse of the need to decrease the invisibility Cambodian Americans face in education. To do so we must begin to understand their history in America and their needs as a community. For Cambodian American students to academically succeed at the post-secondary level, teachers must be culturally responsive to their needs in the classroom.

Educators must be cultural sensitive to the nuances that exist in the Cambodian American community. Importantly, educators must have genuine care and interest for their students, and recognize their students are not homogenous, but are unique. Each Cambodian American student has historical and cultural ties to Cambodia that shape their background and identity as Cambodian Americans.

It is important that educators understand the communities students come from and that they must be reflected in their teaching. The history, culture, and personal narratives of those communities should be discussed so that students are able to make personal connections with

their students. Work on multicultural education is incomplete if the personal connections and experiences of students are not considered.

A Cambodian American and History curriculum following approaches from Gay's model of a culturally responsive pedagogy¹⁶ should not only integrate the experiences of the Cambodian American student body but should also challenge them to connect their personal experiences with broader historical and social patterns—thus making their education more meaningful. Suggestions made by my interviewees—especially what Laura, Betty, and Susanna proposed-- are missing in Asian American studies classes and are imperative to include. This class needs to be reflective and flexible to the needs of the students. It has to be culturally responsive—therefore part of this study demonstrates the composition of a Cambodian American History & Culture syllabus.¹⁷

By highlighting the troublesome areas of invisibility and underrepresentation that Cambodian Americans face in education today, culturally responsive teaching methods and pedagogies will expand educational resources. This study contributes to research literature on retention and academic success of Cambodian Americans in post-secondary education. This analysis and my recommendations for Cambodian American's academic success are the initial steps toward fostering a life-long relationship with learning and developing meaningfulness to their education. A class such as the model given in the Cambodian American History and Culture syllabus can improve the representation, recognition, and visibility of Cambodian Americans in higher education. Most importantly, it gives a space where Cambodian Americans can share their stories and have their voices to be heard.

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¹⁷ The syllabus that was developed is available upon request—please e-mail the author if you would like a copy.

The Quest For Meaningful Pedagogies

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Differential Experiences and Needs of Queer and Heterosexual Students in Sex Education

Jaimée M.K. Marsh

Abstract

Previous studies conclude that Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) students face different social and health challenges than heterosexual students, which may have implications for the ability of sex education programs to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Since few studies explore university students' sexual health knowledge, experiences in sex education programs, attitudes about sexuality, and sexual behaviors, this study uses a self-administered survey to collect this information from 112 University of Washington students to compare and contrast responses from GLBT students and heterosexual students.

GLBT and heterosexual students agree that the purpose of sex is not only for reproduction or reserved for married couples. Students also agreed that preventative sexual health information should be taught in schools, and that they wish they had received more info during their teenage years. Their agreement with these statements was statistically significant. GLBT students were significantly more likely to experience shame or guilt after participating in sex education programs. This study also revealed differences about the level of communication and similarity in beliefs between GLBT and heterosexual students and their parents. Also, heterosexual students were more likely to use a method to prevent sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, yet more GLBT students had been checked for HIV.

The findings echo previous research by reiterating the specific health, education, and support needs of GLBT students, as well as the need for further development and implementation of comprehensive sex education curriculum.

Introduction

Although sexually transmitted infection (STI) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevalence rates remain highest among people age 18-24, college-age students continue to engage in sexual risk behaviors (Eng & Butler, 1997; Washington State Department of Health, 2007). More than half of young people become sexually active while minors, and consequently face a greater number of years in which they are at risk of unintended pregnancy, STIs, and HIV infection (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2006). Young people who are homeless,

incarcerated, living in the foster care system, victims of sexual abuse, and members of communities of color face greater risk of infections and unintended pregnancy (Collins et al., 2002). Youth who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (herein referred to by the umbrella term “queer”) may be members of the aforementioned groups, yet also experience elevated risk of physical and mental health problems resulting from their social marginalization. This includes experiencing higher rates of homicide, physical and sexual assault, sexual risk taking behaviors like prostitution and survival sex, substance abuse, depression, and suicide in comparison to heterosexual youth (Advocates for Youth, 2005; Blake et al., 2001; Cochran et al., 2002).

Previous research on sex education in the United States focuses on adolescents’ attitudes, knowledge, and behavior pertaining to sexual activity. Fewer studies explore university students’ sexual health knowledge, education, attitudes about sexuality, and sexual behaviors. Understanding the experiences of university students provides useful information about the long-term impact of receiving (or not receiving) sexual health information, and how young people do or do not implement that knowledge into their lifestyle over time. In general, funding and support for research about health concerns specifically affecting the queer community has been limited (Dean et al., 2002). Centering heterosexuality in research and sex education neglects the specific health care needs of queer students, and consequently leaves them at higher risk of negative sexual health outcomes, including STIs, HIV, cancers and associated agents like the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), sexual abuse, and unintended pregnancy compared to heterosexuals (Dean et al., 2004; Saewyc et al., 1999).

The purpose of this study is to explore the similarities and differences within the sex education experiences of a sexual minority and the sexual majority. This study aims to answer the following questions: How do queer and heterosexual students think about sex? How do queer and heterosexual students relate to and implement the knowledge from sex education? What social supports influence their decisions about sex? A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from University of Washington students who identified themselves as either queer or heterosexual. The survey focused on university students’ attitudes about sexuality and education, social influences, and preventative behaviors. Exploring these topics will lead to increased understanding about how to better meet the health education needs of the diverse student populations in Washington’s public schools, and identify alternative strategies to improve students’ knowledge and support systems.

Background

From 1996 to 2006, Congressional spending on abstinence-only-until-marriage education totaled over \$1.5 billion (SIECUS, 2007b). The Title V program, a part of the 1996 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Welfare Reform Act, is one of the three primary funding sources for abstinence-only education programs which assert that sexual activity should only occur within the context of marriage, and any sexual activity deviating from that standard will likely result in “harmful psychological and physical effects” (SIECUS, 2008). If contraception or protection is discussed, it is often in terms of rates of failure and the inevitability of contracting an STI or becoming pregnant. On the other hand, comprehensive sexual education programs, also referred to as abstinence-plus programs, promote abstinence as the most effective way to prevent unintended pregnancy, STIs, and HIV in addition to correct, consistent use of contraceptives and/or protection (Collins et al., 2002).

Studies evaluating the effectiveness of abstinence-only programs reveal that these programs do not delay initiation of sex until marriage nor do they decrease the frequency of sexual activity or number of partners (Collins et al., 2002; Constantine, 2008; SIECUS, 2007b). These programs fail the students by not providing them with relevant, accurate information to prevent negative health outcomes. Research also shows that abstinence-only programs also fail to meet the desires of parents, who prefer that their children are taught about abstinence in addition to pregnancy and disease prevention (Bleakley et al., 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2007).

Research evaluating multiple comprehensive sex education programs shows that these programs increased condom and contraceptive use, delayed initiation of sex, decreased the frequency of sex, and decreased the number of partners (Kirby, 2006; Kohler et al., 2007). Previous research also supports the argument that providing sex education does not promote sexual activity among young people (Sabia, 2006).

As a result of these research findings, Washington State joined 25 other states in ceasing support for abstinence-only education programs. The Washington State Legislature passed the Healthy Youth Act in 2007 mandating that all public schools choosing to teach sexual health education must do so in an age-appropriate, comprehensive manner by supplementing abstinence messages with medically accurate pregnancy and disease prevention information (SIECUS, 2008). The Healthy Youth Act does not create a specific sex education curriculum, include financial provisions, nor order that all Washington public schools

must teach sexual health education (SIECUS, 2007a). As a result, discrepancies exist in terms of the amount of preventative sexual health information received by students in grades K-12 across Washington State.

A study surveying sex education programs in over 130 public school districts across Washington State collected data about HIV/AIDS education, the range of topics covered in sex education curriculum, instructors' training level, and other aspects to understand how sex education is delivered. Although more than 70% of districts reported teaching "abstinence plus" education, which includes information about STI and pregnancy prevention, only 27% of respondents reported discussing sexual identity and orientation (Peters, 2007). This finding justifies questions about the ability of school-based sex education programs to meet the specific health needs of diverse student populations. A national study conducted by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS, 2001) estimates that 4.5% of high school students in Seattle, WA identify as queer- one of the highest rates in the country according to the study- and an additional 4% were questioning their sexual orientation. Queer and heterosexual students have unique health and information needs based on their different social circumstances and sexual behaviors. Both groups deserve high quality services to meet their basic health care needs, yet the health and social disparities persist while funding and logistical challenges impede public health research around queer issues (Solarz, 1999).

Methods

Research Design

Participants from the University of Washington completed an anonymous, self-administered, online survey composed of four sections: knowledge, attitudes, behavior, and social support related to sexual activity. All students, whether queer or heterosexual, received the same questions. Except to confirm being at least 18 years of age, students were allowed to answer or skip questions at their discretion. Students were also advised that they could discontinue participation at any time. The study was conducted throughout the month of October in 2008.

Participants

Study participants were recruited using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling strategies. These non-probability sampling strategies were utilized because of their effectiveness for collecting a large study sample for sensitive research topics. A

description of the study and a link to the information statement and survey were circulated on multiple email lists, including the School of Social Work, Comparative History of Ideas, Public Health, the Office of Minority Affairs, and the Campus Q mailing list subscribed to by members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer members of the campus community. Scripted announcements were read in social work and public health classes. Posters advertising the study were also placed in the main administrative building. Students recruited in classrooms and via email were invited to pass on the survey link to other students who fit the study criteria. The recruitment materials and information statement explained the purpose of the survey as a tool to assess students' attitudes about and implementation of sexual health information in order to understand how sexual education programs can be improved to meet the needs of diverse populations. All advertisements and the information statement emphasized the study's anonymous, voluntary nature, and explicitly requested that students be at least 18 years of age. There was no age limit to participate in the study.

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 describes the study sample, which included 112 University of Washington students. 46.4% identified their sexual orientation as queer, and 53.6% as heterosexual. The mean age was 24.5 (standard deviation 5.6). The racial composition of the sample was 3.9% Black/African American, 3.9% Asian or Pacific Islander, 74.7% Caucasian, 4.9% Latino, 1.0% Middle Eastern, 11.6% Multiracial. 62.5% identified their gender as female, 29.5% as male, and 8.0% as transgender. 57.1% of the sample grew up primarily in Washington State. 21.5% described the setting they grew up in as urban, 58.0% as suburban, 18.7% as rural, and 1.8% as international. 29.5% of the students currently receive need-based financial aid.

Measures

The first section measured participants' knowledge of pregnancy and disease prevention. Next, participants were asked to describe their level of agreement with statements about the purpose of sex, acceptability of specific sexual practices, and information needs. The third section inquired about participants' past participation in sexual education programs and other sources of information regarding sexual health. Lastly, participants were asked about their history of sexual behavior and use of contraception and protection. Whether sexual activity meant penetrative intercourse, oral sex, or any other sexual contact was not specifically defined for participants; rather, the definition

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was subjective based on individual participants' perceptions of their own sexual behaviors. This paper focuses on the measures elaborated below, which emerged as prominent dimensions of students' experiences in sexual education.

	Overall (n = 112), 100%	Queer Students (n = 52, 46.4 %)	Heterosexual Students (n = 60, 53.6%)
Gender Identity			
Female	62.5	28.6	33.9
Male	29.5	9.8	19.6
Transgender	8.0	8.0	0.0
Race/Ethnicity			
African American/Black	3.9	1.0	2.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.9	2.9	1.0
Caucasian/White	74.7	35.0	39.7
Latino/Hispanic	4.9	1.0	3.9
Middle Eastern	1.0	1.0	0.0
Multiracial	11.6	5.8	5.8
Age (Mean)	24.5		
WA Resident			
No	36.6	18.8	17.9
Yes	57.1	25.0	32.1
Missing	6.3	2.7	3.6
Environment			
International	1.8	0.9	0.9
Rural	18.7	7.1	11.6
Suburban	58.0	23.2	34.8
Urban	21.5	15.2	6.3
Receives Need-Based Aid			
No	70.5	30.4	40.1
Yes	29.5	16.1	13.4

Table 1. Sample Characteristics of University of Washington Students, October 2008.

Attitudes About Sex

Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) with two questions regarding the

purpose of sex: (1) “The purpose of sex is only for reproduction,” and (2) “Only married couples should have sex.”

Attitudes About Sex Education

Participants also indicated the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) with the following two questions regarding information needs and desires: (1) “Information about how to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections should be taught in school,” and (2) “I wish I was given more information about sex and sexual health when I was a teenager.”

Social Influences

Participants answered the following five questions related to social relationships that potentially influence their beliefs, knowledge, and behavior: (1) “My beliefs about sex are the same as my parents’ beliefs,” (2) “I feel comfortable asking my parents questions about sex and sexuality,” (3) “I must hide information about my sexual history from my parents,” (4) “I feel comfortable speaking with a health care professional about my sexual health,” and (5) “My friends influence my decisions about sex.”

Emotional Response to Sex Education

Participants responded “yes” or “no” to the following single-item question regarding their emotions after participating in any sex education program: “Have you ever felt ashamed, guilty, or upset about your sexuality or sexual history after a sex education presentation?”

Preventative Behaviors

Participants answered the following two questions regarding the frequency (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = most of the time, and 5 = every time) of their engagement in behaviors to prevent STIs and unwanted pregnancy: (1) “How frequently do you use a method to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections during sexual activity?” and (2) “If you had access to free condoms, birth control, or other methods to prevent pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections, how often would you use them during sexual activity?” These questions are aimed at understanding students’ utilization of contraception and disease prevention methods as a means of risk reduction.

Participants responded “yes” or “no” to an additional single-item question, “Have you ever been checked for the Human

Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)?" in order to understand their participation in preventative healthcare behaviors.

Analysis and Results

One participant was excluded from the data because they did not identify their sexual orientation, which was the basis for comparison in this study. A student's *t*-test compares the attitudes, sources of social influence, and behaviors of queer students and heterosexual students. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. The mean responses and *t*-test and *p* values are reported for the following dimensions:

Attitudes About Sex

Figure 1 shows that queer students were significantly more likely to disagree strongly with the statement, "The purpose of sex is only for reproduction," than heterosexual students (5.0 vs. 4.7, $t = 2.38$, $p = 0.020$). Queer students also disagree more strongly than heterosexual students with the statement, "Only married couples should have sex" (4.8 vs. 4.3, $t = 3.13$, $p = 0.002$). The differences between queer and heterosexual students' attitudes about both aspects of sex are statistically significant.

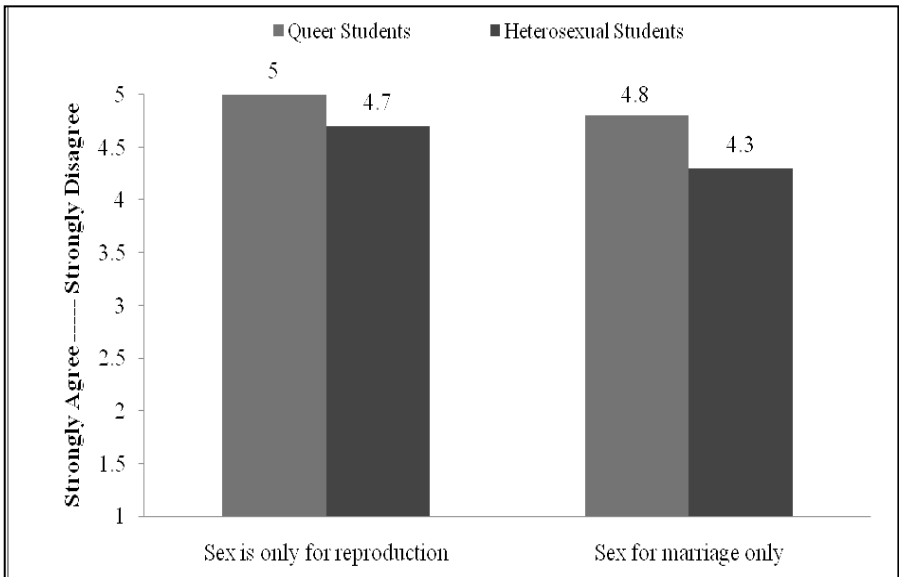


Figure 1. Attitudes About Sex.

Attitudes About Sex Education

Figure 2 shows that both queer and heterosexual students agreed strongly with the statement that information about preventing pregnancy and STIs should be taught in school (1.0 vs. 1.2, $t = -2.25$, $p = 0.028$). Queer students agreed more strongly than heterosexual students with the statement, “I wish I was given more information about sex and sexual health when I was a teenager” (1.5 vs. 2.5, $t = -4.99$, $p = 0.000$). The differences between the extent to which queer and heterosexual students agreed with both aspects of sex education are statistically significant.

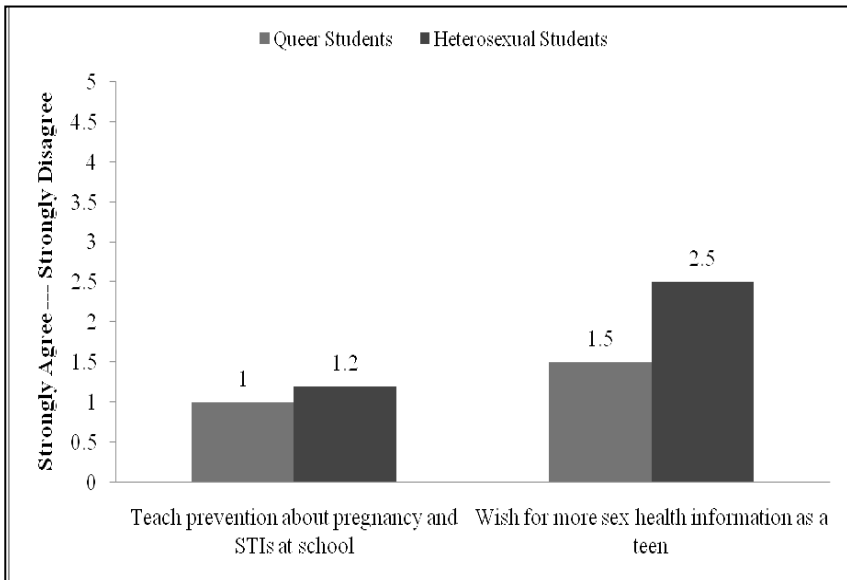


Figure 2. Attitudes About Sex Education.

