

Distinctions

Kingsborough Honors Journal



Volume 13 Number 02

DISTINCTIONS

Volume 13 | Number 02

Spring 2018

Distinctions, the journal of the Honors Program at Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, welcomes submissions of scholarly work written for Kingsborough courses.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Professor Bob Blaisdell | Editor

ADVISORY BOARD

Provost Joanne Russell | Vice President for Academic Affairs

Professor Homar Barcena | Director of the Honors Program

COVER ART

The Rainbow Band Shell, built in the 1920s for the Manhattan Beach resort, survived on the Kingsborough campus until 1972, when it was demolished. The photograph by Herman Fields was probably taken c. 1938, according to John Manbeck, the great former Brooklyn Borough Historian and Kingsborough professor.

Copyright ©2018

Kingsborough Community College, The City University of New York

EDITOR'S NOTE

I don't know what I would do without deadlines. Last semester I wasn't able to guarantee an early enough publication date in order to have time to schedule a celebration for the Fall 2017 authors. It was like arriving at the station, getting through the turnstiles and seeing the departing train close its doors and slowly pull away. The student contributors to this issue have helped me get to the station on time by submitting their reflective statements and self-portraits before the beginning of the Spring semester. Some of the students submitted their work back in October of 2017. They and I have learned that publication is like a long ride on an unfamiliar line.

The eleven papers in this issue run the gamut from Lilia Teal's analysis of feminism in Turkey and Carolina Cen's imagined travel cruise business to curriculum-crossing essays on education by Nika Kondzhariya, Candida Knight, and Leslie Irene Junco; on racism by Femi Omoijuanfo; on gender by Isabell Rivera and Sholom Gutleizer; on popular culture by Anthony Charles and Ethan Sapolsky; and on poverty by Ricardo Medina.

I am grateful to the Director of the Honors Program, Professor Homar Barcena, who has continued to give *Distinctions* his encouragement and support. We are indebted to Provost Joanne Russell for providing funding for the journal. I have special thanks for Dr. Eileen Ferretti, the chair of the English Department, who has granted me the time to act as editor. I have received invaluable and necessary help from others I'm not supposed to name, but they know who they are. I am grateful to all my colleagues who have encouraged their students to submit their papers to *Distinctions*. I count on Kingsborough's great instructors to continue that encouragement and to also please let me know how they would like the journal to change and develop.

Professor Robert (Bob) Blaisdell
Department of English
Robert.Blaisdell@Kingsborough.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Educational Inequality</i>	6
Nika Kondzhariya	
<i>Social Mobility</i>	12
Ricardo Medina	
<i>Incarceration Rates in America and Who It Affects</i>	16
Femi Omoijuanfo	
<i>Inside the Classroom: Linguistic and Behavioral Development of Bilingual Students</i>	24
Leslie Irene Junco	
<i>The Social Construction of Gender and Power</i>	30
Isabell Rivera	
<i>Transgenderism, Social Construct or Mental Illness?</i>	43
Sholom Guteizer	
<i>From Rebel to “Rockstar”: How African Americans Won the Battle for Pop Culture Supremacy and Relevance through Hip Hop</i>	50
Anthony Charles	
<i>Issues Faced by Homeless Students in New York</i>	56
Candida Knight	
<i>American Food and Popular Culture</i>	61
Ethan Sapolsky	
<i>Venezuelan Dreams Cruise</i>	68
Jing Yu Carolina Cen Feng	
<i>Feminist Movements in Turkey: The Three Waves, 1908-2017</i>	77
Lilia Teal	
<i>Contributors</i>	86
<i>Submission Guidelines</i>	89

Educational Inequality

Nika Kondzhariya

Spring 2017
ENG 2400 | Freshman English II
Professor Esther Gabay

“Poverty is not just a lack of money; it is not having the capability to realize one’s full potential as a human being,” as Amartya Kumar Sen, an Indian economist and philosopher, once said. It means that people who are considered poor have not only financial difficulties but also a lack of opportunities to make their dreams come true. That is the case in the United States, where students from poor families cannot fully enjoy the benefits of education as a driving force for achieving their goals. People who come from impoverished backgrounds, compared to those from prosperity, simply lack the educational options to fully develop themselves and climb the social ladder; while it can be done it is much more difficult if the person is a member of the lower class. The amount of money your parents have should not be the main predictor of your future wealth. There are many examples of talented people who, although poor, somehow managed to overcome the lack of options and due to their diligence contributed positively to society and some have even become the pride of the USA. Nevertheless, the majority of poor children give up and do not follow their dreams, and accept their situation as being innate, something set in stone that cannot be changed because the government does not provide them with same opportunities as wealthy people have. Therefore, income inequality prevents poor children from getting a quality education and, thus, denies the country talented humans.

Liz Murray, a motivational speaker and the author of international bestseller *Breaking Night*, for example, was born in a very poor family but managed to achieve her goals. In her book she describes her life, including all of the challenges that she had to face on her path to success. Born to drug-addicted parents in the South Bronx, Liz Murray had a more arduous path to success than most people. From early childhood, she and her sister were not well taken care of. They lacked basic necessities such as food and clothes. Their mother and father always spent all of their money on getting high. Therefore, Murray was metaphorically abandoned, as her parents chose drugs and alcohol over their children. Obviously, being

depressed because of her situation and receiving ridicule from her classmates at school about her “messed up clothing, the pocket sewn onto the back of a shirt or a short pants leg on her too-large jeans” (Murray 111), Liz skipped classes and as a result was kicked out of a high school.

Some years later, her mom was diagnosed with AIDS and died. The indignity and sadness of her mother’s demise shook Liz to her core. She did not want to follow in her parents’ footsteps and decided to change her life. She states, “I was inspired by a question that kept repeating itself in my mind: Could I really change my life?” (Murray 280). Being a sixteen-year-old girl, Liz decided to continue her education, but she had to face the fact that not much depended on her. No high schools wanted to accept her. They, possibly, did not want to deal with a student who was not only very poor but also was an academic disaster. As she says, she was “tired of getting rejected, tired of hearing no” (Murray 251). Obviously, after so many failures many people would abandon the idea of getting an education.

But, fortunately, Murray did not give up and decided to take her last chance and was successful in an interview at Humanities Preparatory Academy. This was a school designed by Perry Weiner, the chairman of the board of School Based Management, and Vince Brevetti, the chairman of the teachers union, to help struggling students take and pass required classes, in order to successfully finish high school and consequently being able to be accepted to college.



Liz Murray, author of *Breaking Night*. Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-1346184/From-homelessness-Harvard-University-How-Liz-Murray-turned-life-around.html>

Murray’s persistence coupled with high quality classes, which “were

meant to cultivate an environment of authenticity and encourage depth of thought,” allowed her to become a top student (Murray 253). This means that Murray, when given educational opportunities, proved that she was able to gain knowledge and study diligently. Later she became one of the six students who won the *New York Times* scholarship out of three thousand participants. Due to the fact people saw an article about her life story, strangers started helping her by sending money and necessities. Then, she decided to apply for Harvard. Undoubtedly, Liz was not an ordinary applicant. She had to fight with poverty and other difficulties, so she had to put in much more effort to get an education than other pupils. Fortunately, based on the strength of her character, she was admitted to Harvard in 2000. Later, Liz Murray became a motivational speaker to inspire others to change their lives, study more and never give up. She is now “travelling to various countries, working with thousands of people to deliver workshops and speeches to inspire others” (Murray 324).

Obviously, a person with such great experience of overcoming a variety of obstacles can motivate others to always follow their dreams. Everybody has his/her own problems that in some way make his/her path to success very complicated. That is why this kind of motivation provided by Murray is very valuable for people. Liz helps our society to become stronger and empowers people to achieve their goals. If she were not given a chance to study, the USA would have lost a person who could have had a beneficial influence on its own citizens. Thus, the government should do its best to provide more opportunities for economically disadvantaged children, as can be seen in Murray’s case. The more success stories we have the better our society will be.

According to the article “Still Separate, Still Unequal” by Jonathan Kozol, an American writer and activist, today’s US school system is highly separated and unequal according to economic status. Children from poor families have a lot of obstacles to overcome in order to get a quality education. Public schools, where children from poor families are dominant, simply fail to create an environment that encourages their students to study. The main reason for this tendency is that these schools lack government funds. “The present per-pupil spending level in the New York City schools is \$11,700, which may be compared with a per-pupil spending level in excess of \$22,000 in well-to-do suburban district of Manhasset, Long Island” (Kozol 45). That difference in about \$10,000 of government funds results in a substandard physical condition of the public school buildings, which are full of cracks and leaks. There is an insufficient number of bathrooms and air-conditioning in classrooms. Moreover, these schools can not provide their students with libraries and places to relax like sports grounds or gardens.