Social Influences

Figure 3 shows that queer students significantly disagreed more strongly than heterosexual students with the statement, “My beliefs about sex are the same as my parents’ beliefs” (3.9 vs. 3.3, $t = 2.69$, $p = 0.008$). Queer students also disagreed more strongly with the statement, “I feel comfortable asking my parents questions about sex and sexuality” (3.8 vs. 3.3, $t = 1.82$, $p = 0.072$). Queer students agreed with the statement, “I must hide information about my sexual history from my parents,” significantly more than heterosexual students who reported feeling more uncertain or indifferent to the same statement (2.9 vs. 3.8, $t = -3.17$, $p = 0.002$). Queer and heterosexual students both strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel comfortable speaking with a health care professional

about my sexual health,” (1.9 vs. 1.7, $t = 1.00$, $p = 0.318$). Responses from queer and heterosexual students were also similar in reporting uncertainty about the statement, “My friends influence my decisions about sex,” (3.3 vs. 3.4, $t = -0.283$, $p = 0.778$).

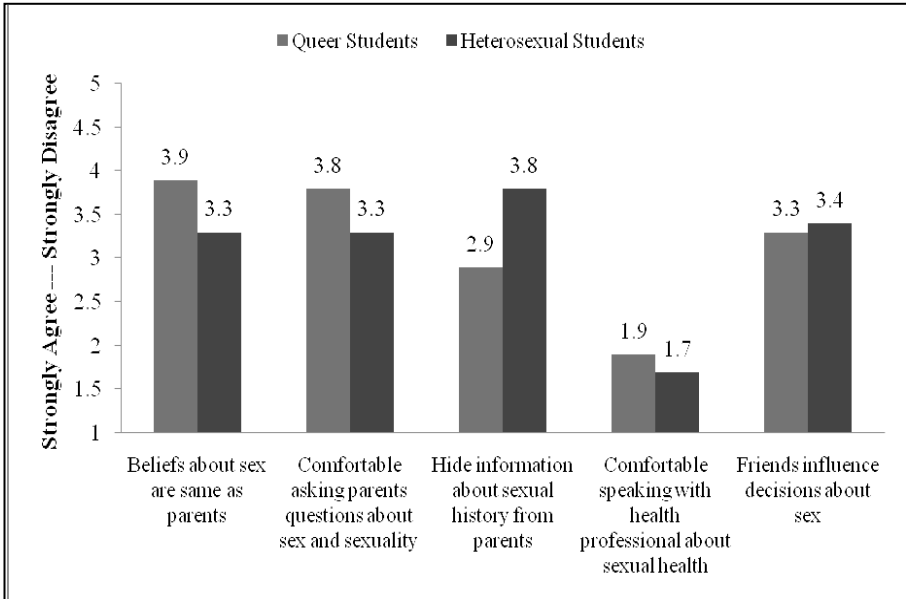


Figure 3. Social Influences.

Emotional Response to Sex Education

Figure 4 shows that queer students were significantly more likely than heterosexual students to respond affirmatively that they felt shame, guilt, or negative feelings about their own sexuality or history after receiving sex education ($t = -3.093$, $p = 0.003$).

Preventative Behaviors

Figure 5 shows that heterosexual students were significantly more likely than queer students to report using a method to prevent pregnancy or STIs (4.5 vs. 3.6, $t = -3.778$, $p = 0.000$). In response to a hypothetical question of how frequently students would use methods to prevent pregnancy or STIs during sexual activity if they could access them for free, heterosexual students were significantly more likely to respond “most of the time” than queer students (4.7 vs. 4.0, $t = -2.787$, $p = 0.007$). Figure 6 shows that queer students were significantly more likely heterosexual students to respond affirmatively that they had been tested for HIV in their lifetime ($t = -2.555$, $p = 0.013$).

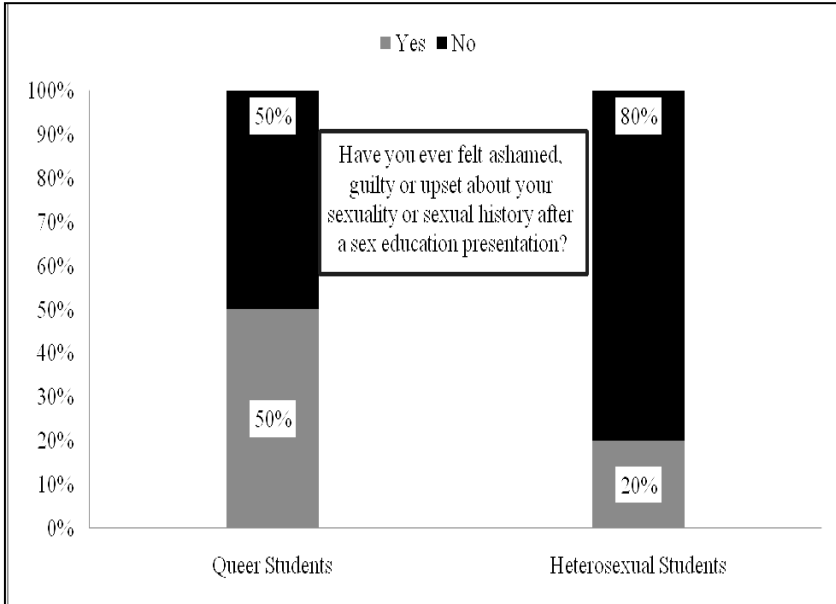


Figure 4. Feelings After Sex Education.

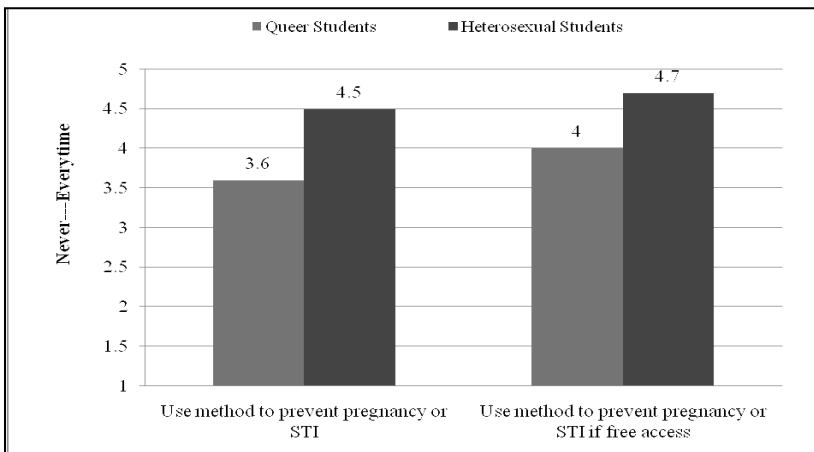


Figure 5. Frequency of Preventative Behaviors.

Discussion

The results reveal both similarities and differences between queer and heterosexual students' attitudes, social influences, and

preventative behaviors related to sex and education. A majority of queer and heterosexual students agreed that sex is not reserved solely for marriage and reproduction. These beliefs are contradictory to the messages conveyed in abstinence-only until marriage programs in which over 40% of the participants reported participating. Approximately 90% of the study participants reported prior engagement in sexual activity at the time of the survey, and of those 90%, over half engaged in sexual activity when they were younger than 18 years of age. In addition, 75% of the students who were sexually active had more than one sexual partner in their lifetime. Therefore, it is not surprising that queer and heterosexual students also agree that sex education should be comprehensive, meaning students should learn about prevention of pregnancy and STIs, and that they desired more information about sexual health when they were teenagers. Both queer and heterosexual students were also similar in regard to feeling comfortable speaking with health professionals, and the extent to which their friends influence their decisions about sex.

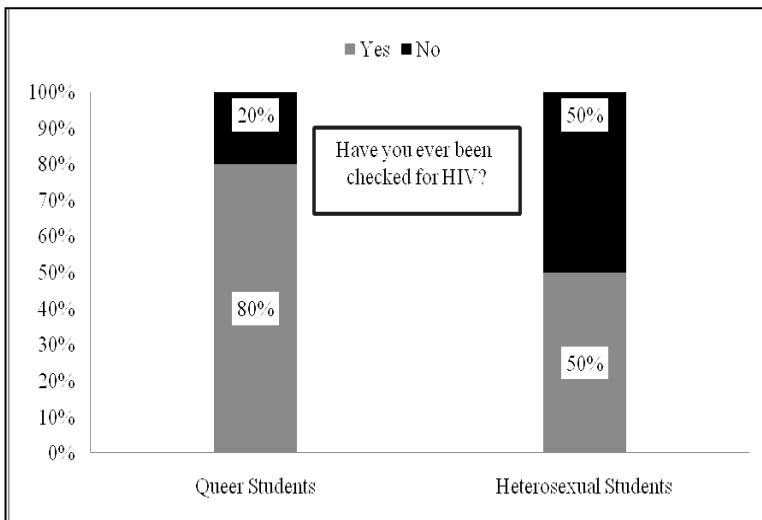


Figure 6. HIV Testing.

However, queer and heterosexual students differ when it comes to their relationships with their parents since queer students experience a significantly greater level of discomfort talking about their sexuality with their parents than heterosexual students. Not only do queer students' beliefs about sex differ from their parents' beliefs, but more queer students also feel as though they must hide their sexual history from

their parents. These findings support previous research talking about the social stigma faced by the queer community, and the fear young people have about repercussions of coming out, for example their parents putting them out of the house. It is especially important that young people are able to have conversations with their parents about sex and sexuality as studies show that parents are often the biggest influence on youth's sexual decisions and positive communication can elevate their perceptions of sexual health (Lederman et al., 2008). Another outcome that queer students experience more than heterosexual students is feeling negative emotions after participation in sex education. 30% more queer students reported feeling shame or guilt about their sexuality and sexual history, which does not promote self-esteem nor facilitate their absorption and integration of sexual healthy or prevention information.

In terms of preventative behaviors, there are two key differences noted in this study. Heterosexual students are significantly more likely to report using methods of prevention and contraception. This finding agrees with other studies that have found that queer students engage in more risk taking sexual behaviors (Lindley et al., 2003). This finding also points to a lack of understanding about disease transmission in same-gender sexual partnerships. When it comes to HIV testing, queer students were significantly more likely to report being tested for HIV. This may be due to a hyperawareness of HIV in the queer community and a greater availability of free, anonymous testing.

Reflections and Recommendations

In retrospect, elements of the survey were hetero-normative, which could potentially exclude or limit responses from queer participants. For example, asking about the effectiveness of contraceptive methods or whether participants have ever been shown how to use a condom is not entirely relevant to the lifestyles of women who have sex exclusively with women. However, asking an additional question or rewording the given question to be more inclusive of other types of protection, such as dental dams, would be more useful. Another reason questions in the survey may not have been relevant to both queer and heterosexual students' lives is that there is no inquiry as to whether participants are in a monogamous relationship. Asking specific questions about the level of commitment in their relationships is necessary in future studies. In general, providing more "not applicable/does not apply" options is also necessary. The absence of these additional categories may also account for incorrect responses in the knowledge section, especially about the steps in using a male condom properly and the function of emergency contraception.

Since the survey inquires about sensitive, even socially taboo issues, social desirability bias may result from the tendency to provide socially acceptable responses. These complications highlight the difficulty of conducting a study of a sensitive nature. Providing anonymity to study volunteers encourages participation and honest responses; however, the means by which anonymity is provided potentially leads to weaknesses in the data. In addition, the survey link was unrestricted and available to anyone since the survey was anonymous and therefore did not require any university identification to login and access the survey. Consequently, there is no guarantee that every participant in the study was an undergraduate student at the University of Washington as the study recruitment materials emphasized.

In order to understand the intricacies and complexities of students' interactions with curricula and social influences regarding sexuality and health, a qualitative study using a short answer survey granting the respondents some freedom and flexibility in their reflections and/or interviews will allow for more elaboration and probing of specific themes. These research methods would be especially useful in exploring more in depth the relationship between identities and attitudes toward sex and education, for example inquiring about the relationship between sexual orientation, gender, and race/ethnicity in terms of how students are experiencing sex education.

Young people's sexuality is influenced by a variety of sources, including parents, peers, media, school, society, and community-based programs. Therefore, sex education programs and interventions for populations at high risk of unintended pregnancy and disease should focus not only on providing knowledge of health information at school, but also on developing knowledge and support within the students' social networks. Providing accurate information and practicing communication skills to facilitate conversations between students, parents, and peers are current strategies that should be continued and expanded. Requiring that all sex educators be educated about issues specific to the queer community is also an essential piece of providing health information competently and accurately. Additionally, addressing the discrepancy in sex education across Washington State by following up the Healthy Youth Act with a mandate that all students receive preventative health information is an urgent public health policy issue.

The ultimate intention of this study is not to separate the sexual health information needs of queer and heterosexual students, as separation would only perpetuate the stigma of same-gender partnerships as a deviation from normal sexual and relationship behaviors. On the other hand, not acknowledging and discussing the health needs specific

to both groups in a competent manner also condones marginalization of the queer community, and perpetuates their elevated risk of negative health outcomes like STI and HIV infection.

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Student Activism: The Challenges and Benefits of Collaboration

Jaimée M.K. Marsh

Abstract

Leadership studies value collaboration as an essential tool for promoting social change. Although previous research exists about student leadership identity development, few studies explore how student organizing and collaboration occurs. My study uses a grounded theory approach to understanding how students engage in collaboration and what they perceive to be its challenges and benefits. I employed a purposeful sampling strategy to select ten undergraduates with multiple years of experience in Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and the Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW) student government. From individual interviews and participant observation, I highlighted two pathways to collaborative programming: an organizational-centered pathway focused on each group's mission and degree of collaboration, and a relationship-centered pathway focused on crossover membership and reliance on personal friendships. Two of the most frequently reported challenges to collaborative programming are the difficulty of establishing a common mission and/or goals, and lack of time due to students' multiple commitments. The most frequently reported benefits were increased access to funding for event planning, and developing alliances to increase support and visibility for a specific cause. All of the students interviewed in this study believed that collaboration is an essential means to accomplishing the mission and programming goals of their respective organizations. The ability of student organizations to fulfill their missions and achieve their goals influences the lives of other students on campus seeking community within the larger institution and a voice for their concerns.

Introduction

Over 40 years ago, student activism and organizations like the Black Student Union (BSU) shaped the University of Washington's (UW) policies and programs for diversity. The BSU of 1968 was a multicultural organization that advocated for increased resources for and representation of communities of color in the curricula, student body, staff, and faculty. Inspired by other Black organizations, the BSU's vigilant activism culminated in a sit-in that ultimately forced the university administration to address the perpetuation of institutional racism on campus (Garner, 2008). Other transformations in the UW

campus community that can be attributed to the BSU include the establishment of the Office of Minority affairs and Diversity, the Ethnic Cultural Center and Theater, multiple ethnic studies departments, and the outreach and recruitment of students of color. The BSU's example demonstrates how student activism has the power to transform the university into a more socially just institution, yet there is still work to be done.

A driving influence of the BSU's formation and the activism in 1968 was their collaboration with other students from around the country at a conference for Black youth activists (Robinson, 2008). Collaboration is a "cornerstone value" enhancing leaders' ability to effectively contribute to social change (HERI, 1996, p. 23). Scholarship on leadership defines collaboration as, "A mutually beneficial relationship between two or more parties who work toward common goals by sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability for achieving results" (Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p. 5). Collaborative relationships at the organizational level are strengthened by interpersonal relationships built upon trust, shared goals, and integrity (Allen & Cherrey, 2000).

Some scholars focus on the challenge of defining qualities of individual leaders and criticize measurements of leadership in different contexts (Burns, 1978; Rost, 1993). Previous research on student leadership focuses on personal development, awareness of self, and the process of leadership identity development (Komives et al., 1998; Komives et al., 2005). A gap in research remains about how student leadership develops and occurs. My project expands upon previous research focusing on individual student leadership development to gain an understanding about how students engage in collaboration as group leaders (Komives et al., 2006). I use a grounded theory approach to explain student leaders' process of relating to their fellow group members and to other student organizations. To understand more about the challenges and benefits of collaboration and how students engage within and across student organizations, I interviewed ten students about the following topics: (1) What are student leaders' visions of collaboration and its benefits? (2) How does collaboration between student leaders and their groups (not) presently occur? (3) What are some strategies that facilitate collaboration between student groups? (4) What are some hindrances to collaboration between student groups?

Background

After five years as an undergraduate student and organizer working with a variety of student organizations, student government, and

university diversity programs, I developed strong connections with other students who are outstanding academics and advocates for social justice and change. While reflecting on the accomplishments and challenges of student activism on campus, I focused on the Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and the Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW) governing body that strive to promote multicultural awareness and support members of underrepresented communities while recognizing the intersections between our life experiences and identities. My experiences as a queer, multiracial woman who is also a first-generation university student inspire me to get involved with supporting students and promoting social justice. These identities also motivate me to relate the missions and challenges of multiple student organizations on campus. I see a need for developing collaborative relationships and alliances between student organizations dedicated to promoting diversity, justice, and social change across all issues of oppression.

However, my personal observations and communication with other leaders from RSOs and the ASUW suggest that collaboration in the spirit of an anti-oppression framework is not consistent throughout UW student activism. Even with eight institutionalized, student-run diversity commissions under the ASUW that are structurally designed to collaborate, leaders acknowledge that the amount of collaboration varies from year to year. It seems as though the existence and effectiveness of collaborative programming is more dependent upon the pre-existing relationships between individual students who assume leadership positions than relationships developed based on a common mission of promoting diversity, justice, and change. The development of collaborative relationships between and within student organizations is threatened by frequent turnover in leadership and a lack of strategies in place to ensure institutional memory within the group. Since the identities of the leaders and their constituents exist across different social groups, collaboration is natural and necessary. The missions of these organizations include anti-oppression programming, celebration of diverse cultures and social groups, and empowerment through access to higher education and its resources. The ability of student organizations to fulfill their missions and achieve their goals influences the lives of other students on campus seeking community within the larger institution and a voice for their concerns.

Methods

I used purposive sampling to select the ten student participants based on their status as current seniors. All participants are actively

engaged in planning and programming for the ASUW Diversity Commissions or RSOs categorized as cultural/international and political/social action. I selected some of the interviewees because other study participants identified them as students who are highly active on campus. All of the participating students have been involved in student organizations on campus since their freshman year. I only interviewed ten students because the responses became repetitive. I contacted the ten students via email or approached them in person to explain the purpose of my study and to share examples of the interview talking points before inviting them to participate. I explained to each student that their participation was voluntary, would not affect the outcome of any grade or class, and that their identity would remain confidential by use of a pseudonym if they preferred. Of the original ten students I contacted, all agreed to participate and to be named in this article. However, I decided to assign each student a pseudonym to preserve his or her confidentiality for reasons discussed later in this paper.