When a person studies in a room “in which a plastic garbage bag had been attached somehow to cover part of the collapsing ceiling” (Kozol 44) or in a room with nothing to breathe because of broken ventilation system, education becomes less important and the only desire that a pupil has is to leave that place

and never come back. That is why these children in letters of complaint ask Kozol for a help; they need to have the same necessities as children from wealthy families have to make their path to education more appropriate. Pupils from poor families like everybody else dream of going to college and understand that they need a good school education to achieve this goal. Obviously, most of them have heard about the examples of how college degree help people, like Liz Murray, to go beyond their background and climb the social ladder.

Unfortunately, according to Kozol, studying in a school where children from poor families are dominant weakens their chances to prepare for college. Unlike Murray, who could take all required classes at Humanities Preparatory Academy, pupils in such schools sometimes do not have access to useful classes which they want to take because the government financing is not enough to cover the salary of teachers and necessary equipment. Kozol comes up with examples of public high school students who wanted to go to college but could not take the necessary classes. One of the students dreamed of becoming “a social worker or a doctor, but was programmed into ‘Sewing Class’” (Kozol 52). Another student, Mirea, wanted to take an AP class in order to go to college, but had to take hairdressing, as it was the only available option at the school. These children can be compared with a patient who is given inappropriate medicine by his/her doctor. Obviously, that medicine cannot make that person feel better and it can even worsen the negative influence on his/her health. The same thing happens with these students because they are denied the purpose of their life, and thus are harmed like the patient because of inappropriate medicine. Those stories become even more dramatic if we also take into account that these pupils, possibly, could have become fantastic social workers, doctors or scientists and, like Murray, could have been very beneficial to our society. That boy who was scheduled into a sewing class could possibly have saved a lot of lives, or Mirea could have invented something great that would have made people’s lives easier. Therefore, when the government denies poor students educational opportunities, it harms not only them but also itself because it possibly loses talented people.

Tom Hanks, the great American actor and filmmaker, is another example of a person who was born into a poor family and who would not have become who is he now if he had not been given chances to get an appropriate education. In the *New York Times* article “I Owe It All to Community College,” Hanks describes his path to success. Being poor, his family “could not afford tuition for college” for him, so the only option was going to the free local community college, Chabot, which accepted every applicant and was located in his state of residence, California (Hanks 1). Like Murray at Humanities Preparatory Academy but unlike the pupils whom Jonathan Kozol met in public schools, Hanks was able to take classes whichever he wanted. As he says, “Name the art or science, the subject or trade, and it was probably in the catalog” (Hanks 1). He was able to get the general education that allowed him to enter affordable Sacramento State University

and study his major, theater arts. Also, by taking the classes that he loved like oral interpretation, film as art, public speaking and literature, he earned the recognition of Chabot's Dean's list, thereby proving that financial capability has nothing to do with one's ability to gain knowledge, study diligently and achieve educational goals. Moreover, these classes coupled with the college's great library allowed him to develop his thinking and imagination. Therefore, Hanks was given a chance to realize his educational potential and he took it. He, as a fantastic actor and director, has presented to worldwide audiences great films that in some ways can be very informative for our society. For example, his great performance in *Forrest Gump* teaches people the importance of kindness, generosity and nobility.



Tom Hanks. Source:

<http://www.kidinthefrontrow.com/2009/09/great-advice-from-tom-hanks-on-how-to.html>

In today's world, which is full of violence, people need to see examples of shining behavior that can oppose the horrible things happening every day, like acts of terrorism or murders. Therefore, society would have lost such a great source of moral examples if Hanks had not been given opportunities to become educated. His talent and possible bright future could easily have been ruined, like it was in Kozol's example of public school pupils who were denied the option to study whatever they wanted.

One of the ways to ameliorate this problem of inequality is getting an education like the one described in the essay "Teaching Language in Open

Admissions” by the American poet Adrienne Rich. That solution is the “Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge” (SEEK) program, a New York program designed to provide struggling students, both financially and academically, with opportunities to get a higher education. In this program, students are accepted to colleges, no matter how successfully or not they have studied at school, and are given financial support in order to make their path to education easier. When Rich describes her experience of working as a teacher at CUNY’s City College of New York in that program, she claims that “none of those students would have come near a higher education under the regular admissions programs of the City University” and that “most could not survive economically in college without the stipends which the SEEK program provides” (Rich 55). This means that under the SEEK program all people get chances to realize their potential, and the lack of money does not become an obstacle for them in achieving their goals. That brings shining results, as Rich writes that in 1972, 40 percent of these students were able to graduate from college and thus improve their academic level. For example, once the president of the college and faculty members had to negotiate with these students about admissions policy, they were positively surprised by their “articulateness, reasoning power and skill in handling statistics” (Rich 58). The effectiveness of programs like SEEK can also be seen in the examples of Hanks and Murray, who both had academic and financial problems, but were given educational opportunities. On the other hand, pupils from Kozol’s examples were denied any possibility to achieve their educational goals, and possibly a program similar to SEEK would have helped them to get educated and realize their potential.

Therefore, it is clear that we need more programs that can help people with financial problems to get an education. There is a huge pool of talented people who may not be able to reach their potential due to obstacles caused by their lack of financial resources. This shows that it is in the best interests of society to create equal access to education, as programs like SEEK do not only help one person at a time, but rather have a ripple effect, where one successful person motivates and helps a number of other disadvantaged people. It is important for a society to take full advantage of its resources, and people are society’s greatest resource.

Works Cited

- Hanks, Tom. “I Owe It All to Community College.” *The New York Times*, 14 Jan 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/01/14/opinion/tom-hanks-on-his-two-years-at-chabotcollege.html?_r=0 Accessed 27 May 2017.
- Kozol, Jonathan. “Still Separate, Still Unequal.” *Harper’s Magazine*, Sept. 2005, pp. 41-54.
- Murray, Liz. *Breaking Night*. Hachette Books. 2010
- Rich, Adrienne. “Teaching Language in Open Admissions.” In *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*. W.W. Norton & Company. New York, 1995.

Social Mobility

Ricardo Medina

Fall 2015

SOC 3100 | Introduction to Sociology

Professor Avri Beard

There are many barriers to social mobility. Among them, and in no particular order, are debt, drug addiction, catastrophe, disenfranchisement, living in redlined neighborhoods, income-inequality, the lack of job opportunities for the poor to take advantage of, bad investments, having minimal or no education, racism, lack of social capital and isolation from others, incarceration, being visible while conducting deviant behavior, flashiness (having a tacky announcement of class), lack of self-worth, language barriers, having defeatist complacency, and loss of social programs to help the needy (welfare, veterans programs, food stamps, mental health services, etc.).

Children who are born wealthy are likely to die wealthy and children born in poverty are likely to die in poverty. The biggest reason why is income inequality and its inability to allow those in poorer classes to reach full potential economically and intellectually. The top one percent of wealthy Americans has about forty percent of the nation's wealth, which also means that most resources are filtered up to those with more wealth, leaving little to none for the poorer class. Even the top twenty percent have a much better chance at having access to quality education, food, and other resources than those who fall into the bottom eighty percent of the population, which hold only seven percent of the nation's wealth.

Lots of wealthy children are left with some sort of trust fund by their parents to ensure they have some capital to survive on and to invest with. Also, most wealthy parents make sure to invest heavily in their children's cultural and social capital. For example, having nannies that talk to children at an early age is helpful in building vocabulary for children born into wealth. The poor tend to spend less quality time with their children and rely heavily on keeping kids entertained with television and mobile apps.

Wealthy children take art or music classes at an early age and are taught leadership skills and make life-long friendships with other children who also

come from wealthy backgrounds. The networks they have can come in handy in the future when it comes to finding good employment or an investor with lots of capital who can then introduce them to others who may offer even more opportunities that can be taken advantage of. Social networks are much bigger and of better quality for the wealthy than for the poor. The poor tend to be much more socially isolated. One reason for this is because the poor often live in areas that may have a higher a crime rate and so it is tougher to socialize with others from the same neighborhood.

That two out of three who are born into poverty will stay at or near the poverty level is a huge problem. They represent a large segment of our population. While there are many reasons for this, the biggest factor here in the United States is income inequality. It is the gap between those who have the highest amount of income and those with little to no income. The ramifications of this for the poor are a lower life expectancy, an increased mortality rate, and a rise in the rate of incarceration and involvement in violent crimes, the lack of quality education, and the unavailability of jobs. It even trickles down to the quality of food choices. Good nutrition is often for those who can afford it. For the rest it's just having something to eat. As a nation, it shows a troubling trend.

In the article "Inequality Matters" by Jared Bernstein and Ben Spielberg, which appears in *The Atlantic* (Jun 5, 2015), they mention how some conservatives believe the focus should be on income opportunity rather than income inequality and how it is "going after" the one percent by taking away income from the wealthy.



Source: <http://money.cnn.com/2014/10/16/news/economy/48-million-americans-poverty-census-bureau/index.html>

Many politicians and analysts would rather not address the power imbalances that have channeled so much of our economic growth to the highest-income families. They are much more comfortable focusing on the benign-sounding

theme of “wealth creation” or insisting that economic growth alone can improve mobility without any redistribution of resources or political power, as if “a rising tide can lift all boats” matters when a few people are in yachts and many are stuck in dinghies (Bernstein and Spielberg, 2015).

The article then shows research that indicates some of the ways income inequality prevents opportunity from reaching the lower class. They mention three in particular: increasing residential segregation by income, unequal access to quality education, and that inequality undermines opportunity through a variety of mechanisms. “In other words, disadvantages faced by children in low- and middle-income families and advantages held by their wealthy peers are two sides of the same coin. The lack of opportunity for those in poverty is not some separate problem from the unequal distribution of wealth and income across society” (Bernstein and Spielberg, 2015).

Another reason for the widening gap is the rising rate of incarcerated black males. It has increased tremendously and prison systems have become a huge industry. They serve to disenfranchise many blacks, ensuring that they experience a downward mobility or, at best, no mobility at all. The current trend is that one in three black males will either be incarcerated or find themselves in legal trouble at some point in their lives. Those that are convicted of a felony face the loss of the right to vote, housing, and to find employment. This in turn keeps them from finding quality jobs and some will turn to a life of crime. Those who have a family will then find it increasingly hard to support their families. That is a large segment of our population that may have already been born into poverty and will remain in poverty.

I believe there are many things we as a nation can do to improve social mobility. The article by Bernstein and Spielberg goes on to suggest ways to help by suggesting changes to the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Housing Choice Vouchers program by tying voucher subsidies to rent in specific zip codes, increasing educational funding to include a free robust pre-K program for kids in low-income families using public funds that come from various levels of government taxes and the redistribution of those taxes.

They also mention relieving college students of debt and school expenses. “As research by the Pew Economic Mobility Project indicates, children born into the bottom quintile who obtain a college degree are 2.5 times less likely to end up in the top quintile of the income distribution as adults than children who grew up in wealthy families but did not graduate college” (Bernstein and Spielberg, 2015).

The article also suggests an increase in social services and safety net programs would go a long way to help those who need those services. For example, that “a \$3,000 increase in family income (in 2005 dollars) between a child’s prenatal year and fifth birthday is associated with an average 17 percent increase in annual earnings and an additional 135 hours of work when the children

become adults, compared to similar children whose families did not receive the added income” (Bernstein and Spielberg quoting Marr et al. research, 2015).

I concur with the suggestions by the article and would also suggest the following. We can:

- Make better investments in early education.
- Spread tax dollars a little more evenly.
- Outlaw certain practices such as redlining certain neighborhoods.
- Encourage saving and proper investments.
- Teach cultural flexibility and the importance of having social capital.
- Teach proper public behavior and avoidance of being labeled as deviant by society. Certain deviant behaviors can happen out of sight, like smoking a joint indoors as opposed to being in a group that is hanging out (loitering).
- Hold corporations accountable for taxes that they have been exempt from paying because that money can be reinvested to help build community programs.
- Show the value of distinctiveness and proper consumption of goods. It can go a long way to improve one’s appearance and acceptance.

Eliminating the barriers to social mobility can go a long way to create an egalitarian society because a well educated and well-fed populous is one that supports its economy instead being a burden upon it.

Work Cited

Bernstein, Jared, and Ben Spielberg. “Inequality Matters,” *The Atlantic*. 5 Jun 2015 Mag., Web. 4 Dec 2015

Incarceration Rates in America and Who It Affects

Femi Omoijuanfo

Fall 2017

ANT 3700 | Introduction to Anthropology

Professor Ryan Chaney

The rates of incarceration in America are startling. In fact 693 out of every 100,000 Americans are prisoners, a rate that ranks second worldwide and first amongst other industrialized nations (“Countries with the Largest Number of Prisoners,” 2017). Even worse is the rate at which black men are being incarcerated. According to an article on the American Progress website, one out of 15 black men are incarcerated compared to one out of every 106 white men (Kerby, 2012). Even though, as the NAACP website states, black men and white men use drugs at similar rates, incarceration of black men based on drug charges is six times more than that of white men (“Criminal Justice Fact Sheet,” n.d.). Why is there a staggering difference between these two groups when it comes to incarceration? There are some factors worthy of consideration when examining or trying to determine the reasons behind the mass incarceration of black men. Racial profiling and unequal arrests between races, lack of representation, economic motivation of the police, and lack of capital. All these in addition to prisoners being used for cheap labor, high recidivism rates all point towards the direction of a new form of slavery.

One of the biggest, most prevalent issues when considering the high incarceration of black men is police discrimination. The way black men are policed is completely different in comparison to white men. Racial bias and profiling seem to be the order of the day, and that is one of the reasons African Americans, especially men, get stopped on the street or pulled over by cops more often than white men. According to an article in *The Huffington Post*, black motorists are 31% more likely to be pulled over than white motorists (Quigley, 2016). The professor that lectures my anthropology class (a white man) gave a perfect example about his experience getting pulled over. He got pulled over, and there was a bottle that resembled a beer bottle in the cup holder. The police man that pulled him over asked, “Sorry, buddy, but I have to ask, is that alcohol?” To which he replied, “No,” and was free to go to. However, if he was of any other

race that interaction might have gone completely differently.

Black people have coined the phrase “Driving While Black” or D.W.B in reference to police being more likely to stop a black driver as opposed to a white driver. This becomes an issue because if you are pulled over, the policeman can use his judgment or discretion to decide whether to search your car, give you a ticket or detain you. The Law Dictionary website refers to police discretion as a “vague term” with a “vague definition,” defining it as “the decision-making power afforded to police officers that allows them to decide if they want to pursue police procedure or simply let someone off with a warning” (Hirby, n.d.). A police officer’s judgment might not be racially charged, but there are studies and research that show clear racial disparities. An article on the Live Science website refers to Ted Miller, a lead study author and a senior research scientist at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in Maryland, for his findings and some explanation. Agata Blaszcak-Boxe, author of the article writes, paraphrasing Miller, “The police officers were more likely to stop or arrest black, Hispanic and Native American people than they were to stop or arrest non-Hispanic white people. The rate of stops and arrests was about 500 per 10,000 people for non-Hispanic whites. In comparison, the rates were 1,400 per 10,000 people for blacks; 1,000 per 10,000 people for Hispanics; and 1,140 per 10,000 people for Native Americans” (Blaszcak-Boxe, 2016). The racial bias that these numbers suggest might not be the intention of every police officer, but the differences are too extreme for it to be overlooked or ignored.



Source: <http://straightfromthea.com/2012/04/04/tyler-perry-victim-of-racial-profiling/driving-while-black/>

Furthermore, the Prison Policy website notes that white (non-Hispanics) make up 64% of the U.S. population, and blacks account for just 13% of the

country's population. Nevertheless, prison population for non-Hispanic whites is 39% and national incarceration numbers are 450 per 100,000, while prison population for blacks is 40% and national incarceration numbers are 2,306 per 100,000 (Sakala, 2014). Once in the system, the less affluent suffer because they cannot afford bail or a good defense lawyer. This hinders them from getting proper representation that aids in making sure the system is not just throwing them in jail and that they do not get more than the time they deserve according to the offense committed. While it is their constitutional right according to the Sixth Amendment which "guarantees the right of criminal defendants, including the right to a public trial without unnecessary delay, the right to a lawyer, the right to an impartial jury..." to get a state assigned public defender, they still suffer because public defenders are completely overworked.

Alex Van Brunt wrote, "In Florida in 2009, the annual felony caseload per attorney was over 500 felonies and 2,225 misdemeanors. According to the US Department of Justice, in 2007, about 73% of county public defender offices exceeded the maximum recommended limit of cases (150 felonies or 400 misdemeanors)." Brunt also notes that public defense attorneys work less than an hour on each case due to their heavy workload (2015). This heavy workload does not come with any increase in pay. An attorney who is overworked and underpaid is less likely to give each case the attention it deserves (not because they do not want to, but because they do not have the time) compared to an attorney who is overpaid and underworked or maybe even overpaid and overworked.