I interviewed all participants in person, either in their offices during office hours or at another space and time convenient to them. I asked each student a set of standard, open-ended questions and followed up with clarifying questions when necessary. The interview talking points include the following: *What is the mission of your organization? What does this organization spend the majority of its time on in terms of events, campaigns, or programs? Did you collaborate with other groups on this event? Why or why not? How does this group decide upon its leadership? Talk about a time you were involved in planning an event on campus. Did you collaborate with another group or organization? What were the benefits of collaborating? What were the challenges of collaborating?* I typed notes during the interview transcribing as close to verbatim as possible. The average interview time was approximately twenty minutes.

From the interview notes, I categorized responses in a spreadsheet according to the groups' missions, challenges to collaboration, benefits of collaboration, process of leadership selection, organizational structures, methods of organizing, and personal reflections about collaborative relationships. Within each category, I highlighted the frequency of themes about the challenges and benefits of collaborative programming.

While reviewing all the responses, a relationship between the groups' missions, leadership structure, and level of collaboration with other groups became apparent. To develop a grounded theory about how and why student organizations collaborate, the groups were fit into a model based on the amount they collaborate with other student groups in

Student Activism: The Challenges and Benefits of Collaboration

relationship to their mission on a continuum from diversity to social justice.

During the study, I was also an active participant observer in three events planned by one of the student organizations of which I am not a member. Participant observation is, “The best technique when an activity, event, or situation can be observed first-hand, when a fresh perspective is desired, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the phenomenon under study” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p.13). This quarter, this organization organized rallies advocating for an end to the occupation of indigenous people in Palestine, immigrants’ rights, and labor rights for university workers amidst the current budget crisis. I also attended a social event where the purpose was to meet with another student organization included in this study to develop personal relationships in order to plan collaborative events in the future. We discussed my interview findings, and I asked for their input about the themes I discovered based on their experience as a relatively new organization on campus.

Findings

Description of Organizational Missions

The mission of each student group is explained in Table 1. The explanations are derived from the students’ perception of their respective groups’ missions, not their actual mission statements per se. The programming around these missions changes with the interests of the current leadership and current events.

Student	Description of Organizational Mission
Anna	Educational & political programming to end occupation of indigenous people
Brandon	Middle east solidarity group, animated by 3 rd anti-imperialism, 3 rd world feminism, and queer liberation
Carrie	Create a safe space on campus for discussion focused on multiple identities & intersectionality; educate & build alliances; anti-oppression advocacy
Diana	Create a space for people to embrace all their identities; recent larger commitment to social justice
Eric	Empower Chicanos through promotion of culture and access to higher education; deconstruct different forms of oppression
Felicia	To establish cohesion among (Black) women through discussion and bonding activities
Gina	Advocacy for economic justice, labor solidarity, and

MCNAIR SCHOLARS JOURNAL

	support of local labor unions
Harry	Bridging gap between Asian communities; sharing ideas; community building;
Isabella	Promote women’s rights; connect women to local resources; educate and inform; build dialogue to create action
Jon	Facilitate social support space and advocate for rights and respect of members of the queer community

Table 1. Group Missions.

Challenges to Collaboration

“We should not be fighting separate battles. We should work together; build our power and movement to attack the issues strongly. If we don’t work together, nothing [will] ever get achieved.” – Gina

“Organizing is not about sending emails. You really need to find time to meet in person.” – Brandon

“Collaboration should have happened a long time ago because we are like the same group, just a different color.” – Felicia

Regarding challenges to collaboration, six out of ten students responded that group leaders already have multiple commitments, especially to other student organizations. Four of the then students reported that is both difficult to establish a connection based on common goals or similar missions, and that people do not follow through with commitments or assigned responsibilities as promised. Two out of ten students claimed their group does not collaborate due to a lack of necessity and/or desire to work with other organizations. Other reasons why collaborations between student organizations are difficult to initiate include that there are too many “egos” trying to take control and pursue individual agendas, and that tasks are not properly delegated. Two students also cited the history as a reason why their group does not collaborate, but from two distinct standpoints. One of these students cited the history of the Black Student Union and commented that other people do not understand the powerful history of student organizing and realize how they should be working together and fighting for social justice issues. The other student believed that the history of her organization as traditionally white and feminist discouraged other students from collaborating with her, especially women of color.

Benefits to Collaboration

Student Activism: The Challenges and Benefits of Collaboration

“[Our group] is relatively young, so it’s helpful to build relationships with other groups. This way we can put on a more action-oriented event and draw a new crowd not previously seen at our events.” – Carrie

“More people at rallies supporting a cause shows that people are not in boxes and issues cross race and class lines.” – Gina

“Sometimes, you just can’t do everything yourself.”
- Harry

The most frequent response regarding the benefits of collaborating with other student organizations was an increase in the number of allies to support cause and/or build solidarity reported by seven out of ten interviewees. Five out of ten students also mentioned increased access to funding for events. Contradictory to the 50% of students who found increased access to funding a favorable reason to collaborate, only one student asserted that collaboration is means more than giving money. Four out of ten mentioned enhanced advertising and visibility. Three out of ten students responded that collaboration enhances their ability to become more action-oriented in their programming. Two out of ten students also noted that collaboration brings new perspectives and skills into the programming from which students can learn from each other.

Challenges	Benefits
Lack of time due to other commitments	Allies to support cause
Establishing common goals/mission	Increased access to funding
People do not fulfill responsibilities or commitments	Increased visibility for group
Individualism	Better advertising for events
History impacting perception of group	Social action-oriented events
No necessity or desire to collaborate	New perspectives and skills to planning
	Opportunity to learn from other leaders

Figure 1. Challenges and Benefits of Collaboration.

Pathways to Collaboration

Two pathways emerged leading to an understanding of how students collaborate. The first is an organization-centered pathway focused on each group’s mission and degree of collaboration. Figure 2 plots each student organization based on the relationship between the degree to which they collaborate and their mission on a continuum from a focus on diversity to a focus on social justice. Groups with the highest levels of collaboration collaborate with other organizations on the majority of their programming, and also co-coordinate annual events. The groups with the lowest level of collaboration have only once or never collaborated with another student organization in the past. Diversity-centered groups are those that plan events primarily to celebrate their culture (i.e. cultural food fairs). Groups that are more social justice oriented have the specific goal of advocating against or educating the community about injustice, inequality, and oppression (i.e. university policy on purchasing clothing from sweat shops).

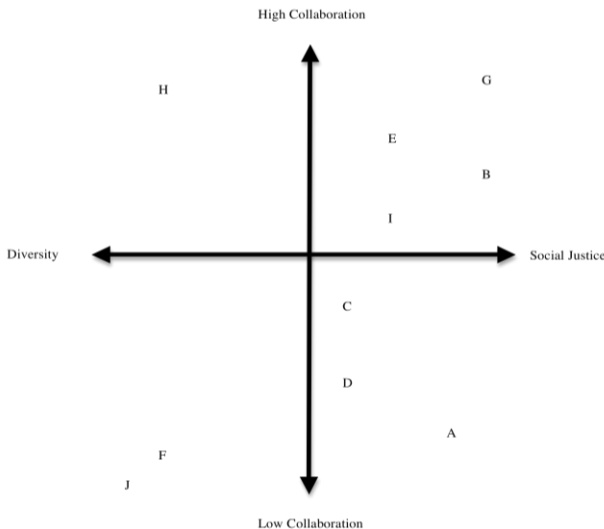


Figure 2. Relationship Between Mission and Degree of Collaboration.

The second pathway for collaboration is relationship-centered focused on crossover membership and reliance on personal friendships with members of different student organizations. All of the groups who

Student Activism: The Challenges and Benefits of Collaboration

collaborated on an event at least once reported that they had turned to friends who are officers in other groups to utilize their access to university funding granted to RSOs and the ASUW. Increased access to funding was also one of the most frequently noted benefits to collaborative programming. Students also reported that when they host an event, they often invite their friends who are members of other student organizations to attend, and that their attendance is sometimes recognized as collaboration between the two organizations. Half of the students acknowledged asking their friends to assist with advertising for events via word-of-mouth.

Crossover membership between groups has a similar effect as students who draw upon their personal friendships to enhance their programming. Six of the ten students are actively involved in other student organizations in addition to the group they spoke about in the interview. Rather than ask a friend in a different student organization to apply for university funding for an event, they can directly access the funding available to all the groups of which they are members. Crossover membership often accounts for why multiple groups' names appear on flyers advertising for student-organized events, when in actuality, individuals are simply pulling from all the sources of resources available to them.

In summary, the results reveal a trend that student organizations with more social justice-oriented missions and events tend to collaborate more with other students than the students in groups whose missions are more diversity-oriented. The organizational structures of social justice-oriented groups with higher amounts of collaboration tend to be facilitative, meaning they do not have a top-down structure and share responsibilities and decision-making power equally. Conversely, the most diversity-oriented groups also have hierarchical organizational structures with distinct officer positions (i.e. president, vice president, secretary, treasurer) and responsibilities.

The groups who are more social justice-oriented with little or no past collaborations also spoke of their event planning as "individual efforts" rather than group efforts. When the active members of these groups conducted an event, it was typically one to three individuals who were interested and executed all the planning and coordinating. They utilized the organization for the resources and reputation. Anna, a representative from one of these three organizations, described her group as "structureless," meaning they lacked an active chain of command and process for distributing responsibility or keeping group members accountable. She also remarked that it was difficult and often frustrating to operate this way. Literature on the organizational structures of

socially and politically active groups argues that no group can be “structureless,” but an unequal distribution of power, responsibility, and resources may be common just as Anna experienced (Freeman, 1970).

Discussion

The findings of this study reflect how the groups are operating at this point in time. This study cannot accurately speak to how the group were run prior to the current leaders or how they might be run in the future. Even now, the mission and programming goals of some of the groups in this study are currently in transition as they seek to become more active, visible, and connected with other student organizations on campus. Also, because only one organizer from each group was interviewed, the possibility exists that their experience does not represent the opinions or capture the experiences of all members in their respective organization. However, groups put faith in their leaders to speak on behalf of the group at rallies and in other public spaces trusting that they will put the mission of the group before their own personal agenda. In the words of one student, Eric, “[Our group] has co-chairs who represent [us] to the community as far as speaking for the group. The group trusts them to be inclusive of everyone’s voice without inserting their personal agenda as best they can.”

Originally, I had hoped to include a focus group in order to debrief and disseminate knowledge obtained in original interviews, and to engage participants in dialogue about how to improve relationships and collaboration among student leaders and organizations. Considering that almost all of the participants are graduating and the end of the school year is typically busy with programming, arranging a time to meet with all the student leaders was not feasible. A focus group with student leaders would be a useful method for understanding how they relate to one another, and provide a forum for them to meet and build relationships that are challenging to initiate for the reasons previously discussed.

While planning the study, I also thought it would be useful to disclose the names of the groups and people I interviewed to contribute to the historical documentation of student activism on campus, and to create more familiarity with the groups’ missions and events. Later, I made a conscious decision to not explicitly state the names of people and organizations that participated in the study in order to offer confidentiality to those who graciously, yet honestly and frankly spoke about their experiences and interactions. The point of this study is not to call out or glorify certain individuals or organizations, but rather to draw lessons from the overall interactions.

Student Activism: The Challenges and Benefits of Collaboration

Due to a recent series of events, I was surprised that none of the groups highlighted the university as a larger institution as an obstacle and/or aide to collaboration. I attended peaceful protest organized by one of the student organizations represented in this study. The protest, showing solidarity with the indigenous people who are occupied in Palestine, occurred the same day as a celebration of Israeli culture. From the various speakers voicing support from organizations near and far while students held signs representing different student organizations also supporting the protest, it was evident that students collaborated in the coordination of the event. As a participant in this protest, I witnessed that it was completely peaceful although there were several passionate arguments between people in attendance. As a fellow organizer on campus, I also know that students who supported Palestine were still invited to participate in a dialogue under a tent at the event. However, when the Palestinian supporters attempted to enter the Israeli celebration, the university police blocked the entrance leading to a standoff between the supporters of both sides and the police. Offended by racist and homophobic comments coming from inside the event and bystanders who had taken notice of the standoff, I left the protest. One of the definite outcomes was that the leaders of the organization who headed the protest in support of Palestine made their identities, their political views, and their belief that declining their entrance was a form of racism known to police.

A few days later, the same student organization collaborated with other organizations (also represented in this study) in the annual May Day rally in Red Square to show support for immigrants' rights. This time, the university police quickly interfered and instructed the students that if they did not cease the use of a bullhorn for chanting, they would be arrested. In my five years at the UW, I had never heard that bullhorns were not allowed. Bullhorns are frequently used, especially in Red Square and in front of the Husky Union Building (HUB) for many different types of events. In fact, students can check out bullhorns from the student resource center where there are other supplies like tables and tents available to RSOs. After talking with the police, the students found that the code cited by the officer was incorrect. Students charged the university police department with inconsistent and inaccurate enforcement of university policies (Strohschein, 2009).

By this time, the primary student organization felt threatened and found it necessary to reach out to other student organizations to build alliances and solidarity. They organized a social with two other student groups to talk about the effectiveness of recent events and the confrontations with university police. I appreciated how they first sought

to build personal relationships with other students before moving on to discussing plans. We shared food, laughter, and plans for the future. This social was one of two events with a similar intent and impact. The group's value of personal relationships echoes back to the literature on leadership discussing the necessity of trust, integrity, and building shared goals for effective collaborations.

The third rally I attended showed support for the university custodians whose jobs and livelihood were threatened by recent budget cuts. Consistent with some of the earlier findings that groups must establish common missions or goals, the students collaborated with other student organizations whose missions included labor rights and racial equality. The groups met multiple times per week with the custodians to develop a common understanding of the plans and the issues to be addressed. Ultimately, the event successfully convinced the university to extend the custodians contract one month. The students acknowledge that the decision was just a first step, and that they will continue to organize until their demands (i.e. cutting pay from administration, "the top," before the struggling custodial staff) are met. I also find it interesting to note that when the students in the rally publicly accused the university administration of not being truly committed to diversity as exemplified by the fact that a vast majority of the custodians are people of color earning a low income, the university police on duty did not take their bullhorns away.

After reflecting on the activism of the group I observed, it appears that the groups who are more social justice oriented and aim to tackle relevant issues meet more opposition independent of their ability to build relationships with student and community organizations. Therefore, I found it even more necessary to maintain the confidentiality of these students. This series of events illuminates the importance of committees like the Student Advisory Board, which is designed for student organization leaders to communicate directly with the Vice President of the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity. Continued efforts by the university administration and students to open lines of communication and develop personal relationships are essential to addressing students' needs and concerns, and to build upon strategies and programs that currently work well.

Conclusion

All of the students interviewed in this study believed that collaboration is an essential means to accomplishing the mission and programming goals of their respective organizations. Although the extent of their collaborations varied from contributing monetary

contributions, word of mouth advertising, and individuals attending events to larger commitments such as co-hosting annual events and organizing ongoing protests, the students agree that any type of support helps. As these leaders continue to transform the social climate at UW, my hope is that this study will contribute to recording the current history and progress of UW student organizations, and making these histories more available to current and future student leaders. The lessons from student organizers on campus 40 years ago continue to be a powerful influence on programming and the context for student groups today, just as today's leaders are changing the campus environment for future students.

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Jaimée's co-authored research study, *The Prevalence of Sexual Harassment and Workplace Abuse*, conducted at nine universities in Awassa, Ethiopia, is scheduled for publication in the *Journal of Occupational Health* in July 2009. This fall, she will enter the University of Michigan's Masters of Social Work program focused on community organization.

Syntactic Processing in Pre-Adolescents: An Event-Related Potential Study

Vanessa D. Montoya

Abstract

This study used event-related potentials (ERPs) to investigate how children process grammatical errors. We were interested in syntactic errors involving tense and subject-verb agreement marking on verbs, specifically errors in the use of third person singular present tense –s (e.g., She walks every day). We investigated a well-established syntax-related ERP component, the P600. The P600 is a positive change in electrical potential occurring 600ms after a stimulus is heard and is indicative of syntactic reanalysis and repair processes following the presentation of a syntactic error. We measured the P600 following two error types: omissions of third person singular –s (She walk) and overt, incorrect uses of third person singular –s (They walks). We found a P600 following both errors, but the amplitude and timing of the P600 differed between conditions. This study of typically developing children provides the foundation for future investigations of children with language impairments.

Introduction

Child language research has been the focus of a great deal of intellectual effort in recent years and is a particularly interesting topic to study because it centers on a time when language and cognitive development intersect. Recent neuroimaging techniques have allowed language researchers to further scrutinize the behavioral and neural-physiological correlates of linguistic processing. Because child development is very dynamic, it is particularly important to establish standards of normal functioning to assure that over time children are thriving. Normal standards of neural functioning can also serve as points of comparison for investigations of children with language impairments. Thus, it is clear investigations of neural processing of language provide a basis for further understanding normal language acquisition including the development and neural processing of language through childhood and into adolescence.

Studies of child language have focused on a range of linguistic behaviors; one longstanding area of interest in child language is finiteness marking. Finiteness marking involves the notions of number, person, tense, mood, agreement, and aspect (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985). In English, finiteness includes elements of tense and

subject-verb agreement which are marked directly on lexical verbs. All verbs are either finite or nonfinite. Finite verb forms can have a variety of (finiteness) markers that add different tense and agreement elements. The past tense *-ed* is a tense marker used on regular verbs such as, *she walked*. Unlike other finiteness markers, *-ed* does not mark subject-verb agreement and can be affixed to verb roots that occur with any subject. For example, the past tense form in *they walked* and *I walked* uses the same *-ed* form regardless of the subject. Two other finiteness markers are the BE and DO auxiliary verb forms. Instead of simply affixing a bound morpheme to the lexical verb as in the formation of past tense with *-ed*, BE and DO auxiliary verb forms are helping verbs that add to the grammatical function of the main lexical verb. In phrases such as “*I am going*” and “*They do not go often*,” *am* and *do* are auxiliary verbs that work with the lexical verb to serve new functions such as the progressive form, which is used to state what the subject is doing at that moment and negation using a dummy *do* auxiliary. Hence, finiteness marking can appear affixed to a verb or as a free-standing verb (Rice M. L., 1998).