The police continue to play a role when the subject of who is being targeted or who is deemed as the easier target arises. There is evidence that police are more likely to target impoverished black neighborhoods. An article on [Vox.com](https://www.vox.com) by German Lopez talks about Neil Franklin, a retired Maryland police major, who explained that they needed a lot of drug arrests so as to get more funding. He admitted that targeting low-income communities was a lot easier for them for their drug arrests, stating: "They have no political power or capital and no financial power, so there's very little pushback. Doing these evening and afternoon sweeps meant 20 to 30 arrests, and now you have some great numbers for your grant application" (Lopez, 2015). This just shows that they don't care about ridding the streets of drugs. They only arrest drug dealers for funding, and if there was no correlation between the amount of drug arrests made and funds or grants given, then police presence might be a lot less than what it is in these neighborhoods. This is not to say that the issue of dealing drugs in low-income neighborhoods should be ignored, However, targeting them in a bid to get more funding and grants is simply not the correct way of policing, or at least it should not be.

My professor recommended a book by Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*. In Chapter Three, "The Color of Justice," she writes about two black people: Erma Faye Stewart and Clifford Runoalds. Erma was a single mother

of two, arrested in a drug sweep and detained even though she claimed she was innocent. After a week of being away from her home and her kids, she was told to plead guilty and take a plea bargain. She refused, maintaining her innocence, but after a month of being held, with no one to care for her kids, she took the plea deal. Aside from the 10 years of probation and a fine of \$1,000, she got a criminal record for being a drug felon, disqualifying her for food stamps, dwindling her employment opportunities, making her unable to vote, and putting her in danger of homelessness. With nowhere to house them, her kids could be taken away, and she could be left with nothing. All this trouble because of a drug sweep that occurred based on false information (Alexander, 2011, 97).

Clifford was home for his eighteen-month-old daughter's funeral. He was arrested and told that he needed to testify against a defendant in a drug bust. He denied witnessing anything, and he got indicted on felony charges. Charges were dropped after a month, but by then he had lost his job, his house, his car and a chance to say goodbye to his daughter (Alexander, 2011, 97). Now imagine the same scenario but with a person who is not on food stamps, makes a decent living, can afford a decent lawyer and can afford to post bail if need be. It is safe to say that they would be a lot less likely to spend the night in jail, not to talk of days or weeks. Low income and communities of color are targeted and arrested, but because they are poor they can't afford to pay bail money and have to await trial in cells, even though some of these people are innocent of any crime. According to an article on the Prison Policy website, "There are 646,000 people locked up in more than 3,000 local jails throughout the U.S. Seventy percent of these people in local jails are being held pretrial — meaning they have not yet been convicted of a crime and are legally presumed innocent" (Rabuy and Kopf, 2016). That is a lot of people (some probably innocent) sitting around doing nothing. A lot of these people probably have jobs and other responsibilities to take care of, but they are stuck without the means to free themselves from the clutches of the prison system.

The data above points to the fact that black men are being incarcerated in great numbers. Although a number of them are guilty, there are other factors that when examined could lead people to believe that the criminal justice system is rigged. Not just rigged that it does not favor a black man but rigged that it targets him. Professor Martin Matthew (Ph.D.), an African American history professor at Kingsborough Community College, once asked the class if slavery could ever return to America, and some students said, "Yes," while some said, "No." And maybe the type of slavery that occurred in the past might not return, however there is another form of slavery in America, a new form, one that is not so blatant and hides behind the guise of retribution, rehabilitation and correction, one that is legal, lawful and accepted by majority of the society and it is called the American prison system.

There is a popular saying, "Slavery is not dead, it has just changed form."

In an article written by Floyd D. Weatherspoon in *Race, Racism and the Law*, he recalls asking his law students “if they could think of an institutional system where mass numbers of individuals are involuntarily placed in servitude for extended periods or life. In addition, they lost the right to vote, to freely travel, obtain an education, gain meaningful employment, were more harshly punished than whites who committed the same crimes and housed in deplorable conditions” (racism.org). The students responded by naming the institution of slavery, but in fact Weatherspoon was describing the current status of black men in America who are being imprisoned in large numbers.

The prison system is supposed to provide some form of correction or rehabilitation to those who find themselves in it, but it clearly does not. If it did then the recidivism rates would not be so high. Recidivism refers to a person’s likelihood of returning to a crime they were already sanctioned for and, according to the National Institute of Justice, is measured by criminal acts that resulted in re-arrests, reconviction or return to prison with or without a new sentence during a three-year period following the prisoner’s release” (nij.gov, June 17, 2017). The National Institute of Justice reported that in a period of three years of release about 67.8 percent of released prisoners were rearrested and, within five years of release, about 76.6 percent of released prisoners were rearrested. Of those prisoners who were rearrested, more than half, about 56.7 percent, were arrested by the end of the first year (nij.gov, June 17, 2014). If found guilty of committing a crime, then whatever punishment the law metes out might be in order. However, the purpose of punishment is often to deter people from recommitting the crime. So if the current ways of rehabilitation do not seem effective, maybe we should consider and come up with better ways to rehabilitate offenders so the recidivism rates may decrease.

There is an article written by a Californian prisoner in 2004 titled “Institutional Slavery: A Tool of Oppression.” It talks about how prisoners are being treated as “products instead of human beings,” how the prison system does nothing to help the prisoners. Instead it humiliates them, strips them of any dignity they have, there is no educational program and just chips away at them until they finally break. The prisoner continues, “The Amerikkklan criminal justice system is a farce, a fraud, there is no correction being done. What is being done is corruption. Prison has become a booming money system, as well as an instrument to further oppression” (prisoncensorship.info).

Prisoners are often put to work with very little pay as a way for big corporations to get really cheap labor. The United States Congress passed the Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program in 1979, which permitted US companies to use prison labor. The Federal Bureau of Prisons now runs a program called Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR) that pays inmates less than a dollar per hour. The program generated \$500m in sales in 2016, with little of that money being paid to the laborers (Love and Das, 2017). A man locked in

jail for rehabilitation, with almost no constitutional rights, being supervised by prison guards, made to work for less than a dollar, is subject to the same condition as people who were shipped to America in multitudes, no rights whatsoever, no autonomy and forced to work for free. That is exactly what slavery was. In other words the American prison system is synonymous to the American slavery system. In 1967, Martin Luther King, Jr., gave a speech addressing the National Association of TV and Radio Announcers (NATRA); it was later transcribed by a lot of people, including Rima Regas, who posted it on her blog.



Source: <https://www.salesforce.com/blog/2017/01/honoring-mlk-age-of-equality.html>

In this speech Dr. King acknowledged how far America has come but emphasized that there was still a lot more work to be done and a long way to go in rooting out racism and getting true equality for black people. During his speech he said something that was true then in 1967 and still rings true today in 2018:

In 1863, the Negro was freed from the physical bondage of slavery through The Emancipation Proclamation. But he wasn't given any land to make that freedom meaningful. You know, it was something like having a man unjustly imprisoned for 30 or 40 years and suddenly you discover that he's innocent! That he's been unjustly jailed for 30 or 40 years, then you simply go up to the man and tell him, now, you're free. But you don't give him any bus fare to get to town. You don't give him any money to buy any clothes to put on his back. You don't give him any money

to get on his feet so that he can rise up once more as a man. But this is what happens to the Black man in America, and we must remember this: that at the very same time America refused to give the Black man anything, they said you're free. He was left penniless, illiterate, standing out in a situation, not knowing what to do or where to go, and we must not forget that at the same time the Negro was being treated like this, America was giving away millions of acres of land in the West and Midwest. It said that our country was willing to undergird its white peasants from Europe with an economic floor, and it refused to undergird its Black peasants who were brought in chains from Africa with an economic floor. And so emancipation for the Negro was freedom to hunger. It was freedom to the winds and rains from heaven. It was freedom without a roof over their heads. Freedom without bread to eat. Freedom without land to cultivate. It was freedom and famine at the same time, and it is a miracle that the Negro has survived!

Just as the slaves were left with nothing after slavery was abolished, no jobs, no land, no money, and no education, the majority of the prisoners who are done serving their time have little to no resources to help them successfully re-enter society. In fact the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) states: "Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), 13 states fully prohibit anyone with a drug-related conviction from receiving public assistance under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program; 23 other states maintain a partial ban." This poses a problem because, according to the National Institute of Justice, "survey results suggest that between 60 and 75 percent of ex-offenders are jobless up to a year after release." If a former offender cannot get food stamps and the majority of employers won't hire him, his options become very limited and he might go back to committing crimes in a bid to survive. This is evident, and one does not need to be in the system to realize that the prison system is rife with corruption and institutionalized racism.

Mass incarceration of black men is a big problem, but it is not a problem for white America. A lot of white people refuse to recognize their privilege so they don't understand when black people complain about racism. If police officers decide to stop and pull over and question and search white motorists the same way they have always done to black motorists, then they might understand the struggles of Driving While Black. If money, social capital and visibility wasn't in play while trying to arrest and charge offenders, then it would be crystal clear why slavery is still thriving today. Social inequality, racial profiling, discrimination, and targeting poor black communities are big obstacles, and until we find

a way to bypass them, mass incarceration of black men will continue to plague the black community. The American claim of freedom and liberty will continue to favor white America.

Works Cited

- A California Prisoner. *Institutionalized Slavery: A Tool of Oppression* (2004). www.prisoncensorship.info
- Countries with the largest number of prisoners per 100,000. (2017, July). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com>
- Criminal justice fact sheet. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.naacp.org
- Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States. *The Sentencing Project*. (2014).
- Kerby, Sophia. (March 13, 2012) The Top 10 Most Startling Facts about People of Color and Criminal Justice in the United States. Retrieved from www.americanprogress.org
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. Retrieved from www.rimaregas.com: <https://www.rimaregas.com/.../transcript-martin-luther-kings-speech-to-natra1967-second-half-racism-on-blog42/>
- Lopez, German. (April 16, 2015) *These Maps Show that the War on Drugs Are Only Fought in Poor Neighborhoods*. Retrieved from www.vox.com
- Love, A. David and Vijay Das. *Slavery in the U.S Prison System*. www.aljazeera.com (2017, September, 9).
- Quigley, Bill. (June 2, 2015). *40 Reasons Why Our Jails Are Full of Black and Poor People*. Retrieved from www.thehuffingtonpost.com
- Rabuy, Bernadette and Daniel Kopf. (May 10, 2016) *Detaining the Poor: How Money Bail Perpetuates an Endless Cycle of Poverty and Jail Time*.
- Weatherspoon, Floyd D. *The Mass Incarceration of African American Males: A Return to Institutionalized Slavery, Oppression and the Disenfranchisement of Constitutional Rights*. *Race, Racism and the Law*. www.racism.org.

Inside the Classroom: Linguistic and Behavioral Development of Bilingual Students

Leslie Irene Junco

Fall 2017

ANT 3700 | Introduction to Anthropology
Professor Ryan Chaney

Introduction

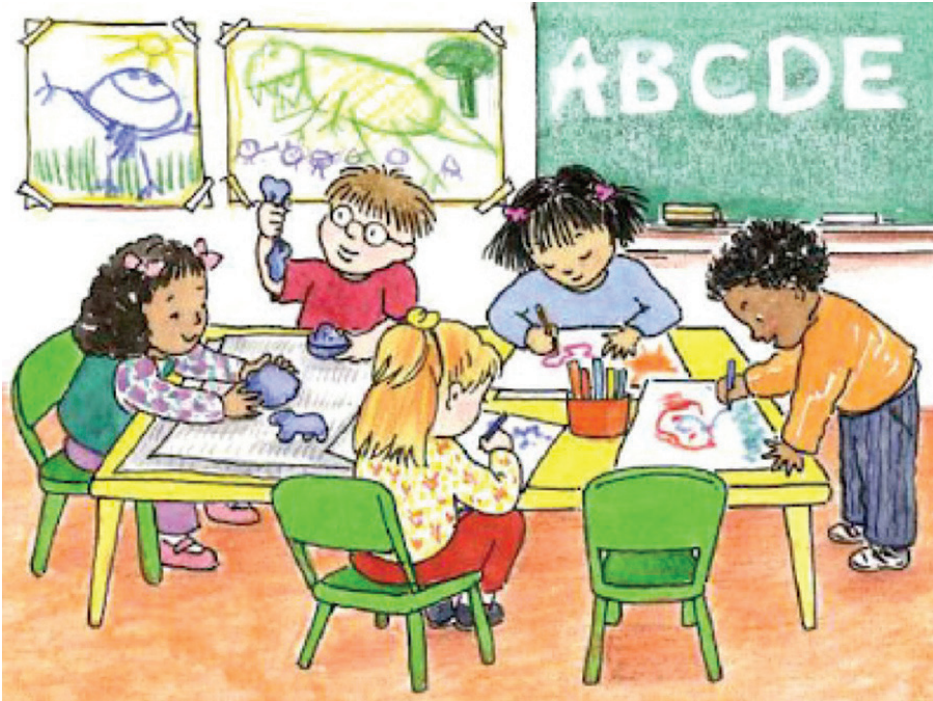
New York State is home to more than 8.5 million people, with almost 1.1 million students enrolled in public school in New York City alone, according to NYC Department of Education.

In the 2013-2014 demographic report by the Department of English Language Learners and Student Support, 43.3 percent of all NYCDOE students spoke another language other than English at home. Teachers have to teach and maintain their required tests and assessments for the students with and without English competency.

Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, pioneers in the cognitive development studies of young children, highlight the importance of letting children explore their environment and learn based on their correct developmental stage. Most children between the ages of two and seven are in the pre-operational stage, where they begin to develop an understanding of language and symbols, yet they lack the ability to place two concepts together abstractly. For example, students will understand what the number “two” is, but struggle to understand that the sound of the word two can also mean the action of going “to” a place or the word for also, “too.” While some children are more advanced in their developmental stage than others, bilingual students must form associations with English as well as with the language spoken at home.

Based on research from modern psychologists, there is a strong possibility that bilingual children need a more play-based curriculum, as they are behind academically from children whose first or only language is English. Children, in their early stages of education, are taught to understand their position as students and as people in society. While it may not be possible to eliminate assessments from NYC education, there could be a reduction in the frequency to ease the pressure on both students and teachers. Another culprit can also be the curriculum

taught is too advanced and is inappropriate for the children's developmental stages. Regardless of language barriers, all children look for acknowledgement from what they have learned. Students want to be successful, but instructors and school officials have to be aware of the stages of development of the students and the pressures of success are in our society. One of the most important factors to successful learning is the relationship between student and teacher which, based on my observations, must be developed more in classrooms.



Source: <http://agenesiscorpuscoallosum.blogspot.com/2012/11/teacher-of-acc-student-parent-input.html>

Overview

The kindergarten classroom subject to observation is within PS 253, where they will remain anonymous for the children and teacher's privacy. The classroom consists of bilingual and non-bilingual students from ages four to five. The kindergarten teacher is following the Common Core curriculum required by the school and is provided by the NYCDOE. The Common Core follows a timeline structure and provides several resources, from examples of lesson instruction to advice for teachers with bilingual students. Some of the various languages the bilingual students speak consist of Spanish, Russian and Arabic, including different dialects.

The white American teacher can only speak English, but she has learned words in some of these languages for easier communication with bilingual students. However, there are times where the children who are more advanced must speak

to their peers in their first language.

The teacher in the observation struggled with moving the classroom of approximately 25 children along to meet her deadlines, while some students fell behind in lessons and could not pass the different assessments. Due to the language barriers, some students fell behind in their assessments or simply lacked the understanding of what they were supposed to be learning. Some of these children were new to the classroom setting, new to the English language or simply had not reached the same stages as their peers.

My series of observations highlight the children's need for more appreciation and affection from their instructor, reducing the rules and norms of the standard classroom, and allowing them to explore in the correct developmental stage in an environment where success is measured in assessments. The teacher needs to be able to build a connection with students along with teaching child-friendly material.

Curiosity and Physical Attachment

In the beginning of my observations, some students were intrigued by my presence, asking several questions such as "Do you go to school?" or making comments about my book bag, which happened to be a penguin backpack. There were students who refused to talk to me as I walked around. There were a couple that wanted me to look at their assignments and would reach for my hand. After three or four observation sessions, five or six students began to greet me with hugs and several had learnt my name. Physical contact with the students was particularly unique; the teacher would help the children pack up their bags and zip their jackets. One student requested their shoe to be tied and the teacher bent down to help. Students began coming up to me for assistance on the days I observed their last class. One child in particular became attached to me and spoke to me in Spanish after finding out I too am bilingual. In an attempt to stay neutral, I spoke to the child in English, as the teacher explicitly stated that speaking any other language other than English is unacceptable. Although I refused to speak to her in Spanish, she resisted my non-compliance and continued to speak the language. This student was considered "a trouble-maker" by the teacher.