In marked finiteness forms, seen in *she walks*, the bound morpheme *-s* is affixed to the verb root indicating that the sentence has a third person singular subject and is in present tense. Finite forms mark tense and agreement in obligatory contexts, however, they do not always have an overt phonologically noticeable form (Rice M. L., 1995). Consider the use of *-s* in the following phrases: “*He rolls down the hill*” and “*They roll down the hill*.” The verbs in both phrases are finite but they differ in the surface form of the finiteness marker. In the first phrase the *-s* in *rolls* marks third person singular present tense and follows conventions for marked finite verb forms. In the second sentence, there is no *-s* morpheme or other overt finiteness marker but the verb *roll* is still a finite form. In the second example, the verb carries hidden features of tense and agreement referred to as “zero morphemes” that do not have a phonological form (Rice M. L., 1998). The appropriate use of finiteness marking can help determine if the child has developed the syntactic abilities needed to fully understand the meaning of sentences they use and hear. Thus, finiteness marking is a property of one's grammatical knowledge that is important to measure in children in order to learn more about their syntactic system.

During language acquisition, children make errors on finiteness marking. A common error that young children make is an omission error related to finiteness. Omission errors occur when a verb fails to be marked for tense and agreement in an obligatory context, for example, “*Every day the girl read books to me*.” Although errors of omission are

Syntactic Processing in Pre-Adolescents

common in young children, other overt errors of subject verb agreement and tense marking are much rarer. An overt error is an inappropriate use of finiteness making as seen in “the ladies *likes* playing tennis.”

Children usually achieve mastery level of English syntax around eight years of age and most typically developing children as young as 36-42 months old have mastered the basic morphosyntactic structure of their native language (Golinkoff & Hirsch-Pasek, 1995). Investigations of finiteness marking and syntax in children can help us learn more about language acquisition but we have very limited knowledge of how the brain processes finiteness marking. Some neuroimaging methods have recently proved valuable in advancing knowledge and appreciation of possible neural signatures related to finiteness marking and morphosyntax.

Event-related potentials (ERPs) are a noninvasive neuroimaging method that measures the time-locked patterned firing of large groups of neurons in response to stimuli or internal events (e.g., motor movements). ERPs have good temporal resolution at the millisecond level. Responses are time-locked to the stimulus onset and therefore reflect the neural processes that are required to process the stimuli. ERP components can reveal electrophysiological patterns of different cognitive states including the level of effort needed for that cognitive activity. In this way, ERPs are indicative of various steps in information processing, analysis and integration. ERP components are defined by specific characteristics including the scalp distribution, latency, polarity, and amplitude of the electrophysiological response. Therefore, this method can be used to investigate the timing of neural processing of language.

One language-related ERP component is the P600. It is a positive-going wave occurring approximately 600 milliseconds after the onset of a syntactic stimulus that is either unexpected or incorrect. This component elicits a broad response in the posterior centro-parietal region of the scalp. The P600 has been observed in studies of syntactic errors of phrase structure (Hahne, Eckstein, & Friederici, 2004; Osterhout & Holcomb, 1992; Oberecker, Friederich, & Friederici, 2005). This component is of interest in language research because it is indicative of syntactic reanalysis and repair processes and can help further our knowledge of language processing. The timing, amplitude and polarity of the P600 response can be used to determine how children process syntactic errors involving finiteness marking.

Children as young as 30 months have shown a P600 like effect in response to syntactically anomalous sentences but their P600 had a longer duration, later peak amplitude and was more broadly distributed

when compared to adults (Silva-Pereyra, Klarman, Lin, & Kuhl, 2005). Similarly, children 36-48 months old also showed P600 differences in duration and scalp distribution in response to syntactically anomalous sentences (Silva-Pereyra, Rivera-Gaxiola, & Kuhl, 2004). In this study, responses in 48-month-olds became more focal and were more anterior than children 36 months old. Pereyra et al. suggested that these differences were moving towards more adult-like responses that may reflect the specialization of neural processing mechanisms that continue to develop into the mid-teen years.

Hahne and colleagues (Hahne, Eckstein, & Friederici, 2004) found that children who were between the ages of 7-13 began to show more adult-like P600 responses to sentences with syntactic violations of phrase structure such as, *the goose was in the fed*. The latency of these responses decreased with increasing age. Interestingly, 6-year-old children showed a noticeably different P600 response that occurred much later and with comparatively smaller amplitude than that of the 7-13-year-olds. Thus, these findings demonstrate that the underlying processes of syntactic reanalysis and repair are established in the toddler years but continue developing through early and late childhood. It is interesting to note that even though children 7-13 years old have mastered English syntax and perform well on grammaticality judgment tasks they still showed P600 responses different from those of adults with regards to amplitude and latency. Much can still be learned from investigating ERPs in late childhood and early adolescence.

The goal of this study was to use event-related potentials to investigate how children process grammatical errors. We were interested in syntactic errors of subject-verb agreement marking on verbs, specifically the use of third person singular present tense *-s* (e.g., *She walks every day*). We were interested in whether children 12-14 years of age showed a P600 response following omit errors and overt errors and whether these responses differed from each other with regard to their timing, amplitude, and scalp distribution. These results will help establish a norm for syntactic language processing in typically developing children through late childhood and early adolescence and could be used as a comparison group for future investigations of children with language impairments. Based on previous studies, we expected to find a P600 following omit and overt error types, with the overt P600 having a larger amplitude than the omit P600.

Methods

Participants

Syntactic Processing in Pre-Adolescents

A total of 17 typically developing (TD) children from 12-14 years old participated in this study. All of the participants were native speakers of Standard American English and were right handed as determined by the Edinburgh Inventory (Oldfield, 1970). All participants were tested for normal hearing at 25 dB for 500, 1000, 2000, and 4000 Hz. Audibility was required in at least one ear at each frequency level. Participants had normal non-verbal cognitive and language abilities scoring no more than 1 standard deviation below the mean on two behavioral tests: The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Fourth Edition (Wechsler, 2003), an assessment of non-verbal cognition, and the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals - Fourth Edition (Semel, Wiig, & Secord, 2003), an assessment of language ability. Behavioral and ERP testing were completed in two separate sessions. Both children and their parents consented to participate in the study. Children 13 and older signed their own consent to participate along with their parents. The University of Washington Human Subjects Committee approved the methods and procedures used in this study. Participants received \$50 for completion of this study.

Stimuli

We created fifty original stimulus sentences using third person singular present tense verbs. We then modified these sentences to create fifty sentences in each of our four experimental conditions: omit errors, omit controls, overt errors, and overt controls. We investigated two types of morphosyntactic errors that violated rules of subject-verb agreement: omission (omit) errors and overt errors. The grammatical morpheme *-s* was deleted from the lexical verb in the original stimulus sentences to create an omit error such as, “Her brother *play* piano.” For the overt error sentences, we chose to change the subject to third person plural present tense while the verb remained consistent with third person singular present tense form such as, “her brothers *plays* piano.” Control sentences using correct subject-verb agreement were generated to correspond with each error type. All sentences were spoken by a female native English speaker using natural prosody and were recorded digitally in a sound attenuated booth at a 44 kHz sampling rate.

Data collection

Children wore a geodesics Hydrocel electrode net with 128 silver/silver-chloride electrodes (Electrical Geodesics Incorporated, 2009). They sat in a quiet room on a comfortable chair approximately three feet away from a computer screen. Another researcher accompanied children who needed encouragement to stay still during the

experiment. Electrodes were placed according to the international 10-20 system locations (Jasper, 1958). We manually adjusted impedances for each electrode by adding more electrolyte solution to the electrode with a pipette and parting hair to attain a better connection with the scalp. No more than 5 electrodes with impedances over 50 k Ω in a single region of the scalp were permitted for testing. All electrodes were later re-referenced to the electrode on the left mastoid process offline. EEGs were recorded at a sampling rate of 250 Hz then digitally filtered offline from .1 to 30 Hz. Trials with eye movements and eye blinks exceeding 70 μ V were excluded from the study. All participants had at least 10 usable trials per condition but most averaged twenty to thirty usable trials.

After the electrodes were placed on the scalp, the children sat and listened to stimulus sentences presented by two audio speakers which were in close proximity to the computer monitor and the children. The loudness level of the sentences was adjusted to a comfortable listening level according to each child. E-prime computer software was used to administer the experiment (Schneider, Eschman, & Zuccolotto, 2002). Participants listened to ten practice sentences to familiarize them with the experiment before starting. Directions were presented in writing on the computer monitor; in addition, the researcher read these instructions to any child who requested help. Participants held a button press response box on their lap and were visually prompted by the computer to make grammatical judgments following each stimulus sentence. While the stimulus sentence played over the speakers, a “+” appeared on the screen. Children were asked to fixate on the “+” to avoid excess eye movement artifacts. At the end of each sentence the phrases “good” and “not so good” appeared on the monitor. Children then pressed the button that corresponded with their answer choice. This button press response was counterbalanced so that one half of the children pressed button number 4 for “good” and button 1 for “not so good” and the other half pressed the opposite buttons for “good” and “not so good.” Counterbalancing the response hand helped to ensure that responses made with the children’s dominant hand had no impact the ERP measurements. There were four, ten-minute sets of stimulus sentences containing 75 sentences per set. There was a 1500ms delay between sentences. If a child did not respond to a sentence within 10 seconds, the program timed-out and recorded a non-response. Participants took a short break of up to five minutes in between the four sets of stimuli. Water and candy were offered during the breaks to increase children’s comfort and motivation.

Data Analysis

Data included in our analysis consisted of ERP responses from correct trials, that is, trials where participants correctly judged stimuli as being grammatically correct or incorrect. A small subset of electrodes was used for statistical analysis: F7, FC3, F3, Fz, FCz, F8, FC4, F4, CP5, O1, P3, CPz, Oz, CP6, O2 and P4. Each 1600ms epoch from the EEG data contained a 100ms prestimulus baseline relative to the offset of the main verb root in the sentences followed by 1500ms after the verb root. We chose to segment our data at the offset of the verb root because this is where the *-s* marker was affixed in the omit control and the overt error conditions, and also where the verb ended in the omit error and the overt control conditions. We used a time window of 500-900ms post stimulus onset to compute the mean amplitude because this is where we expected to find P600 responses. Two repeated measures ANOVAs were performed to investigate syntactic error type effects and possible interactions. An initial set of ANOVAs analyzed the within subject factors of condition (error, control), hemisphere (left, right) and region (anterior, posterior) in the lateral sites. A subsequent set of ANOVAs evaluated condition, hemisphere, region and age group factors for the midline electrodes.

Results

The ERP results of children in our study resulted in strikingly different neural processing characteristics between the omit and overt error conditions. For the omit condition, we found a significant condition by region effect with a significant condition difference in the midline region, $F(1, 16) = 4.948, p = .041$. The peak amplitudes for the omit error and the omit control in the anterior midline region were $-2.164\mu\text{V}$ and $-.276\mu\text{V}$ respectively. Omit error and control responses in the posterior midline region had peak amplitudes of $4.614\mu\text{V}$ and $3.250\mu\text{V}$ respectively. Therefore, in the posterior regions, where P600 effects are typically observed, the omit error condition was more positive than the omit control condition. Visual inspection of data revealed that the largest effect was seen in the posterior midline area. Figure 1 displays the P600 results for the omit error and omit control conditions.

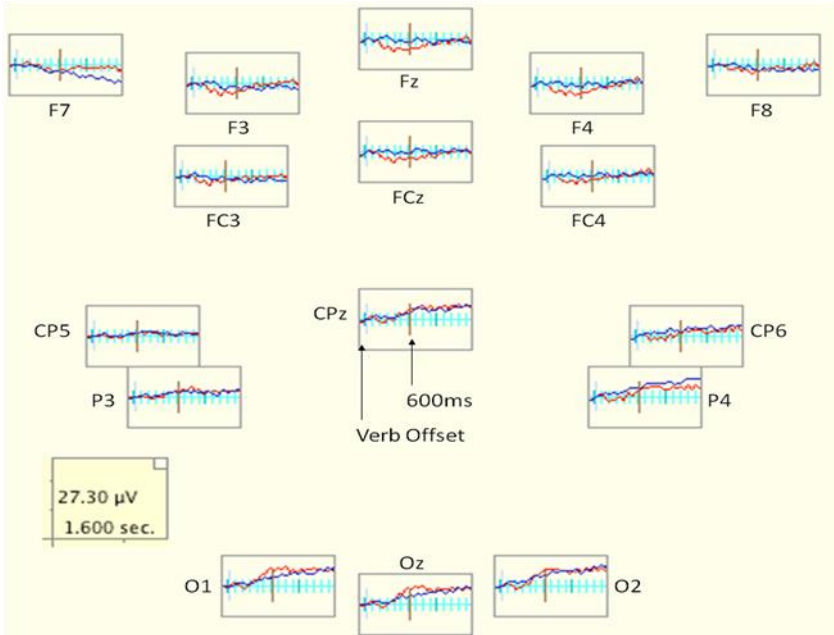


Figure 1. P600 responses for omit error and omit control conditions; positive voltage is plotted up.

In the overt condition, the children's ERP responses were markedly larger in amplitude and longer in duration than in the omit condition. There were significant condition main effects in both the lateral F (1, 16) = 8.736, $p = .009$, and midline sites, $F(1, 16) = 11.124$, $p = .004$. Upon visual inspection of the data we noted that the posterior sites, namely CP5, P3 CPz, showed a long condition effect from 44-1450ms. Similarly, anterior electrodes: FZ, F4, F8, FC3 FCz and FC4 also showed a prolonged condition effect from 200-1500ms. Figure 2 shows the P600 results for the overt error and overt control conditions.

Synaptic Processing in Pre-Adolescents

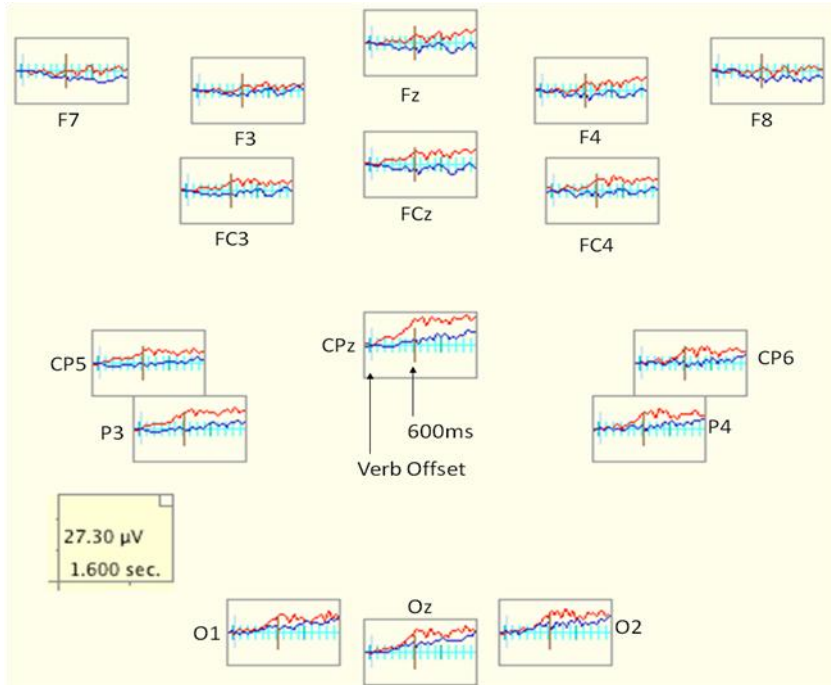


Figure 2. P600 results for overt error and overt control conditions; positive voltage is plotted up

Discussion

Our study was concerned with investigating whether there were neural processing differences between sentences containing omit and overt syntactic errors involving tense and subject-verb agreement on third person singular present tense verbs in children 12-14 years old. We used ERPs to determine whether there was a P600 effect immediately following each error type and whether the characteristics of this effect differed between our four experimental conditions: omit errors, omit controls, overt errors and overt controls. As expected, we found that P600 responses were different in our two error conditions. Interestingly, these responses contrasted far more than expected in terms of their amplitude, duration and degree of scalp distribution.

In the omit conditions, the largest P600 effect occurred in the posterior midline area. However, these P600 responses were smaller and more focal than those seen in similar studies of syntax (Osterhout and Holcomb, 1992). One explanation for this result may be that our omit error was more subtle than the syntactic errors used in previous studies. The *-s* omission has relatively low phonetic and semantic salience. The *-s* morpheme in our study serves as a marker of tense and subject-verb

agreement but actually carries little semantic importance in the sentence overall when compared to previous studies that looked at errors of word category (Hahne et al., 2004). Thus, the modest P600 that we found for the omit conditions probably represents a relatively low reanalysis cost for the brain.

Conversely, results for the overt error condition revealed a more wide-spread P600 response which was present in all of the posterior electrodes we analyzed. P600-like responses were also present in some more anterior regions. There were noticeably larger amplitude differences between the overt error and the overt control conditions relative to the omit error and omit control conditions. For the overt error condition, we pluralized the subject and added an *-s* to the lexical verb so that sentences such as, “Her brother plays the piano,” in the omit control condition became “Her brothers plays the piano” in the overt error condition. Here the subject-verb agreement error seems more significant than that present in the omit conditions for three main reasons: our omit error can be interpreted as two types of errors, the higher syntactic and semantic salience of the error compared to the omit condition, and the fact that overt errors are rare in spoken English. The nature of online auditory language processing dictates that while the listener hears each word in the sentence, they analyze and interpret the semantic and syntactic information for each individual word and also integrate each new word into the context set up by previous words within the sentence. This integration of information is based on the semantic and morphosyntactic forms commonly encountered in their language. Thus, when the children in our study heard a third person plural subject followed by a third person singular verb in the overt error sentences this mismatch caused them to reanalyze both the subject and the verb to determine where the error occurred. Although one might argue that this explanation is also true in the omit error condition, omissions of tense and agreement are more common than overt errors. The type of tense and agreement error present in the overt condition is so rare in English that we believe the listener might have a higher propensity to reanalyze and repair the sentences they hear. All of these factors could be playing a role in the larger amplitude of the P600 response and the higher reanalysis cost that this error type elicits/provokes.