In her frustration, she would get out of her seat and go to a table with one of her friends who also spoke Spanish. There would be times where she would go to the play mat and dance in the middle of writing activities. The teacher could not communicate with her properly whenever she needed something, such as going to the restroom or attention if she could not complete her work. Unfortunately, the teacher resorted to scolding the child to sit, to be quiet and to speak English, which she could not do.

Looking back on what I have observed, it seemed quite obvious that the children would become attached to those they considered their friends. The little

girl in particular began to communicate with me because she finally got a chance to be understood by someone. Although it was definitely not the teacher's fault, the main problem was the lack of bond between student and teacher. Many of the students had the same problem where the comprehension of language held them back from their learning abilities and from being able to enjoy class.

Common Core and Four Square Boxes

One of the most interesting observations were the literacy lessons involving a work sheet with a panel of four squares, each giving a prompt to write a specific sentence based on one concept, in this case "going to the park." The teacher provides instructions to the children: box number one will be the sentence: "I like the park." Box number two describing what they see at the park, box number three describing what the student enjoys doing at the park, and box number four describing the child's emotion about the park. The teacher explains the rules: students must write the complete sentences and also provide a small drawing about what they have written about. The words used in the sentences were the "sight words" of the week, a term she used to describe the weekly vocabulary they needed to learn. After showing the students how to fill out the boxes on her whiteboard, the teacher proceeded by allowing the children to do it themselves. Labeling was one of the many classroom rules for the students, an act that many students didn't do. After walking around the classroom, I only saw two students label figures from their drawings. One of the two in particular was the first to finish the worksheet; she went up to the teacher to show her the completed work. The teacher, however, was administering a make-up assessment for a student and could not make further comments on the student's work. Other students were in all stages of completion, from simple drawings to the beginnings of sentences. The students were sitting in tables of four, yet two or three students got up from their assigned seats and began walking around to different tables. Table four got praised often for their "good behavior" as they were following the non-explicit norms and following rules of the classroom: completing assignments, staying seated, being quiet; following the norms and rules were rewarded with stickers for their notebooks. When I began to look into the children's writing or math folders, I was able to see the lack of completed work, particularly in the folders of the students who would not speak English during class or showed the least amount of English comprehension. It was apparent that many of the students were not receiving enough attention when they could not understand the material. The worksheets were not age appropriate and the teacher could not address the problems the children were struggling with.



Source: <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2007/12/10/kindergartners-see-new-approach-to-learning-abcs/>

Conclusions

The teacher expressed her concern with having the students complete these worksheets as a form of assessing them. She explained that she had to meet a certain amount of worksheets per child every week and that the children could not complete them effectively. The teacher complained that the administration of the school did not understand the difficulties of having bilingual students.

From what I can interpret, students from table four and others who met expectations still looked for the same attention from the teacher and from me, the observer, as the struggling students. The material did not seem appropriate for some students, whether it was because of age or because of language barriers remains unclear. The lessons seemed too structured and too abstract for their zone of their cognitive development. Many students did not understand the teacher's instructions and were unable to perform to her expectations. These worksheets were a form of measuring the children's writing skills; yet some students could not complete them, not because they couldn't write, but because they did not understand what they were supposed to do.

Students were frustrated that they could not communicate with the teacher, so they would resort to misbehaving or communicating with their peers. I can conclude that these students need less testing and more lessons that are age appropriate, especially when dealing with bilingual students, who need to have more fun and more encouragement from their teachers. With the improvement of the student-teacher relationship, students will learn more efficiently.

References

- “Curriculum and Instruction.” NYC Department of Education, 1 Nov. 2017, schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CIPL/overview.htm.
- Department of English Language Learners and Student Support. “English Language Learners.” NYC Department of Education. <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/A8429354-F136-479D-AAA6-EB402CCC86B8/0/ELL_Elementary_brochure_2015_ENGLISH.pdf>.
- Department of English Language Learners and Student Support. “School Year 2013-2014 Demographic Report.” NYC Department of Education. <schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/FC0B4035-00DF-4318-A1F7-6EF23C15B7F6/0/20132014DemographicReportFinalWINTER2015.pdf>.
- “English Language Learners Face Unique Challenges.” National Education Association, NEA Education Policy and Practice Department, 2008, [www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/ELL_Policy_Brief_Fall_08_2\).pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/ELL_Policy_Brief_Fall_08_2).pdf).
- “Statistical Summaries.” NYC Department of Education, 31 Jan. 2017, <schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/stats/default.htm>.
- “Theories of Cognitive Development: Piaget & Vygotsky .” [Ncsu.edu](http://www4.ncsu.edu/~jlnietfe/EDP304_Notes_files/Development%20Notes.pdf), Theories of Cognitive Development: Piaget & Vygotsky. <http://www4.ncsu.edu/~jlnietfe/EDP304_Notes_files/Development%20Notes.pdf>.

The Social Construction of Gender and Power

Isabell Rivera

Fall 2017
SOC 3800 | Sociology of Gender
Professor Dominic Wetzel

The majority of contemporary society believes that the gender and the sex of someone are identical. On the contrary, they are two completely different terms. The biological sex that determines if someone is a man or a woman is assigned by nature. However, the “gender,” if someone is female or male, is something we “do,” which is assigned to us by society and our cultural background. According to *Gender* by Lisa Wade and Myra Marx Ferree, “The ‘Banking’ Concept of Education” by Paulo Freire, and “Standards for a New Womanhood” by Angela Davis, the way society learns new ideas and how perceptions in regards to gender have shifted and why they did are all intertwined. However, it is also up to us to question the norms and rules established in our society to keep our individuality, but also to not just look at things with tunnel vision. The question that remains is, can we reconstruct how society “does” gender if we take away gender rules?

When it comes to the rules applied to “gender roles,” the media plays a significant role in how society does gender. Women, as well as men, perform a certain role, which has changed over the decades, but men are still set above women. According to the authors Wade and Marx Ferree: “It places men above women, values masculinity above femininity, and routinely brings men and women together into relationships in which women are positioned as helpers to men” (113). In other words, women are there to comfort men, to look pretty for men, as well as entertain them. Society displays women as helpless beings without a man and therefore in need to depend on one. Society has not considered women to be “independent individuals” that are able to rule alone.

Anything that is being associated with women and femininity is automatically considered weak and emotional. This way of thinking is deeply ingrained in us because we get conditioned this way. As Wade and Marx Ferree state: “We learn complex sets of gendered expectations that tell us how to behave as men and women in varying situations. While we sometimes act in gendered ways out of habit, we also come to understand that if we fail to do so, others may tease,

hassle, or hurt us” (60).

The first institution we encounter is the one we are born into: our family. We learn that the color blue is for boys, and the color pink is for girls. We learn that certain toys are only for girls, such as dolls, and others are only for boys, such as cars. We also learn that anything other than one’s own gender is “bad” or “stupid.” That’s why when children go through the fourth psychosexual stage, the “latency phase,” according to Sigmund Freud (McLeod, 2008), they are only interested in same-gender playmates. We also get conditioned to ask for the opinion of others, especially our closest friends in either gender, who are the same gender as ourselves. It gives us a feeling of security, but it’s also a force of habit. The habit is to follow the rules because we grew into this “role” of acting feminine or masculine.

Nevertheless, we also often break the rules, which could have the consequences of feeling ashamed of oneself, due to the policing of our close peers. A woman could feel that she failed to be a good girlfriend because she doesn’t constantly dress up for her partner, whereas a father can feel disappointed if his son doesn’t want to become a quarterback or go camping in the woods.

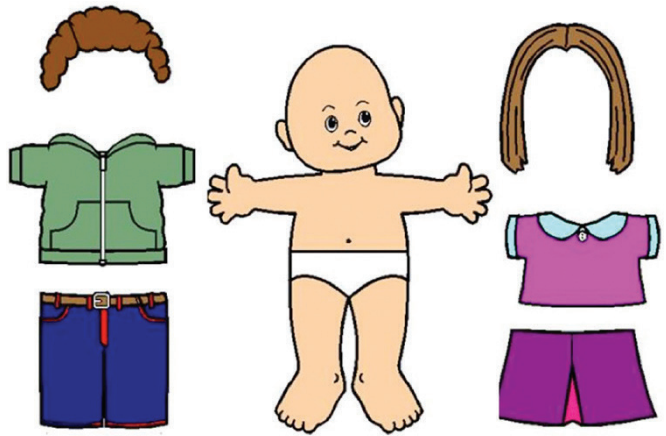
It all reflects on how we perform according to the gender assigned to us, since most Western cultures distinguish only between male and female. Even if we personally don’t want to put ourselves into a category, we do “label” others around us, instead of looking at the bigger picture. As humans beings, we are both regardless of the sex we got assigned by birth, but we do notice differences between men and women. For instance, most men don’t show emotions, because it would be considered “unnatural” and “unmanly,” whereas a lot of women do show emotions, and it’s expected from them. If a woman does not show emotions and acts “tough,” it would be considered “unnatural” and “manly,” yet again that has something to do with how we raise women and men, but more so how media portrays them and how society expects men and women to act.

The authors continue: “In fact, many people will say that they sort of are... and sort of aren’t... the stereotype” (Wade, Marx Ferree, 11). Although this might be true to some degree, most men would see themselves as manly and tough, and will try to fit into the category of being a “hegemonic male.” Whereas most women would try and act feminine to complement the “hegemonic man” they then choose to be with. However, exceptions prove the rule.

As Freire states: “The solution is not to ‘integrate’ them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become ‘beings for themselves’” (246). Freire means that a society can only function when we think independently and question everything we learn. If we blindly believe in what is taught to us, we simply don’t exist. We don’t challenge existence and creativity and what it means to become a person, an individual, not a robot or a slave controlled by someone superior. This can also be applied to how society looks at gender and gender roles and how we distinguish them. In this case, society

members again blindly follow the rules of gender and conform to be considered male or female, out of fear of being rejected and policed by family and friends, as well as the public eye.

How we “do” gender has also a lot to do with how media portrays how we should act and dress. Freire continues: “Those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of women and men as conscious beings, and consciousness as consciousness intent upon the world” (248). Freire says that the world wouldn’t exist if society and its people had not rebelled against the “mythicizing reality,” which refers to the Bible, and engaged in “demythologized thinking,” which means to question what we’ve been taught and to look for the true meaning of something with questions and research and opposing the biblical and heroic elements. In this case, there is not just masculinity or femininity, a woman is not just a female and feminine, and a man is not just male and masculine. The gender spectrum has a wide range and as a whole is a complex term, with many sub-terms. Society over the decades questioned these terms but still tries to file men in one category and women into another.



Doing Gender?

Source: <http://slideplayer.org/slide/2961646/>

As the authors argue, there is more to it than just identifying with only being male or female. “Finding a way of doing gender that works for us as unique individuals who are also shaped by other parts of our identity and the realities of our lives is called gender strategy” (Wade, Marx Ferree, 85).

The way society is constructed and views people all depends on skin color, heritage, status, class and gender, because they intertwine with each other. Colorism, ableism, ageism and not to mention racism and homophobia are all terms related to gender and how we “do” gender as well as how we accept sexual orientation, but more so the stereotypes associated with the terms. As the authors

continue, “Our gender strategies are not only a reflection of our personalities but also of the twists and turns of our lives ... Our strategies, though, are never just a result of personality and chance; they are also contingent on our class status” (Wade, Marx Ferree, 87).

Through racism, we assume every black person is a criminal and a rapist, every black woman is loud, masculine and strong, every Asian woman is passive, every Asian man is too feminine and most white All-Americans are “vanilla,” which in most cases is not true. According to the authors, “Like our economic class and place of residence, race shapes our gender strategies. Some racial groups are denigrated, others valorized; all are subjects to advantages and disadvantages related to their unique histories” (Wade, Marx Ferree, 89). But because we learn these “stereotypes” we either act that way or try to do the opposite to disassociate ourselves with the stigma related to the stereotypes. For instance, some black people try to “act” white by dressing nerdy and listening to classical music associated with the white upper-class. Black women “act” more feminine by straightening their hair and bleaching their skin, Asian women “act” passive in public and assertive in private, Asian men conform to masculinity by becoming athletes or lawyers, and the vanilla-type American either rebels against the mainstream by becoming a “freak” like the goths or associates with the lower class “white trash.” As the authors state: “All of us, including white people, carry racialized physical features that are ‘read’ by others trying to figure out who we are and, simultaneously, who we should be. These racial strategies to fend off stigmatizing identities and assert esteemed ones” (Wade, Marx Ferree, 97).

We act differently, depending who is around us, therefore we “use” different strategies to not be labeled as one or the other. Society tends to “stereotype,” and this is also something we learn early in our lives. This again goes back to the “Banking Method” by Freire. We learn to accept gender roles and stereotypes, without questioning them. Our culture is focused on what media tells us, we simply take everything that is sold and told to us, without doing our own research. Society, thanks to the media, tells us how women should act and dress and that men are leaders in politics, companies, and even the country.

However, oftentimes we are also unable to “do how we feel” in fear of being labeled as something we don’t identify with, such as sexual preference. A lot of women are afraid to cut their hair short and not wear makeup and sweats, out of fear of attracting the same sex. As Wade and Marx Ferree continue: “A heterosexual woman who performs masculinity, for example, risks being seen as a lesbian. She may despise make-up, love the feel of a short haircut, and prefer wearing her Canucks jersey over anything else, but being herself in this way might get her mistaken for gay” (99).

One of the reasons men embrace hyper-masculinity is because they don’t want to be looked at as “flamboyant” or give out the wrong signal to gay men. Whereas at other times, there are gay men “embracing” a more heterosexual

lifestyle, and although they are out of the closet, they “act” more masculine than feminine.

This “masking” of emotions and the balancing of what is accepted causes inequality in both genders. Women are suppressed from becoming equally treated in the workplace, and men are suppressed from showing any emotions. This is one of the reasons women find the binary system unfair, because men are still put above women.

On the other hand, men deal with “inequality” by repressing their emotions and pretending to be something they are not, out of fear of being victimized or policed. According to Wade and Marx Ferree, “Because hegemonic masculinity pressures men to be a particular kind of impossible person, it is a significant source of oppression for men” (126).

According to the documentary *The Mask You Live In* by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, men are also falsely portrayed in society. Young men grow up learning to mask themselves with a persona created by media. This is where a man is everything but emotional. Men learn to treat women as objects, and that “real” men show and use violence in order to be accepted and to be part of a group. Also, more men engage in dangerous behaviors. If a man feels he is disappointed in his actions, it turns into aggression. Oftentimes these aggressions are encouraged through alcohol abuse. The hiding of emotions becomes a ticking time bomb and in the worst case scenario ends in homicide or another violent act, like rape, which is also mentioned by Wade and Marx Ferree.

It goes hand in hand. Men praise hierarchy as well as patriarchy because it secures them a “higher status,” whereas empathizing with a woman or anything feminine would put them on the lowest rank.

However, some women have extended power and protection as long as they don’t overshadow the men. As the authors state, “Rather than performing emphasized femininity, some women try to be ‘just one of the guys’ -- a strategy sociologist Michael Kimmel refers to as emphatic sameness” (Wade, Marx Ferree, 153). However, most women tend to adopt both strategies; they use “emphasized femininity” or “emphasized sameness,” depending on the situation to gain some power, therefore performing masculinity, but also enough of femininity to avoid being policed. Wade and Marx Ferree continue: “Most women alternate between emphasized femininity and emphatic sameness in a strategy called gender equivocation, using both strategies when they’re useful and culturally expected” (Wade, Marx Ferree, 154). This makes sense. Nevertheless, it is hard for a woman to reach the higher status of hierarchy, that of men, because it is socially not accepted (yet).

On the other hand, black women have dealt with a different gender struggle. In the chapter “Standards for a New Womanhood,” by Angela Davis, she writes, “Judged by the evolving nineteenth-century ideology of femininity, which emphasized women’s roles as nurturing mothers and gentle companions

and housekeepers for their husbands, Black women were practically anomalies” (Davis, 5). In other words, the ideology didn’t apply to black women, neither could black women relate to it, due to the experience of slavery and how it shaped their attitudes towards womanhood and family life. Neither were black women looked at as feminine.