Perhaps more striking than the large amplitude difference between the ERPs following the overt conditions relative to the omit conditions, was the extended duration of the overt P600. The response lasted from 400-1450ms in the posterior region and from 200ms -1500 ms in the anterior region. There could be several explanations for this finding. One possibility is that this particular error type actually

Synaptic Processing in Pre-Adolescents

represents several ERP components working together over a longer period of time. It is possible that a combination of a P300 and a P600 could account for the unusually long duration of this response. Although there is still no formal consensus on the neural processes that the P300 represents, it is believed that the P300 is sensitive to the probability of a target in a specific task. The P300 increases in amplitude as the target probability gets smaller (Duncan-Johnson & Donchin, 1977). Therefore, it would seem that the parietally maximal P300 occurs when a target is infrequent and unexpected (Verleger, Jaskowski, & Wauschkuhn, 1994). This could mean that listeners in our study were surprised when they hear the overt errors (P300) then reanalyzed and repaired their meaning (P600), therefore leading to two positive going ERP components occurring in close temporal proximity to one another. Nonetheless, it is clear this large amplitude difference was not found following omit errors and more research is needed to fully determine whether a P300 component occurred in the overt error condition.

In sum, this study shows that not all morphosyntactic errors have the same underlying neural processing. In fact, we can further investigate and define both normal and abnormal language processing by comparing neuroprocessing of different error types. Establishing language neuroprocessing norms is instrumental in the study of children with language impairments, who might, in some cases, process morphosyntactic errors differently from typically developing children.

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Synactic Processing in Pre-Adolescents

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Appendix

Practice Items

The man is driving a car
My sister is play a game
I does like chocolate
Fish swim in water
The children don't play football
In the race the man ran the fast
The children doesn't play football
Next week the men will go fishing
The man is drive a car
I go swimming in the summer

Omit controls

Every day the girl reads books to me
My aunt makes peanut butter sandwiches
The baseball player throws the ball to first base
The teacher writes problems on the board
My cousin gives presents to me on my birthday
My friend plays movies on a big screen tv
After dinner the boy plays games with me
Every day the girl plays baseball with me
My uncle buys bread at the grocery store
The bus driver drives buses all over town
The boy drinks milk with his cookies
The green frog likes jumping on rocks
She always walks by my house after school
The boy wants pizza for dinner
Her brother plays the piano
The bumblebee makes buzzing sounds
The dangerous black bear makes me nervous
The lady likes playing tennis
At the fair my sister rides the roller coaster
The girl makes dessert for everyone
The dentist cleans peoples' teeth
The boy always wants more candy
My best friend goes biking with me
The old lady gives nuts to the squirrels

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The doctor gives children shots
The girl packs bags for the trip next week
The bug bites people sitting outside
The famous artist paints pretty pictures
The librarian gives books to the children
The baby likes crawling on the floor
At the zoo the lion makes loud sounds
The shark lives beneath the water
The pilot takes planes to different countries
My uncle drives black motorcycles
Outside the bird gets branches for the nest
My best friend lives next door to me
At the beach the boy builds castles in the sand
The soccer player kicks the ball
In the barn the horse rests near the cows
Every morning the lady drinks grape juice
The smart boy knows the answer
The firefighter drives quickly to the fire
After school the girl reads books for fun
The tall boy plays basketball at school
Her sister waits beside me for the bus
Every morning she brings me the newspaper
The boy grabs cookies before leaving the house
My brother likes pancakes for breakfast
Every day my sister likes dancing to music
My art teacher draws pictures of animals

Omit Errors

Every day the girl read books to me
My aunt make peanut butter sandwiches
The baseball player throw the ball to first base
The teacher write problems on the board
My cousin give presents to me on my birthday
My friend play movies on a big screen tv
After dinner the boy play games with me
Every day the girl play baseball with me
My uncle buy bread at the grocery store
The bus driver drive buses all over town
The boy drink milk with his cookies
The green frog like jumping on rocks
She always walk by my house after school
The boy want pizza for dinner

Synactic Processing in Pre-Adolescents

Her brother play the piano
The bumblebee make buzzing sounds
The dangerous black bear make me nervous
The lady like playing tennis
At the fair my sister ride the roller coaster
The girl make dessert for everyone
The dentist clean peoples' teeth
The boy always want more candy
My best friend go biking with me
The old lady give nuts to the squirrels
The doctor give children shots
The girl pack bags for the trip next week
The bug bite people sitting outside
The famous artist paint pretty pictures
The librarian give books to the children
The baby like crawling on the floor
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The soccer player kick the ball
In the barn the horse rest near the cows
Every morning the lady drink grape juice
The smart boy know the answer
The firefighter drive quickly to the fire
After school the girl read books for fun
The tall boy play basketball at school
Her sister wait beside me for the bus
Every morning she bring me the newspaper
The boy grab cookies before leaving the house
My brother like pancakes for breakfast
Every day my sister like dancing to music
My art teacher draw pictures of animals

Overt Controls

Every day the girls read books to me
My aunts make peanut butter sandwiches
The baseball players throw the ball to first base
The teachers write problems on the board

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My cousins give presents to me on my birthday
My friends play movies on a big screen tv
After dinner the boys play games with me
Every day the girls play baseball with me
My uncles buy bread at the grocery store
The bus drivers drive buses all over town
The boys drink milk with their cookies
The green frogs like jumping on rocks
They always walk by my house after school
The boys want pizza for dinner
Her brothers play the piano
The bumblebees make buzzing sounds
The dangerous black bears make me nervous
The ladies like playing tennis
At the fair my sisters ride the roller coaster
The girls make dessert for everyone
The dentists clean peoples' teeth
The boys always want more candy
My best friends go biking with me
The old ladies give nuts to the squirrels
The doctors give children shots
The girls pack bags for the trip next week
The bugs bite people sitting outside
The famous artists paint pretty pictures
The librarians give books to the children
The babies like crawling on the floor
At the zoo the lions make loud sounds
The sharks live beneath the water
The pilots take planes to different countries
My uncles drive black motorcycles
Outside the birds get branches for the nest
My best friends live next door to me
At the beach the boys build castles in the sand
The soccer players kick the ball
In the barn the horses rest near the cows
Every morning the ladies drink grape juice
The smart boys know the answer
The firefighters drive quickly to the fire
After school the girls read books for fun
The tall boys play basketball at school
Her sisters wait beside me for the bus
Every morning they bring me the newspaper

Synactic Processing in Pre-Adolescents

The boys grab cookies before leaving the house
My brothers like pancakes for breakfast
Every day my sisters like dancing to music
My art teachers draw pictures of animals

Overt Error

Every day the girls reads books to me
My aunts makes peanut butter sandwiches
The baseball players throws the ball to first base
The teachers writes problems on the board
My cousins gives presents to me on my birthday
My friends plays movies on a big screen tv
After dinner the boys plays games with me
Every day the girls plays baseball with me
My uncles buys bread at the grocery store
The bus drivers drives buses all over town
The boys drinks milk with their cookies
The green frogs likes jumping on rocks
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Her brothers plays the piano
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The sharks lives beneath the water
The pilots takes planes to different countries
My uncles drives black motorcycles
Outside the birds gets branches for the nest
My best friends lives next door to me

At the beach the boys builds castles in the sand
The soccer players kicks the ball
In the barn the horses rests near the cows
Every morning the ladies drinks grape juice
The smart boys knows the answer
The firefighters drives quickly to the fire
After school the girls reads books for fun
The tall boys plays basketball at school
Her sisters waits beside me for the bus
Every morning they brings me the newspaper
The boys grabs cookies before leaving the house
My brothers likes pancakes for breakfast
Every day my sisters likes dancing to music
My art teachers draws pictures of animals

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The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

Christina Rainey

Abstract

Depression is a serious mental health problem that adversely affects adolescents. This paper reviews important concepts and key findings in adolescent depression research with a specific focus on African American adolescents. Parental support and racial identity are two factors that have been related to African American adolescents' well-being, however there is limited research examining their relationship with African American adolescent depression. The current study explores the experience of parental support and racial identity among African American adolescents with higher and lower levels of depressive symptoms. Qualitative analysis of African American adolescent interviews revealed themes related to parental support and racial identity which will be discussed along with specific attention to differences in themes between adolescents with higher and lower levels of depressive symptoms. Future implications of this research are discussed.

Adolescent Depression

Depression constitutes a serious health problem among youth, with 10% to 15% of the child and adolescent population reporting some symptoms of depression (Surgeon General Report 2003). As many as one in every 33 children may meet criteria for clinical depression, and the prevalence of depression among adolescents may be as high as one in eight (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Depression among adolescents is related to numerous negative psychological outcomes including suicidality, aggression, school-drop out and the development of other mental health problems (e.g., anxiety disorders, eating disorders) (American Psychiatric Association DSM IV-TR, 2000).

Depression among adolescents is a complex issue that is manifested in numerous ways (Sagrestano, Paikoff, Holmbeck, & Fendrich, 2003; Compas & Hammen, 1994; Kovacs, 1990). Major Depression and Dysthymia are two diagnoses that are common among adolescents. These forms of depression are associated with a variety of individual and environmental factors including biological factors, parenting factors, and social environmental factors, but the actual cause of depression is unknown (Surgeon Generals Report, 1999).

The criteria for a diagnosis of Major Depression include: depressed mood, (in adolescents this can also be irritable mood), changes in appetite, changes in sleep, decreases in energy, low overall self-worth, a negative outlook on life, and a sense of not belonging (American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV, 2000). According to the Surgeon General's Report, 5% of youth ages 9 to 17 report experiencing major depression (Surgeon General's Report 1999; Shaffer et al., 1996).

Dysthymia, or Dsythymic disorder, is another diagnosis typically involving chronic symptoms of depression. Dysthymia results in mood changes and in some cases can be more severe than major depression (APA DSM IV, 2000). Among adolescents, dysthymia affects both males and females equally. Common symptoms of dysthymia include feeling irritable, cranky, and "down in the dumps." Negative outcomes related to dysthymia include low self-esteem, low energy, and poor social skills (DSM IV TR, 2000). Research indicates approximately 3% of adolescents have a diagnosis of dysthymia (Surgeon General Report 2003; Garrison, Waller, Cuffee, McKeown, Addy, & Jackson, 1997) and 70% of adolescents and children who experience dysthymia also experience major depression (Surgeon General Report 1999; Kovacs, Akiskal, Gatsonis, & Parrone, 1994).

Treatment for Adolescent Depression

There are many different types of treatment methods for adolescent depression. Currently there are a variety of interventions including cognitive therapy, family systems therapy, behavioral therapy, and psychoeducation. Cognitive therapies are common in the treatment of depression and are often combined with behavioral techniques. In a review of which treatment methods are most effective with adolescents, Lewinsohn & Clarke (1999) found cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to be an effective treatment for adolescent depression. The CBT model utilizes structured therapy sessions that varies in duration of time (weeks, months) and can be administered in a group or individual format. Sessions focus on facilitating constructive positive thinking, coping skills, and self-change skills (Lewinsohn & Clarke 1999). Advantages of using CBT to treat depression include effective treatment in a short amount of time, and predictable length of treatment for health care providers and health care agencies. CBT is efficacious, with as many as 63% of adolescents who received CBT showing significant improvement at the end of the treatment (Reinecke, Ryan & Dubios 1998).

Currently, most of the research on interventions for adolescent depression focuses on treatment programs, while limited research

The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

examines prevention for adolescent depression (Lewinsohn & Clarke 1999). In addition, research on the etiology of adolescent depression has reported varied and sometimes conflicting findings regarding causal and contributing factors (Wight, Sepulveda & Aneshensel, 2004). Consequently, a cohesive model of adolescent depression is lacking.

African American Adolescent Depression

Among the gaps in the literature on adolescent depression is a particular lack of research that focuses specifically on depression in African American adolescents. Currently, the need to examine depression among African American adolescents is pressing, as there are limited studies and an inconclusive literature focused on this population (Hammack 2003; Repetto, Zimmerman & Caldwell, 2004). In addition, limited findings in this area have been over generalized, impairing our understanding of African American adolescent depression. What is known about African American adolescent depression is that these youth are a unique population with complex issues and are disproportionately affected by mental health disparities (Hammack, 2003; Breland-Noble, 2004). Furthermore, the complexities of depression in this population are understudied, hindering the development of effective interventions for these youth.

Studies employing a within group research design (i.e., focusing exclusively on African Americans) have yielded some important findings about adolescent depression in this group. Specifically, among African American youth, depressive symptoms during adolescence predict a two to three-fold greater risk of depression in adulthood (Repetto, Caldwell, & Zimmerman 2004; Aseltine, Gore, & Colten 1998). Further, the prevalence of major depression among African American youth is as high as 9% (Hammack, Robinson, Crawford, & Li, 2004; Roberts, Roberts & Chen 1997). In addition, problem behaviors such as aggression and violence, academic failure, and delinquent behaviors are purported to function as coping mechanisms for depression in this population (McGee, 2003) highlighting some of the negative consequences associated with untreated depression in this population.

Gender Differences

Gender differences have also been reported in within group studies of African American adolescent depression (Grant et al., Steele, Armistead, & Forehand, 2000; Lyons, Carlson, Thurm, Grant, Gipson, 2006). Among African American females, the prevalence of depression and depressive symptoms is substantially higher than their African American male counterparts (Grant et al. in press; Lyons et., al 2006;

Grant et al., 2004). One study examining ruminative coping and depressive symptoms found that gender was positively correlated with depressive symptoms and ruminative coping, with females reporting significantly higher depressive symptoms and ruminative coping than males (Grant et al., 2004). Additionally, Hammack et al., (2004) found that the association between poverty and depressed mood among African American adolescents was more prevalent among females, with 57% of impoverished females reporting clinical levels of depression compared to 35% of impoverished males. In addition, depression has been linked to low neighborhood social capital and kinship support and violent behaviors among African American males but not females (Lindsey et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1998). Gender differences in the correlates and prevalence of depression supports paying attention to within group differences when studying African American adolescent depression, and designing sex-specific interventions for African American youth (Grant et al., 2004).

African American Adolescent Depression and Suicide

A positive relationship between depression and suicide among African Americans has been established within the literature (Willis, et al., 2002). However, despite higher rates of depression among African American adolescent females, rates of suicide have been growing among African American adolescent males (Breland-Noble, 2004; Crosby & Molock, 2006; Hammack, 2003). It has been concluded that the rate of suicide among African American adolescent males has increased 114% between the period from 1980 to 1995 (Breland-Noble 2004; CDC 1998). It is important to gain a better understanding of African American adolescent depression and its potential relationship to increasing suicide rates in this population.

Despite recent research on prevalence rates and correlates, overall, the topic of depression among African American adolescents is under-researched leaving a substantial need for more research in this area (Hammack, 2003; Repetto, Caldwell & Zimmerman 2004). With the increasing suicide rates and substantial prevalence of depression (Crosby & Molock 2006) there is a definite need to investigate potential risk and protective factors within this population group.

Risk and Protective Factors for Depression

Several factors influence the development of African American adolescent depression, including socioeconomic status, limited opportunities, racial identity, and parental support (Hammack, 2003). To understand how these factors influence the manifestation of depression, a

The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

brief overview of these factors follows, with in-depth attention to the role of racial identity and parental support as these are the focus of the present study.

Socioeconomic Status and Limited Opportunities

Low Socioeconomic Status (SES) and depression symptoms are correlated among urban African American adolescents (Fitzpatrick et al., 2005). With approximately 31% of African American youth living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), low SES has been cited as being one of the main attributes for mental health problems among African Americans adolescents (Lyons et al., 2006; Hammack et al., 2004; Bruce, Takeuchi, & Leaf 1991).

African American adolescents' perception of limited opportunities available to them may not only be a deterrent to success (Hawkins et al., 1998; Levy & Land 1994) but also a contributor to depression (Hawkins et al., 1994). In Hawkins et al. (1994) study with inner-city adolescents, lower levels of perceived success were related to higher levels of depression symptoms, particularly among African American male adolescents. This study is the only study found that examines the relationship between limited opportunities and the development of African American adolescent depression, leaving limited opportunities as an under-studied potential risk factor for the development of African American adolescent depression.

Racial Identity

For African Americans racial identity has been defined as “the significance and qualitative meaning that individuals attribute to their membership within the Black racial group within their self-concepts. This definition can be broken down into two questions of ‘How important is race in the individual’s perception of self?’ and ‘what does it mean to be a member of this racial group?’” (pg. 1 Seaton, 2009, Sellers et al., 1998) Adolescence has been identified as a developmental period in which youth engage in the critical task of questioning and exploring their racial identity (Sellers et al., 1998, Phinney, 1989, Tatum, 1997). It is during this time that adolescents realize that some of their experience of adversity is linked to their racial group (Phinney, 1989, Tatum, 1997) and this understanding has been cited as having a significant impact on their goals and accomplishments (Sellers et al., 1998, Tatum, 1997).

Racial identity has been linked to the psychological well being of African American adolescents (Sellers et al., 2006). Racial identity and psychological well being have commonly been investigated in conjunction with racial discrimination. For example Sellers et al., 2006

examined the affects of racial identity by assessing the relationship between racial discrimination and psychological well being. Authors found that there is a relationship between public regard (African American adolescents' perceptions of the view that other ethnicities have towards African Americans as a whole), racial discrimination and depression (Sellers et al., 2006). These authors also found that positive private regard (private regard refers to personal attitudes towards one's racial group) were associated with more positive psychological outcomes regardless of level of discrimination. Findings from this study indicate racial identity is related to the psychological well being of African American adolescents, and depression in particular. While this study provides support for the relationship between racial identity and depression a greater understanding of how racial identity may impact African American adolescent depression is needed. Further, there is an inconclusive literature examining the relationship between racial identity and psychological functioning with studies finding conflicting results (Sellers et al., 2006) suggesting more work examining the construct of racial identity among African American adolescents with higher and lower depressive symptoms is warranted.

African American Parental Support

Within the structure of the African American family, research has often examined the role of kinship. Kinship within African American families is the social network of extended nuclear family members and friends who are considered family (Taylor & Roberts, 1993). The concept of kinship among African American families is of great importance and has been found to predict increased well-being in African American adolescents (Taylor & Roberts, 1993). While this construct has been commonly associated with externalizing problems among African American adolescents (McCabe, Clark, & Barnett, 1999) the relationship between kinship, and internalizing problems such as depression has not been adequately examined.

Building off the kinship support literature a probable theory is that parental support is important for both externalizing and internalizing problems among African American adolescents. Research supports this theory and indicates that there is a relationship between parental support and African American adolescent depressive symptoms. Bean, Barber, & Crane (2006) concluded that parental support plays a vital role in preventing African American adolescent depression being related to decreased depression, regardless of gender, grade, or income level. Lindsey et al. (2006) also concluded that family support for African American males played a vital role in how they sought to cope with

The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

depression symptoms providing an adaptive coping mechanism. This research suggests that parental support may have a significant role in African American adolescent depression, but there is still a need for more research.

Present Study

The current study explores parental support, racial identity, and depression symptoms among African American adolescents. Primarily using the qualitative method, the current study seeks to examine the experience of racial identity and parental support among African American adolescents with higher and lower depression symptoms to further examine the role of these constructs in African American adolescent depression. This study addresses gaps in the literature on depression among African American adolescents and provides suggestions for future research directions.

Methodology

This data collection is a part of a larger study, Project GAINS (Gathering Adolescent Input for New Solutions). Project GAINS is a two year project initiated in December 2006. Project GAINS was developed in order to understand how stress and coping factors are related to ethnically diverse adolescents' health risk behaviors. The project examines the specificity and generalizability of a model adolescent drinking that includes individual, interpersonal, and contextual risk and protective factors.

For the current study, in-home baseline interviews were conducted with African American adolescents to explore depression, racial identity and parental support.

Participants

The total sample size for the current study was comprised of 23 African American adolescents. Participants ranged from the ages of 15-18 years of age. The sample had 11 males (45.8%) and 12 (50%) females, and one participant who did not indicate their gender (4.2%). Participants indicated whether or not they received free or reduce price lunch, 11 (45.8%) reported yes while the other 12 (50%), reported no. Again there was one participant who did not respond (missing value 4.2%).

Procedure

African American adolescents were recruited from high schools, community centers and a church in two different cities (one in the Pacific Northwest and another in the Midwest). Parental consent and adolescent

assent was obtained in person before every interview. The length of the interviews was approximately 90 minutes. Adolescents were paid \$15 for completing the interview.

Measures

Depression, parental support, and racial identity were measured using a mixed method approach that includes a survey and open-ended questions.

Child Depression Inventory

Depression was assessed using the Child Depression Inventory (CDI) developed by (Kovacs, 1992). The CDI is a 27-item self report symptom orientated scale suitable for use for those between the ages of 7 and 17. Participants pick one of three items that best describes their behavior for the past two weeks, such as “all bad things are my fault” or “many bad things are my fault” or “bad things are not usually my fault.” Overall depressive symptomatology is measured by a total score from five factors: negative mood, interpersonal problems, ineffectiveness, anhedonia, and negative self esteem. The CDI has been used with various ethnic groups including African American adolescents (DuRant et al., 1995; Fitzpatrick, 1993; Goldstein, Paul, & Sanfilippo-Cohn, 1985; Maikranz, Steel, & Forehand, 2003). Cronbach’s alpha in a normative sample was .86, and total score reliability ranges from .80 to .88 in normative samples.

Open-Ended Interview Questions

The interview questions were designed with particular attention to language used with language used intended to be understandable, non-intrusive, and inoffensive to participants. For example, the word “why” was avoided in interview questions due to the potential corrective connotation of the word (Berg, 2001). Lastly, questions were designed to be brief and concise and avoid asking two things at once (Berg, 2001). When administering these questions, research assistants were thoroughly trained in how and when to use probes such as “could you tell me more about that” in order to preserve standardization and to gain a more comprehensible answer from the participant. Open ended interview questions were utilized to investigate the topic areas of parental support and racial identity.

Interview Questions

Interview questions related to parental support are: 1) “What are your parent’s goals for your education?” 2) “What are your parents’

The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

biggest concerns for you right now?” and 3) “How often do you and your parent talk about how to deal with stress?” Interview questions related to racial identity are: 1) “How would you identify your racial group?” 2) “What does it mean to you to be a member of your racial group?”

In order to assess responses to open-ended questions a phenomenological qualitative approach was used for this study. The phenomenological approach focuses on the lived experience of each participant (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). First open ended questions were transcribed verbatim. Next, transcriptions were separated into 2 categories: teens whose CDI scores indicated higher depressive symptomology and teens whose CDI scores indicated lower symptomology. The procedure for determining the higher and lower categories is described below. Third, transcriptions were coded for themes related to racial identity and parental support.

Results

Adolescent CDI total scores (raw score) ranged from 0-12, with t values of 29-50. The cut off score for this study to determine those with lower vs. higher depression symptoms was a raw score of 9. This raw score corresponds to the 46th percentile in a normal population for boys age 13-17 and 56th percentile for girls aged 13-17. The total number of participants with a raw score of 9 or above was 6.

Themes related to parental support and racial identity emerged from the interviews. Themes are reported in Table 1. Some of the main themes reported by teens with higher depression symptoms were adolescent independent coping with stress (coded from parental support questions), and a historical sense of pride (coded from the racial identity questions). Some of the main themes reported by teens with lower depression symptoms were the importance of parental involvement when dealing with stress (coded from parental support questions) and resiliency against negative societal norms and positive and negative stereotypes (coded from the racial identity questions). Themes that each group shared were the importance of parental involvement with educational goals and parental concern with avoiding dangerous activities (both coded from parental support questions).

	Higher Depression Symptoms	Lower Depression Symptoms	Shared
Parental Support	More independent coping with stress	More parental Involvement	Parental Involvement With Educational Goals Concern with avoiding dangerous activities
Racial Identity	Historical sense of pride	Positive & Negative Stereotypes Resiliency against negative societal norms	

Table 1: Parental Support and Racial Identity Themes for Adolescents with Higher and Lower Depression Symptoms

Parental Support

For the role of parental support there were differences and similarities in the themes for each adolescent group. When discussing the topic of stress adolescents with higher depression symptoms reported that there was limited communication about stress, and most teens reported that they independently coped with stress. Conversely, adolescents with lower depression symptoms indicated they talked to their parent often about how to deal with stress or about their daily activities and what’s going on with them. The similarities found between adolescents with higher and lower depression symptoms were that parental involvement was found to be substantial when it came to topics related to educational and career success, and the avoidance of dangerous activities. Tables 2 & 3 illustrate qualitative responses.

The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

<p>Teens with Higher Depression Symptoms Theme: Independent Coping With Stress</p>	<p>Teens with Lower Depression Symptoms Theme: Parental Involvement</p>
<p>"...we don't really talk about it 'cause when I stress, she knows when I'm stressing so she let me be. Like she can know when I'm mad because I'll go to my room and close the door. Or when I'm walking down the street, she knows I'm mad because I fold my arms. ..Or she, she know, she'll talk to me about it after the fact. She know I'm through with stressing or through getting mad. Like she know when I'm stressing when I go to sleep, all day, she know something wrong. So she talks to me after I cool down. She asks me like "what's wrong?" and I'm like "nothing, but she, she's "okay". She leave, but she always will come back, or I end up going back and tell her anyway. And I might not be in the mood to talk to her about it. "</p> <p>*****</p> <p>"We don't talk about how to deal with it, like nah we, we, don't, we don't talk about how to deal with stress they say if you're angry just go out and calm down or something like that. So we, yeah, that's we really don't talk about how to deal with it. Yeah, if I'm angry they'll tell me like, usually when I'm angry I'm angry at them or something that they did. Cause I really don't tell them what's going on at school cause they're going to be like well don't worry about it, just forget about it and that doesn't help so. "</p>	<p>"Uh, a lot. ...Uh, we just like, once in a while, we'll talk about stuff and stress because like, sometimes, like I said, I stress about my grades. And when I'm stressed, I usually get headaches or I'm real quiet. So then they'll ask me why am I quiet, or uh, and then, like we'll just start talking about stress and like stuff and what's on my mind"</p> <p>*****</p> <p>"A lot of times, yeah. Like every day like my mom would ask me what I think about everything like, you know, about life and all, and yeah. Not to be stressful about college and... about everything in my life. Yeah. ... Yeah, like, how to take care of myself, and how to be more strong and you know, be like, you know, like confidence and all, ok, yeah."</p>

Table 2: Themes and responses to "How often do you and your parent talk about stress?"

Racial Identity

The role of racial identity was found to manifest itself differently among adolescents with lower and higher depression symptoms. Those with lower depression symptoms identified positive or negative stereotypes and one's response to them as an important aspect of racial identity. In addition, these adolescents identified resiliency against negative social norms associated with being African American as another important component of racial identity. Those with higher depression symptoms identified a historical sense of pride and strength as an important component of their racial identity. Findings are reported in Tables 4 and 5.

The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

Teens with Higher Depression Symptoms Theme: Historical Sense of Pride & Strength	Teens with Lower Depression Symptoms Theme: Positive and Negative Stereotypes
<p>"Um, to me it just means to be, I think, like it is to be anything. Living with your past, present and future as a, as a person born to that ethnic group. So, I think for black people, being strong and who you are and sort of being born in the world with both the stigma and a sense of pride. So, both of those characteristics are kind of butting heads; but like, it is whatever you make it."</p> <p>*****</p> <p>"Yeah um, actually I'm kind of proud you know, I don't get any sense of where I come from that I'm strong enough to come from certain things that happened in the past with my culture, my people, to be part of something. I also feel like I have to work harder to get things I want but that's just the world we live in. It's improving you know, um with Obama I would look up to him as a leader and think if he does win the election I think it'll give a lot black people hope and tell them you know you can make it. We have, we have our first black president and your only resort isn't to sell drugs or all that stuff. You can do other things so yeah that's, I'm glad that I'm black you know. ..."</p>	<p>Black people. ...Identify athletic...very smart, very street smart, even some of the people that don't seem that they're smart, are smart in certain aspect of things. So it's a beautiful group of people sometimes misguided. People that can do great things, most all great things happened in the world are black people. ...Black people are best at everything just about. Best fighters, best basketball players, best football players, best runners, best golfers, best tennis players. It's true. "</p> <p>*****</p> <p>"Mmm. There is a lot of stereotypes with being black... If you eat out you eat chicken and like you wear your clothes big. Um, I don't know you talk funny or something like that ...I think I'm 'posed to make it cause I'm not trying to be another statistic that the people that's not making it. I don't know, like, it seems like everybody thinks that your supposed to go to jail or your not supposed to graduate or nothing. ...And I'm trying to do the opposite. ..."</p>

Table 3: Themes and responses to the "What does it mean to you to be a part of your racial group?"

Teens with Lower Depression Symptoms Theme: Resiliency Against Societal Norms

“I think I’m ‘posed to make it cause I’m not trying to be another statistic that the people that’s not making it. I don’t know, like, it seems like everybody thinks that your supposed to go to jail or your not supposed to graduate or nothing. And I’m trying to do the opposite.”

“Well it’s important to me because people that are not a part of my racial group may have umm, umm thoughts in their head that aren’t true and I could prove them wrong or try to anyway. Like umm we’re not smart and we’re lazy and stuff like that.”

Table 4: Themes and responses to the “What does it mean to you to be a part of your racial group?”

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

African American adolescents’ experience of parental support and racial identity were found to have unique components depending on the adolescents’ level of depression symptoms. For parental support, teens with higher depression symptoms reported more independent coping whereas those with lower depression symptoms reported more parental involvement in coping. It may be that those with higher depression symptoms attempt to manage stress more on their own. Managing stress on their own may be an indication that adolescents with higher levels of depression symptoms do not have adequate parental support to protect them from the risk of depression symptoms. It may also indicate that these adolescents do not disclose their experience of stress with potential supportive individuals. Adolescents with lower depression symptoms on the other hand were found to have parental involvement when dealing with stress. A reason for this finding may be that parental support acts as a protective factor against depression symptoms; in this case the parental support provided acts as a coping resource for the teen protecting them from the experience of depression symptoms.

For racial identity teens with higher depression symptoms focused on a historical sense of pride and strength associated with their

The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

racial group whereas teens with lower depression symptoms highlighted some of the positive stereotypes of Black people and overcoming the negative stereotypes. It may be that those with higher levels of depression symptoms feel the challenges are larger (rooted in historical racism that continues today) and have a greater responsibility to carry on the Black legacy of being strong and proud. Whereas those with lower levels of depression symptoms feel the challenges of one's race relate to how one chooses to respond to positive and negative stereotypes. Individual experiences related to one's racial identity can also be attributed to adolescents' responses that were indicative of a sense of having to prove something against other racial groups' preconceived ideas of the adolescent's racial group.

Findings from this study suggest that there is a need for intervention between parent-child dialogue. Results encourage families to have an open dialogue about how to deal with stress, as this may be protective against experiencing higher depressive symptoms. Also dialogue about positive perceptions of African Americans in society may be a protective factor. Pride was found to be a risk factor for higher depression symptoms. Adolescents with a greater sense of pride may have the burden of handling problems themselves and represent their race well. Thus, parental conversation encouraging adolescents to embrace their pride appreciate their heritage and the positive aspects of strength and resilience among African Americans may in return be helpful in protecting adolescents from experiencing higher levels of depression symptoms.

Limitations & Future Implications

Limitations of this study include level of depression symptoms in the sample and generalizability of findings. The sample size for this study is 24 participants is a relatively small sample, but is adequate to provide information to meet the aims of the current study which was to gain a greater understanding of factors that contribute to depression symptoms among youth. There was a low incidence of depression symptoms in this sample which limits the ability to accurately describe what contributes to risk for higher levels of depression symptoms and the actual diagnosis of depression. Self-report response bias is always a possibility with survey research and may have influenced participant's endorsement of depression symptoms. Although it is likely that participants will answer the self-reported surveys as accurately as possible (Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S.G., Aiken, L.S., 2003) there is a chance that underreporting of potentially stigmatizing information (such as depression symptoms) could occur. To insure that underreporting is at

a minimum, confidentiality was explained to the participants, including the fact that the information they shared would not be accessed by parents/guardians or any other parties outside of this study. Finally, since the study is restricted to African American adolescents in the Pacific Northwest and Midwest areas, the findings may not generalize to the overall population of African Americans.

Even though the study may not generalize to the entire African American population, the study yields important insights regarding the experience of parental support and racial identity and depression symptoms among African American adolescents. Information from this study can be used to guide further investigation of the complexities of African American adolescent racial identity and parental support and how these constructs influence the experience of depression. Building off findings from the current study, the investigator plans to use the information gleaned from this study to further examine the experience of stress and racial identity among African American adolescents and how this relates to mental health outcomes. Parent-child discussions of stress and how the manifestation of stress can lead to adolescent depression symptoms, needs to be further researched and the investigator plans to examine these constructs in a larger sample of African American youth with higher levels of depression symptoms. Also the complexities of positive and negative consequences associated with feeling a burden to live up to historical strength and resilience among this group needs to be examined and will be incorporated into future studies by the investigator.

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The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

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The Role of Parental Support and Racial Identity in African American Adolescent Depression

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Broadening Discourse and Centering Social Justice: Struggles for a More Just Food System in Seattle, Washington

Yecelica Valdivia

Abstract

This paper demonstrates the need for a more holistic and anti-racist approach to local alternative food practice in the U.S. that would aim to meet the needs of the most marginalized: women, people of color, low-income peoples, immigrant peoples, and rural/small-farm holders. First, I define three major food discourses: community/food security, food sovereignty and food justice. Second, I focus on the current state and framing of the food alternatives system and network of emergency food resources in Seattle, WA. Third, I add to previous work done about space, whiteness, and privilege in the food alternatives movement and its exclusionary practices. Lastly, I consider conceptualizations of privilege and whiteness in order to critique the three aforementioned discourses. The goal of this paper is to widen the language of local alternative food work and create a framework that would aim to meet the autonomy and needs of those disproportionately affected by industrial food practices.

Introduction

Urban centers in the United States have become localities of place-based opposition to the corporate and industrialized food system. Seattle, Washington is an urban center at the forefront of the movement with thriving grassroots, community-based solutions, local and regional policy and initiatives and allocated financial support from the local government. Accompanying these alternative food system “solutions” is a large network of emergency food resources such as food banks and hot meal programs. These programs are often framed within a discourse of food security. This framing has implications for resource allocation, empowerment, self-reliance, and autonomy/sovereignty, particularly for historically (and perpetually) marginalized people like women, people of color, immigrant peoples, and low-income neighborhoods.¹

Considering that low-income and racially/ethnically diverse communities are those who disproportionately face “food insecurity” in

¹ There is much overlap between many of the communities because of the processes of marginalization. For example, in low-income neighborhoods there usually are disproportionate numbers of people of color and immigrant people.

urban centers, it is important that these communities are involved and central to the food discussions because marginalized peoples are usually the ones most negatively affected or just forgotten in these discussions (“AFPCFoodAccess”). Moreover, many community food organizations remain unaware or closed to the ways that racism works within food systems and the food alternatives movement. These groups, rather, stress community and self-sufficiency and overlook, intentionally or unintentionally, the intersecting feature of class, gender, and race within the food system (“Anti-racist Practice” 330).

In this paper I seek to critically focus on several points. Firstly, language and framing are crucial particularly when engaged in struggles for social justice. Therefore, I ground and historicize three major food discourses: community/food security, food sovereignty, and food justice. By doing so can open up a discussion in term of their implications for justice, basic human rights, understanding our relationship with food and one another, and the empowerment and self-reliance specifically of low-income and racially/ethnically diverse communities. Secondly, I outline the current state of the food system in Seattle, Washington, focusing on emergency food resources and food alternatives. This is important so to ground physically the discussions of language and framing and revealing privilege. Thirdly, community/food security, food sovereignty, and food justice are considered and critiqued. Fourthly, drawing from geographers and other whiteness scholars, I consider space, privilege, and whiteness in the food alternative movement in order to put this in conversation with the critiquing of the discourse. Lastly, drawing from the aforementioned discussions about space, privilege, whiteness, and the critiques of food alternative systems and the three food discourses, I hope to broaden and help shape a more comprehensive and anti-oppressive framework that will center the needs of those negatively affected by our current food system and whom are at times neglected/overlooked in current food work.

Methods

The methods I used are complimentary and relevant to the gathering of appropriate data for my project. I utilized three methods: literature review, web-based research, and archival research which is also dominantly web-based.

Based on the current literature available, I gathered the historical context and subsequent development of the three food discourses community/food security, food sovereignty and food justice (academic literature available about this particular discourse is sparse). Furthermore, I gathered current work being done by geographers

focusing on whiteness and spatial privilege within the food alternatives system. Web-based research is important because food communities have a large web-based presence.

One of the guiding questions of the project is: What is the current state of Seattle's food alternative system and emergency food networks? The creation of a map was most appropriate to depict these alternatives. Therefore, I reviewed umbrella organizations such as Puget Sound Fresh and the Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance to retrieve the most updated information and locations of current farmers markets and food alternatives in the Seattle area. The City of Seattle web pages proved informational when gathering the locations of emergency resources in Seattle, including food banks and referral programs. I also examined blog networks and pages to gather sites of "unconventional" means of food access such as dumpster diving sites and gleaning locations.

In order to analyze these sources, I used two analytical methods. One, spatial pattern and relationship analysis, and two, discourse analysis. After creating a map depicting Seattle's current food alternatives and emergency food resources, I compared and contrasted this with that of the *Acting* Food Policy Council's (AFPC) food insecurity map shown in their Issue Paper No. 4, "Mapping Food Insecurity and Access in Seattle and King County." Finally, I used discourse analysis to outline and analyze the three food discourses.

Contextualizing and Defining the Discourse

It's necessary and important to define both the context in which community/food security, food sovereignty and food justice have come about as well as their literal definitions. Language and resultant discourse creation processes have political, social, economic, and cultural implications. Those discourses which become dominant for and through various reasons influence particular realms such as policy and resource allocation. For one, language is highly open to interpretation based on numerous factors. One's class, gender, and culture are critical to the way one interprets. Therefore, words must be carefully and sensitively put side by side one another. Language and discourses represent underlying values and biases. For example, they may portray ideas of what are good food practices and how one should view and carry out their relationship with food. Language and discourse both carry baggage and embedded meaning whether one is cognizant of these implied assumptions or not. This is critical to understand, especially when considering the unnamed and unclaimed privileges within the food alternatives movement and the discourses framing this movement.

Community/Food Security

The concept of food security was first introduced in 1974 at the United Nations World Food Conference. It soon became central to policy in many “developing”² countries as it was declared that the “right to freedom from hunger was an inalienable right” (Allen 21). Food Security,

...exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (“First Feed the Face” 196; Patel 90; Windfuhr and Jonsén 21).

In the 1980s, the U.S. adopted the food security framework. At the World Food Summit in 1996, there was increasing attention to the right of food and quality rather than quantity became the focus (Allen 21).

The framework of food security took a turn in the U.S. in the context of the Rodney King verdict in 1992 which brought to light the inequalities facing the Black community and food issues facing South Central Los Angeles communities. People became more concerned with food access, quality, as well as affordability. Out of this context, the concept of *community food security* was defined as a condition in which “...all persons obtaining at all times a culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through local non-emergency sources (Allen 21; Campbell 346; “Community Food Security” 24; “First Feed the Face”). With the formation of the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) in 1996, came a refined definition which extended the previous definition to include, “...through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (“Community Food Security Coalition”).

The CFSC claims that community food security is a comprehensive strategy aimed to address the “ills affecting our society and environment due to an unsustainable and unjust food system.” Grounding community food security are six principles addressing “low-income food needs,” increasing poverty and hunger, the disappearing of farmland, environmental pollution, community resource building, and stabilizing a local agricultural base to build stronger ties between farmers and consumers so that “consumers gain a greater knowledge and appreciation for their food source” (“Community Food Security Coalition”).

² “developing” is placed in quotations because, although I disagree with the political and social ramifications of the use of “developing,” moreover the concept of “development,” it frames the context in which food security was introduced and thus is critical to its current understandings and implementation.

Both food security and community food security have become dominant discourses not only to describe the work being done in the food alternatives movement but also as a critique of the unsustainable industrialized food system. Although they are the most predominant circulating food discourses, food sovereignty has been recognized on more inter/transnational levels that acknowledge and center the struggles of landless peasants and small-holder farmers.

Food Sovereignty

The concept of food sovereignty was collectively envisioned by La Vía Campesina and was brought to international attention at the World Food Summit in 1996, where the concept of community food security was envisioned. This framework came as a direct critique and alternative to neoliberal policies that were negatively harming the most marginalized, notably small farmers, landless peasants, and women farmers and workers particularly those in the Third World. Food sovereignty is broad-based and adamant and reframes food as a human right. Food as “right” works on several levels. As defined by La Vía Campesina, “food sovereignty is the peoples’, Countries’ or State Unions’ right to define their agricultural and food policy, without any dumping vis-à-vis third countries.” This includes:

- the prioritization of local production over export
- free access to land, water and seed for peasants and landless peoples to be sustainably distributed and communally looked after
- land reform
- the rights of farmers and peasants to produce food and the rights of consumers to decide what they consumer, and know how and by whom it is produced
- populations taking part in agricultural policy decisions
- and the recognition of women farmers’ rights and their roles in agricultural and food production (“La Vía Campesina”; “Food Sovereignty”).

(Re)framing food as a human right implies that individuals can require the state and communities of states to “...respect, protect and fulfill their needs for appropriate access to sufficient food of an acceptable quality” (Windfuhr and Jonsén 19). This has a few implications for those who may not have access or who are legally unable to access such systems to enforce this “human right.” I will discuss this in more detail later.

Food Justice

Food Justice is another framework that many urban, grassroots, community-based organizations employ to describe and implement their work. It's a fairly new framework and has not yet gained much attention within academia or come within the purview of government.

As described by the People's Grocery of Oakland, CA "food justice" draws from the organizing traditions and grassroots mobilizations of the civil rights and environmental justice movements. Food Justice emphasizes "that no one should live without enough food because of economic constraints or social inequalities." Food Justice is a different approach to meeting a community's needs. Self-reliance and social justice are the core elements of food justice that center the community and its leadership to describe their own relevant solutions while providing them with "tools to address the disparities within our food systems and within society at large" ("Brahm's Blog"). Food justice has a greater community emphasis. Rather than an individualized focus, food justice recognizes the systemic processes which create and reinforce inequalities and food access being one of them.

Current State of Food System in Seattle, Washington

In this section, I review the current state of the food system in Seattle, Washington. It is by no means comprehensive or offers precise examples. It is meant to give a broad idea of emergency food resources and food alternatives in Seattle.

I chose to focus on emergency food resources and food alternatives because they represent two sides of the spectrum of our food system. On one end, emergency resources such as food banks and referral programs are meant to exist for those in need but actually many people have become reliant on them as regular sources of food. On the other end, are food alternatives such as farmers markets, p-patches, and "unconventional" means of food access (dumpster diving and gleaning) which aim to transform our industrialized food system and offer alternatives to the way we (in reality this only refers to the ideals of particular people, more later) eat and our relationship with food.

Here, I want to offer a few critiques of the emergency food or antihunger movement because of the somewhat contradictory affects and consequences it creates (there will be a more detailed critique and discussion of food alternatives later in the paper). Since the early 1980s, a significant hunger relief network has developed and expanded over the years to include food banks, food pantries, gleaning operations, federal food stamp assistance, and surplus commodity distribution, in order to respond to the emergency food needs of poor households (Campbell

345). The antihunger movement focuses on alleviating hunger in individuals through the emergency food system (342). This emphasis on the individual can and does create “blindness” in that it fails to recognize the systemic conditions that create hunger. The emergency food or the antihunger movement utilizes the “...medical treatment or social welfare model [and] emphasizes short-term hunger alleviation over longer term issues of household income, nutritional quality, food access, or food sourcing” (Campbell 345). Both the medical treatment and social welfare models place blame on the individual. They fail to understand the ways in which systems and institutionalized marginalization shape people’s, for example, health issues or food access. These models have created stigma not only about hunger but poverty and those who need and/or seek these emergency and federally funded social welfare programs.

Additionally, the emergency food or antihunger movement fully depends upon the conventional food system for “excess” products which then are distributed to “those in need” (Campbell 345). It’s based on the supposed surplus of capitalism which exploits and oppresses not only people in terms of labor but also the environment. There is no doubt that there is enough food to feed everyone in the U.S. “...nearly twice over – even after exports are considered” (345). Distribution and systemic processes must be considered as opposed to blaming and consequently stigmatizing individuals in particular situations and groups of people (“Anti-racist practice” 343).

But, emergency food resources are helpful. There are thousands of people and families who turn to these sources in times of need. But, when people and families rely on emergency food resources as daily and regular sources of food, there seems to be a problem. The emergency food/antihunger movement not only replicates inequalities but reinforces them.

With this base understanding, I created Figure 1 depicting emergency food resources and food alternatives in Seattle, Washington. Emergency food resources located on the map are food banks and referral programs. Food Alternatives include farmers markets, p-patches, and “unconventional” means of food access. It was interesting to compare this figure to that of the *Acting* Food Policy Council’s Issue No. 4 “Mapping Food Insecurity and Access in Seattle and King County.” To provide a brief background, the Council was formed in May 2006 with first meetings about food policy in 2004. The AFPC is comprised of 11 individuals from various sectors representing food system issues. The AFPC is one of 75plus food policy councils nationwide and the most important function of a FPC is to bridge local governments and food

issues to create a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to food policy (“Seattle-King County”).

In the AFPC’s Issue No. 4, the Council created an index of “food insecurity” risk factors which included issues such as lower income, higher unemployment, medical expenses, among other factors. Using 2000 Census data, they created a “food insecurity risk factors index” by weighing each of the variables in the Census according to their connection to food insecurity (4). From here, the Council created an index of the density of food insecure households and mapped the results (3). The logistics of how the Council came to calculate their indexes are not necessary to discuss in this paper.

What is important though, is the map which the Council created. Figure 2 has been borrowed from the AFPC report and remains unchanged. Figure 2 depicts the areas in Seattle at risk for food insecurity. The blue dots denote the locations of major grocery stores. The beige blocks are those block groups with greater than 50 food insecure persons per square kilometer. There are interesting differentiations to be considered between Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1. Food alternatives and emergency food resources/referral programs in Seattle, Washington

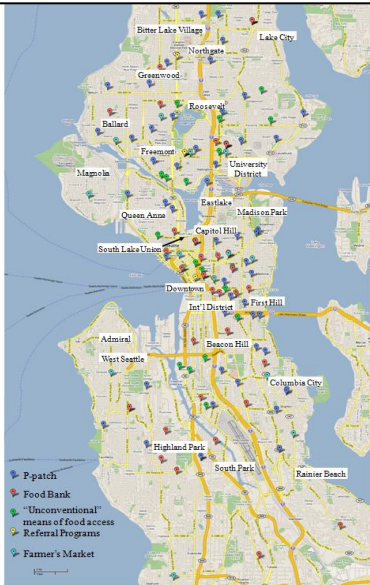
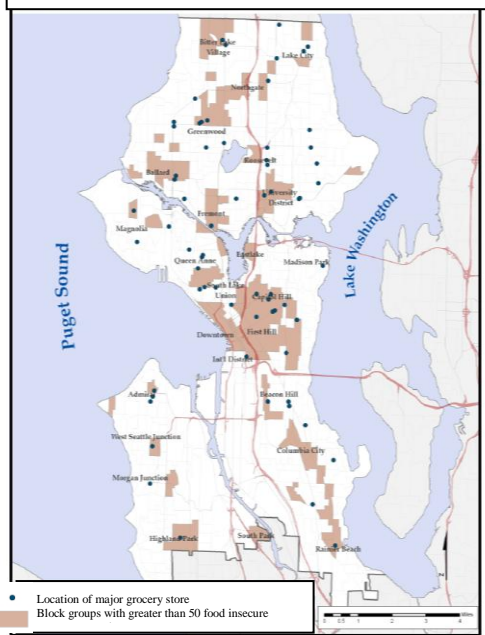


Figure 2. Areas in Seattle at risk for food



Discussion and Analysis

A clarification must be made before comparing the two figures. The beige blocks denote block groups with greater than 50 food insecure persons per square kilometer. Based on the figure, it could be argued that affluent places such as Queen Anne or Magnolia face “food insecurity.” But, the AFPC took into consideration two factors when creating these block groups. One was transportation. The Council took into account distances to access public transportation as well as travel time. For more affluent neighborhoods, personal transportation is most likely even if access to public transportation is sparse. The other the Council took into account was distance to major grocery stores. It is reality that both low-income and affluent neighborhoods may lack grocery stores. Yet, more affluent people have access to transportation that low-income people may not.

There a few major points of contrast and comparison between the two figures. Based on Figure 1, there seems to be an increase in referral programs and food banks in “food insecure” neighborhoods such as downtown Seattle, Columbia City, Rainier Beach, and South Park. These neighborhoods are characterized by low-incomes and racially/ethnically diverse including diverse in legal status. In these same neighborhoods, also referring to Figure 1, there are fewer food alternatives. In Figure 2, there are a lack of major grocery stores in the aforementioned neighborhoods. Within these areas of Seattle there are smaller “ethnic” stores that may carry produce and other fresh foods but were not accounted for in the AFPC’s study. Also, the fact that major grocery stores are not located with low-income communities brings attention to the practice of redlining.

The notable difference in location of food alternatives versus emergency food resources draws attention to who has access to what. Food alternatives are not being located within low-income communities, for reasons that will be addressed later in the paper. The distribution of these sources of food, too, reveal who has the privilege and access to what particular food source.

Critiques and Considerations: Community/Food Security, Food Sovereignty, Food Justice, and Rights

The food alternatives movement in the U.S. has been dominated by a food security discourse. As I previously demonstrated, emergency food resources too utilize the language of food security. It’s appropriate then to offer several critiques of food security and community food security, beginning with a critical analysis of food sovereignty.

Before beginning, I want to make clear that the intent of critiquing these frameworks, is not, in the end, to “choose” which framework would result in a comprehensive and systemic understanding of oppression and the food systems. Rather the intent is to offer a analysis to understand how these discourses are connected and how the underlying and sometimes problematic assumptions may reveal potential steps forward that could transform our relationship with food and ultimately one another. I will discuss this in greater detail in the following section.

In the period during which food security was introduced, there was a greater focus on First World national food security and “security” was production oriented. Even as discussions changed from the overall availability of food to individual’s access to food, there has still been an overwhelming bias towards global, national, and regional availability of food rather than the individual’s *access* to food (Windfuhr and Jonsén 22). Furthermore, food security implies that there is a desirable *condition* which the government claims to be working for but is not *obligated* for its responsibility for the situation of hunger and the malnutrition of people (Windfuhr and Jonsén 22).

Food security recognizes peoples disproportionate access to food. It also recognizes the purchasing of food, therefore addressing the economic aspects of food consumption. Although these are important acknowledgements, the food security framework does not mention how people necessarily would access this (safe and nutritious) food. Stated as is, it merely states a *goal* as opposed to specific recommendations or programs in order to achieve this *goal* (Windfuhr and Jonsén 23). In “Explorations on Human Rights,” Rajeev Patel notes that the definition of food security is compatible to “...an economy with less than full employment in which people are persuaded that the food they are fed on welfare is culturally appropriate, safe, and nutritious” (90). This serves as an important hypothetical interpretation of what achieving food security could look like and still fulfill the definition. Patel’s comment speaks to the vague language of the definition as well as the vagueness in actions needed to meet this goal. In addition, most definitions of food security fail to articulate an analysis of power or place social justice and human rights at the center of their analysis (“Brahm’s Blog”). By not doing so, the framework fails to identify why people and communities don’t have access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods in the first place. Lastly, the ways in which food security is defined it fails to address where food comes from and where it is produced (Pramono)

As outlined above, the community food security framework begins to incorporate an analysis of power and social justice. Yet, it only

implies that social and economic factors lead to food insecurity rather than explicitly stating them in the definition. The way in which its defined hopes for social justice as an outcome as opposed to centering social justice as an approach to inequalities in the food system (“Brahm’s Blog”).

Food sovereignty has a similar context as food security in that it was brought forward at international levels. However, food sovereignty is written more from a rural perspective. As result, it more land- and place-based and argues for the recognition, respect and fulfillment of the rights of peasants, fisher people, small land holders, farmers, and particularly women farmers. It represents the desires and autonomy of many Third World peoples and communities and the need for the respect of their rightful sovereignty. It also applies a systemic, both local and global, consideration to their objectives and demands.

This framework applies a rights-based approach and integrates issues/rights already recognized in international law and also those not part of international law, such as the “right to produce” or the “right to food sovereignty.” Rights-based language is used to support their political demands by showing that they must be fulfilled because they are considered basic by the marginalized and negatively affected communities (Windfuhr and Jonsén 23). Also, food sovereignty’s approach to rights is transgressive, insofar that it focuses on the people who are meant to hold them as opposed to the institutions which enforce, delegate and police rights (Patel 92).

I would like to offer a few critiques of food sovereignty. Any critiques of food sovereignty are not meant to disregard or discredit this powerful and necessary stance. This framework is transgressive and demands the fulfillment of people’s rights, without the need for justification. There’s no need to justify if they’ve been “guaranteed.” Nonetheless, one of the core questions of this research is to open the dialogue and potential of the formation of a transgressive and anti-oppressive framework relevant for rural-urban connections. Food sovereignty was collectively and sensitively envisioned as a rural-based approach and emphasis. The question remains: how can this framework be applied and useful within the peri-urban context? Food sovereignty demands that land, water and seed not be governmentally determined but communally cared and looked after without government input. Navigating the complex urban bureaucracy so that neighborhoods are really autonomous in how they care for land, water and seed could prove challenging. City prioritization of land use may affect decisions for communal land and water management for food/aesthetic production. Moreover, city politics of gentrification and displacement are also at

work within neighborhoods. I do not want to make the argument that food sovereignty is too “idealistic.” Idealism is not relevant in the purview of social justice for marginalized and oppressed peoples because fighting and struggling for social justice will always seem to “idealistic” for outsiders. There is potential within food sovereignty and this will be highlighted in a later section.

Food justice has been a concept of self-empowerment and community autonomy. It is predominantly used to describe social justice centered food work within urban neighborhoods and such organizations as Mo’ Better Foods, People’s Grocery, Just Food, Growing Power, and B-Healthy utilize this framework. These organizations, and others, work within and beside low-income, ethnically and racially diverse neighborhoods.

Food justice work is very grassroots and community-based and hasn’t received scholarly attention to the degree that community/food security and food sovereignty have. I borrow People’s Grocery’s description of food justice. For People’s Grocery, Food Justice goes beyond advocacy and direct “service.” It calls for organized community responses to food problems that are locally driven and owned. As was described in an article concerning food justice work and comparing this to food security,

“food security is more about analyzing problems, ameliorating issues and provides answers...food justice...involves local people from seed to sale. It educates, organizes and mobilizes new social relations around food” (“The ‘Food Justice’ Movement”)

I want to underscore the claim that food security is more about “ameliorating issues” as it seems an appropriate interpretation of the definition and work of food security. Furthermore, these organizations recognize that our current food system fails to provide low-income peoples with healthy foods while failing to create jobs and support local food businesses in urban communities. With this recognition, the work of food justice activists is to centralize the needs of the urban poor and develop creative ways “... that produce and distribute fresh foods, provide nutrition education, promote urban agriculture and create local jobs” (“People’s Grocery – About Us”). Although food justice, too, acknowledges the global-local, or glocal, connections of our current food system, there is a minimal discussion of importance of urban-rural relations either economically, socially or politically.

I want to unpack the use and term of “rights” which was often used in community/food security literature. A discussion of “rights” has often accompanied with issues and discussions of “democracy,”

“citizenship,” “food citizens,” “citizenry,” and “citizens” (Campbell; Delind; Levkoe; Wekerle). Inferring to an idea of rights and the fulfillment of these rights and regarding people as “food citizens” is not critical of those it encompasses/defines and those it leaves on the periphery. Citizenship defines those who can participate and those who cannot; those who have access to particular resources and those who it denies based on their status. Those who face, to use a common phrase used in food discourse, “food insecurity” are marginalized communities. Low-income neighborhoods and racially/ethnically diverse who may vary in legal status, often face “food insecurity.” Food security claims that “all people” should have access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food through non-emergency sources. However, “all people” does not include all people, but rather is defined by citizenship status. Those who are deemed “illegal” or “undocumented” are prevented from turning to government funded resources such as the food stamp program. Considering institutional barriers and claims of inclusivity based on particular perimeters, it isn’t surprising then that many immigrants face food insecurity and turn to emergency channels for food.

Both food sovereignty and food justice reframes the access to food as a “human right” (Patel; People’s Grocery). Framing food as a human rights issue expands the “criteria” to include “all people.” Human rights imply that all peoples regardless of citizenship status or location deserve food and the access and availability of food. Going even further, both food sovereignty and food justice demand that people can be more in control of, not only their actual consumption of food, but the production of their food and the resources to do so (using the term production seems to “commodify” or imply a system of added value towards a means of commodification but it seems most fitting).

Lastly, I want to make a comment on the use of “consumer” in the literature regarding community/food security and food sovereignty. Besides the actual act of “consuming,” the use of the word reinstates particular ideas regarding our relationship with food. The use of consumer seems to contradict the claim that food is a human right. If people cannot afford to purchase food, how can food then be considered an “inalienable right” that all should have access to? Using the term “consumer” reinstates the commodification of food and overlooks how access to food is stratified by class.

Space, Privilege, and Whiteness in the Food Alternative Movement

This section is not meant to be separate of the section discussing the implications of the three food discourses. Rather, this is meant to compliment that discussion so that these would be considered

simultaneously and grow from and with one another. In addition, this is a broader discussion that is highly relevant to the previous sections regarding the current state of alternatives and emergency food resources in Seattle, Washington. These are frameworks through which to view and critique the current system. Furthermore, critiques are not meant to deny or overlook the ways in which food alternatives have created amazing programs and attempts at changing our current food system. Imperfections are expected and critiques are meant to rework and reframe as opposed to demolish.

Space, privilege, and whiteness are critical when considering any social movement. Privilege is relative; for example, people of color who have had the opportunity to receive any sort of higher education can be noted as having an educational privilege. The attainment of a higher degree in U.S. society is looked upon as a positive achievement with associated assumed implications of work ethic and/or the achievement of highly valued skills. It may seem that I'm claiming that privilege is attainable. In some cases yes and many no. For example, the social and systemic privileging of particular bodies with particular skin colors is one that is not attainable but is rather a system into which we are born. This system is consequently performed on us as we perform in it. This system of privilege as maintained via discrimination (sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, and particularly nationality and parameters of citizenship) is highly pervasive and, blatantly or not, permeates our everyday interactions as it perpetuated systemically. The food alternative movement is no exception.

Advocates of food alternatives often focus on access and the education of people about food, where it comes from, and how to eat it. Food alternatives have been noted to cater to well-off consumers, in-part because they have been designed and located in places to ensure market opportunities and decent prices for farmers ("Bringing Good Food" 431). Also, those who tend to be involved in food alternatives are often economically and/or socially middle class ("Whiteness, Space" 522). Guthman's research has noted that for the most part, food alternative institutions are "white" spaces, not only because of the bodies which frequent these spaces, but also the cultural codings performed in these spaces ("Bringing Good Food" 431).

In order to connect space, privilege and whiteness and use this connection to critique the three aforementioned discourses, it is helpful to contextualize these connections in terms of the work of Julie Guthman and Rachel Slocum. I want to first acknowledge, as Slocum does, that a reduction of whiteness to that of racism or privilege must be avoided ("Whiteness, Space" 526). It isn't constructive to reduce whiteness to

such incomplete and simplistic renditions. Rather, an *active* and *continuous* engagement with whiteness and privilege (as well as relative privilege) is necessary to have a better understanding of systemic interconnections and how to creatively form a more encompassing, progressive, strategy of food work that is anti-racist and anti-oppressive.

In Guthman's article "‘If They Only Knew:’ Color Blindness and Universalism in California Alternative Food Institutions," she engages whiteness and its unmarked prevalence within food alternative institutions. Drawing from feminist scholars and geographers who focus on conceptualizations of whiteness, Guthman provides a useful framework to think and bridge the concepts of space, privilege and whiteness.

I want to echo Guthman in that "white" is a messy and complex identity as is any other identity in order to borrow her interpretation of whiteness. For Guthman, "whiteness" refers to several points:

...the phenotype of pale bodies, an attribute of particular people, a result of historical and social processes of racialization, a set of structural privileges, a standpoint of normalcy, or particular cultural politics and practices ("If They Only Knew" 390).

Because of their presumed normalcy and universalizing assumptions, whiteness often goes unnamed, unmarked, unquestioned, and unchallenged (390).

Guthman pulls from geographers of whiteness, including Kobayashi and Peake, to connect the ways in which whiteness' unmarked nature works in shaping social relations and therefore spaces ("If They Only Knew" 390). Guthman notes Kobayashi and Peake's statement that, "whiteness is indicated less by its explicit racism than by the fact that it ignores, or even denies, racist implications" (qtd. "If They Only Knew" 390; "Bringing Good Food"). The failure to actively engage or even mention privilege and how it manifests itself in the food alternatives movement, or any movement for that matter, speaks volumes to the underlying and hidden "cultural politics and practices" at play in shaping these food alternative spaces.

Guthman continues and points to two interworking manifestations of whiteness and how they consequentially define food alternative practice and space. The first is color blindness, which has its origins in liberal thought and has ways of erasing racial identifiers, a practice that does more violence than not. It not only erases histories but the very real effects of racism as well as the privilege of whiteness itself ("If They Only Knew" 391; "Bringing Good Food").

The other manifestation is universalism. Universalism isn't immediately raced but dependent upon "whitened cultural practices" ("If

They Only Knew” 391; “Bringing Good Food” 434). Sometimes universalism takes the form of particular aesthetic standards and often has the ability to erase, refuse and fail to recognize the experiences, aesthetics, and ideals of others. For those who do not hold the same “...white ideals, are justifiably marginalized.” For those who these ideals do not resonate, they must be educated to these ideals or continue to be marked as different (“If They Only Knew” 391; “Bringing Good Food”). This need for the improvement of others elides the historical processes which produced these material and cultural distinctions in the first place (“Bringing Good Food” 436).

Color blindness and universalism as manifestations of whiteness are important to work through when considering food alternative practices and spaces. As a person of color walking through these spaces I do feel a sense of uneasiness. Sometimes I feel the ways in which I eat or have been brought up eating aren't good enough or healthy enough. It seems clearer then that there are particular aesthetic standards and taste standards that are being upheld within these spaces. Furthermore, because these spaces are framed particularly within a food security discourse, the framework and language of food security will also reflect these whitened cultural practices.

Included in my notion of food alternatives are other means of food access. Often these are “unconventional,” meaning not within the purview of what many think of “normal” or “alternative” channels. Such “unconventional” means are dumpster diving and gleaning projects and/or sites. There seems to be a greater awareness of the privilege associated with these means of food access and I want to acknowledge and engage them here.

SeattleDIY is a collective who “...believe in being the creators of culture rather than consumers.” The Collective believes in promoting a just society without hierarchies by fighting institutionalized oppression such as racism, sexism, ageism/adultism, and homophobia. They also “...support environmental justice, animal rights, egalitarianism, and human rights” (“About SeattleDIY”). The Collective produces various do-it-yourself zines and guides. One of them is their dumpster diving zine.

The zine offers an introduction to dumpster diving, etiquette, tips, and most interesting, critiques of dumpster diving. Throughout the zine, the writers are sensitive to the lifestyle choice of dumpster diving. They acknowledge the potential stigmas of dumpster diving and how it “...reinforces the shame associated with being poor” (“Dumpster Dive”). Engaging in an act that's associated with poverty, the zine claims, would reinforce class divisions. The writers also recognize that this may be

especially difficult for those who face other “social divisions” like race, sexual orientation, and gender identity (“Dumpster Dive”). People who fear for their legal status, they may also be compromising their lives if they have a run-in with the police resulting in possible jail time or worse.

The writers’ care and acknowledgement of privilege is quite important. They recognize that participating in dumpster diving can compromise one’s safety based on their positionality, identification and status within society. There is a great deal of privilege associate with such a “lifestyle choice.” Choice can be a signifier of privilege. For many people, because of low-income, working class, legal status, and/or homelessness (among other plausible dynamics), dumpster diving may not be a “choice” but a daily lived reality. This is embodied in the writers’ statement, “...those of us with *privilege* to either ignore the realities of these issues, or to face the reality of these issues, dumpster diving feeds us, supplements us, sustains us” (“Dumpster Dive”). I want to add that, particularly for white people, the act of “choosing” and “living outside the system” is socially more acceptable. There are stigmas and distorted assumptions when marginalized people “choose.” There are barriers which are obvious and real for marginalized people that either don’t exist or bypass those with privilege, particularly white people.

Lastly, the writers’ note that dumpster diving is really not living outside of the system. Rather, food and other goods found when dumpstering are products of the capitalist system. The food and goods are excess produced by capitalism and the exploitation of people and the environment. Dumpster diving, then, is dependent upon the processes of capitalism and oppression (“Dumpster Dive”). There are class and racial undertones to dumpster diving and an inherent privilege in this “choice.”

The dynamics of space, privilege, and whiteness are not particular to the shaping of any one type of space. Skin color and race are constant threads in U.S. society. The ways in which race and racial cultural practices manifest themselves in different spaces are important to the lived and perceived experiences of people. Questioning, challenging, and engaging privilege and whiteness can add so much more meaning and understanding of food alternative spaces and work. It has the potential of broadening the scope, de-centering whiteness and centering the needs of the most marginalized.

Bringing it Together: Towards An Anti-Oppressive and Anti-Racist Movement and Framework

This concluding section is meant to center the aforementioned discussions about space, privilege, whiteness, and the critiques of food

alternative systems and the three food discourses. But, before proceeding I want to offer a few critiques of the concept of “local” for it also has greater implications for framing and language.

Firstly, there exists no consistent definition of “local” (Peters *et al.* 2). Local has often been defined in terms of distance such as a particular number of miles but even these distances have a large range from statewide or region wide. Each of these have been argued as remaining “local.”

Hinrichs and Allen also argue the limitations of “the local.” For these authors, research on local food systems, and I add food alternatives practice and work, are more market than production focused and less centered on social justice concerns (332). The authors also draw from other analysts of sustainable food and local food systems who note that often the interests and experiences of disadvantaged populations (the poor, racial/ethnic minorities, farmworkers) are overlooked or subordinated to the prioritization of economic viability and environmental sustainability (332-333). People’s Grocery echoes this line of thinking and states that market-driven approaches leave out low-income “consumers” who do not have the financial or political power to advocate for inclusion in the food system (“People’s Grocery – About West Oakland”).

Buy local food campaigns, as argued by Hinrichs and Allen, seek not so much to disrupt capitalist relations nor do they envision radical new or transformative economies (339). These campaigns have a blend of protectionist and developmentalist impulses which “...represent a response to the perceived threats of a globalizing, industrialized food system” (342). Localism, additionally, “...can be defensive, xenophobic and impervious to uneven development, as if all communities would want to stay as they are” (“Brining Good Food” 436). Localism and buying local campaigns can produce social justice “blindness” (Hinrichs and Allen 339). Thus, focusing on buying local from local producers can in/directly harm vulnerable food and agricultural workers in distant places, while simultaneously protecting and supporting “local” agriculture (343). A broad reference can be the numerous times in which various food items (including produce) that were imported from “outside” countries have been recalled due to outbreaks or contamination. These instances have often invoked nationalistic, protectionist, xenophobic, and anti-immigration language but masked by “localizing” discourse.

Critiquing “the local” is helpful to make greater connections and envisioning a framework relating and engaging different scales of

analysis, as well as place, social justice, and our food systems. People's Grocery argues,

With 80% of the world's population living in cities and 90% of global consumption derived within cities, urban areas must be included in the reshaping of food systems to become sustainable, equitable and beneficial to small farmers, low-income consumers and the environment alike ("People's Grocery – About West Oakland").

People's Grocery approaches their work through a food justice lens. Although there's an acknowledgement that small farmers and urban areas must be included in reshaping of the food system, their work is primarily focused on expanding urban-based self-sustaining projects. While food justice as well as community/food security recognizes necessary connections between different members, food sovereignty discourse as well as Arturo Escobar's concepts of place can add to this conversation.

Food sovereignty centers small farmers, landless peasants, and, most notably, women farmers. This framework recognizes that gender is at play when considering issues of land, water, and seed access as well as the autonomy of farmers more generally. Yet, this framework centers rural issues and needs and rarely considers urban issues. Before continuing, I want to make clear that there is an urban bias in our society and in many places globally. For many countries, "development" means progress and this leads to a bias towards urban/izing areas because they represent the epitome and center of such thinking. This often comes to the neglect of rural areas and their marginalization. With that noted, food sovereignty is very important because rural people, their livelihoods, and needs are often neglected and, thus, must be considered in food practice and work.

Additionally, food sovereignty is place-based. Place-based is hard to think through in the context of those who do not own land. Arturo Escobar, a critical development scholar, provides an argument that bridges these thoughts and provides a way to connect rural and urban areas. Escobar has argued that there is a clear differentiation between "place" and "the local" (Wekerle 380). Escobar argues that local are scales, processes, or levels of analysis and not places or locations. For Escobar, "...place refers to the experience of, and from, a particular location with some sense of boundaries, grounds, and links to every day practices" (qtd. in Wekerle 380). Here, Escobar rethinks "the local" as well as the meaning and importance of place. For those who are landless who reside in rural or urban areas, can still have a sense of place. Place is not rooted in the physical. It is not necessarily defined by the ownership

of land. Therefore, landless peasants, farmworkers, and those in urban areas who do not own land, can still be thought of as “place-based.” The aspect of “place-based” is both relevant and significant for rural and urban peoples.

Collectivity, community, and autonomy are other aspects which would help to envision a more just food framework. These two concepts are vital to both food sovereignty and food justice. Community food security does recognize a community’s needs for self-reliance but offers little in terms of actual ways to go about reaching self-reliance. Food justice and food sovereignty are about collectivity and communal care of community resources. Community autonomy and empowerment are central to their work and their varying projects aim for these goals.

Beyond place, community, and collective action are the systemic ways in which inequalities are reinforced and justified. Community/food security rarely identifies institutional barriers let alone critiques institutionalized oppression and how marginalization results in varying food access. Addressing the underlying disparities of food access would prove more constructive in moving towards a more just framework. Guthman in “Bringing Good Food to Others...” notes that considerations and attention should be paid to the elimination of redlining, the investment in urban renewal, the expansion of entitlement programs, the attainment of living wages, the elimination of toxins within neighborhoods among other issues (443). The issues which Guthman notes are important to identify. Expanding entitlement programs, on the other hand, may be problematic for a few reasons. Entitlements programs are government programs that provide individuals with some sort of financial benefit which they have the legal right (meaning enforceable in court) if they meet the eligibility. Such examples are Social Security, Medicare, food stamps, and agricultural support programs. Usually they are individualized based on citizenship status or residency but have extended to include organizations such as business corporations, local governments, or even political parties (Johnson). If citizenship or residency are the qualifying criteria for entitlement programs, then people who are “illegal” or “undocumented” still remain marginalized. A possible expansion of entitlement programs may not benefit those not “legal;” those who cannot turn to federally funded agencies for assistance particularly when in need of food.

With this in mind, it may prove constructive to frame food as a human rights issue just as the frameworks of food justice and food sovereignty. All people should be entitled to food regardless of physical location and status. If food is reframed as a human right then all peoples must have this right satisfied. By doing so, immigrant people and those

who are deemed “illegal” will be protected and have a little more movement within the system.

As has been shown throughout the paper is that no one discourse can really stand alone. There are beneficial contributions that can be made from community/food security, food sovereignty, and food justice in creating a more comprehensive food framework that is anti-oppressive and anti-racist. Their framing and resulting work contribute to one another and complement one another. Each one expands the conceptualization of the other and provides language to create bridges. In tandem with the discussion about space, privilege, and whiteness, a more comprehensive discourse can be created.

My hopes in this paper was not only to think more broadly but center social justice and the needs and autonomy of the most marginalized. Critiquing and pulling form the three food discourses revealed the ways in which they speak to one another and how they can bridge issues, concerns, and people of many different experiences. Thinking through the ways in which space, privilege, and whiteness manifest themselves in food alternatives is important to show the extent and effectiveness of these alternatives. Researching the current state of the food system of Seattle, Washington creates a location in which to ground important issues such as exclusion and inclusion, who’s really benefitting from these alternatives. and are these alternatives really transformative as we have hoped. And if we really want a just food system, we must envision language and a framework which will bridge people and communities and different levels while being critical of privilege and not creating definers of participation. If we continue to place limits and definers, then we’re in danger of reproducing oppression and exploitation of not only people but the environment as well.

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