Davis continues: “As the ideology of femininity -- a by-product of industrialization -- through the new ladies’ magazines and romantic novels, white women came to be seen as inhabitants of a sphere, totally severed from the realm of productive work. The cleavage between the home and the public economy, brought on by industrial capitalism, established female inferiority more firmly than ever before. ‘Woman’ became synonymous in the prevailing propaganda with ‘mother’ and ‘housewife,’ and both ‘mother’ and ‘housewife’ bore the fatal mark of inferiority. But among Black female slaves, this vocabulary was nowhere to be found” (Davis, 12). This means, although black women were made into slaves, they were looked at as equal to their slave men and viewed as strong and masculine. Whereas white women were looked on as inferior and feminine, therefore weak and only good for tasks at home as a “housewife.” Most white women took this and some still do this, whereas black women eventually fought back because they felt powerful.



Source: <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/davis-angela-1944-0>

As Davis states: “While it is hardly likely that these women were expressing pride in the work they performed under the ever-present threat of the whip, they must have been aware nonetheless of their enormous power -- their ability to produce and create” (Davis, 11). This also reflects current times. Women don’t know how powerful they are or can be if they would only unite with other women instead of bashing each other. Women learn to be powerful once they raise their

voice. These black women were strong and powerful because although they were sexually and mentally abused and forced to do hard labor, as well care for their children out of wedlock, they had to toughen up. This also reflects what was said in *Gender* by Wade, Marx Ferree; it was expected of black women to be tough, not feminine.

It's important to understand what happened to black women during slavery, and what is mentioned in *Gender* (Wade, Marx Ferree, Chapter 5, 83-110) makes sense in regards of how society and history shape certain "gender rules" and how they get translated to contemporary society. It also goes hand in hand with what is said about men growing up fatherless or in a household where the mother has to be both the father and the mother figure and often these young boys grow up learning to be tough, like their ancestors.

Although men deal with a lot of pressure from society, women do as well. Women have to constantly bargain to not be stereotyped as one or the other (meaning a "cunt," a "dyke," a "bimbo," a "gold digger") as well as be on defense mode in regards to men and other women.

Since the presidential election in 2016 and Trump's new position in the White House, the roles leading our country seem to be questionable. Across the industries, it seems as if powerful men are getting greedier the richer they get and the higher they climb up that ladder of success. The way society is constructed doesn't leave much room for powerful women to climb up the same ladder of success unless these women are willing to pay a price. The price is being sexually exploited by powerful men that these women have trusted. *Gender* by Lisa Wade and Myra Marx Ferree, the article "From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Harvey Weinstein's Accusers Tell Their Stories" by Ronan Farrow, and the documentary *Miss Representation* directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, all state facts and agree that women in contemporary society have a much different position than men no matter how powerful these women are. The question that often arises is, why is it mostly men who sexually harass and not the other way around?

When it comes to sexual assault, rape is not the only crime but the one that happens the most, and the one that often gets downplayed, mostly by women who experienced it, because they feel powerless. That is one of the reasons Harvey Weinstein was able to get away with his inexcusable behavior for decades.

As the data shows (Wade, Marx Ferree, 129) rape is the highest crime (99%) conducted in 2012. That's because (a) most men praise hyper-masculinity and (b) they repress their emotions, which turns into anger. And since most men see themselves above women, they abuse their power to victimize the ones "weaker" and in their eyes inferior. But this also goes for men. Not just women become victims of rape. Men often times have to prove in a group how much of a "hyper-masculine man" they are by becoming a predator, and if they reject this they are looked on as weak and risk the chance to become victimized themselves

(Wade, Marx Ferree, 132). Therefore, women rank at the bottom. That's why "rape crimes" are often a symbol of being superior and having power over someone else. It rarely has anything to do with the act of penetration specifically.

As the authors argue, women deal with a lot of pressure as well as threats when it comes to femininity. Although women have more leeway than men to do gender, Wade and Marx Ferree conclude that "The requirement that women do femininity, combined with the more recent option to also do masculinity, gives women a great deal more behavioral freedom than men today" (145). The authors continue: "Women have more freedom than men to do gender as they like. They can do both masculinity and femininity" (Wade, Marx Ferree, 149). Although that might be true to an extent, women also get judged, policed and stereotyped, just like men do.

Besides, doing both "masculinity" and "femininity" is still a double-edged sword. Women are damned if they do and damned if they don't. Because women are emotional beings who wear their hearts on their sleeves, it is expected for us women to do so, but it is associated with weakness. Therefore, this trait can't be combined with being stern and assertive, which resembles power. As Wade and Marx Ferree state: "The female temperament, it is believed, is at odds with what is required in the power-driven arenas still associated with men. ... There's no hegemonic femininity because feminine traits and activities are seen as desirable only for women" (148).

However, women who are stern and assertive take a risk of being assaulted by denying unwanted approaches, but they also take a risk by being friendly in giving the impression of an "invitation"; therefore this false impression can also lead to unwanted approaches. Again, it shows that women are damned if they do or if they don't. As the authors state, "These forms of violence are all designed, in part, to enforce women's subordination to men or to punish women who refuse to submit" (Wade, Marx Ferree, 150)."

It seems as if women need to distinguish between men as the predator or the friend and helper, because data shows women often get sexually assaulted by men they know (Wade, Marx Ferree, 152). According to the authors, "Benevolent sexism rewards women who perform a degree of subservience with protection and support from men (sometimes called chivalry), but if women fall or jump from their pedestal, hostile sexism takes its place" (Wade, Marx Ferree, 150).

Women are either perceived as being beautiful and feminine but weak, or powerful but unattractive because they represent more masculinity. As Wade and Marx Ferree state: "In the case of women in contemporary Western Societies, the double bind refers to the idea that to be powerful is to fail as woman and to succeed as a woman is to give up power" (155). Women are never allowed to be both, however some women bargain to achieve both at some level.

In October of 2017, *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* dropped the bomb that has led to various revelations in the entertainment industries. One of

Hollywood's most successful producers, Harvey Weinstein, was finally exposed due to sexual allegations against him. Countless women, including Salma Hayek and Rose McGowan, came forward and spoke up to kill the silence. An ongoing process gave strength to women who were powerless and a voice to those who were unable to speak up due to settlements proposed by Weinstein's lawyers.

According to Ronan Farrow's article, "From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Harvey Weinstein's Accusers Tell Their Stories," Harvey Weinstein represents the hegemonic man in a hierarchical society by bullying others to stay below him. It again shows that money equals power. He didn't just buy off the women accusing him (or tried to do so), he was able to afford the best legal team to send out threats to whoever stood his way, even the press.

As Farrow states in the article, "He asked to hold her hand; she said no. In Nestor's account of the exchange, Weinstein said, 'Oh, the girls always say no. You know, "No, no." And then they have a beer or two and then they're throwing themselves at me.' In a tone that Nestor described as 'very weirdly proud,' Weinstein added 'that he'd never had to do anything like Bill Cosby.'" Farrow continues, "'Textbook sexual harassment' was how Nestor described Weinstein's behavior to me. 'It's a pretty clear case of sexual harassment when your superior, the C.E.O., asks one of their inferiors, a temp, to have sex with them, essentially in exchange for mentorship.' She recalled refusing his advances at least a dozen times. 'No' did not mean 'no' to him, she said. 'I was very aware of how inappropriate it was. But I felt trapped.'" All women who worked with or just encountered Weinstein said the same thing, that he didn't take "No" for an answer. He saw women as beneath him and felt empowered to do whatever he was pleased to do. He was referred to as the "God of Hollywood."

As Farrow states, "'I felt I had to,' she said. 'Because I had the movie coming out and I didn't want to anger him.'" She believed that Weinstein would ruin her career if she didn't comply. Years later, when she was a single mother dealing with childcare, Weinstein offered to pay for a nanny. She said that she felt "obliged" to submit to his sexual advances." As is mentioned in Chapter 7 of *Gender*, many men feel entitled and think that women like to get "compliments" or like to advance their careers with sexual favors. It's the control that many men feel they need to have. Again it's this feeling of hierarchy. As long as the women complied, Weinstein promised them a successful career, which reflects the "benevolent sexism" mentioned in the same chapter.

However, as it is stated by Farrow in the article, "Many said that they had seen Weinstein's associates confront and intimidate those who crossed him, and feared that they would be similarly targeted. Four actresses, including Mira Sorvino and Rosanna Arquette, told me they suspected that, after they rejected Weinstein's advances or complained about them to company representatives, Weinstein had them removed from projects or dissuaded people from hiring them." This is a clear example of "hostile sexism." Weinstein manipulated the

women in order to take advantage of them because he knew they feared him. He knew he could get away with it.

What is also interesting to see is that most women felt they had no power or chance to fight Weinstein. Farrow continues: “Afterward, she experienced ‘horror, disbelief, and shame,’ and considered going to the police. ‘I thought it would be a ‘he said, she said,’ and I thought about how impressive his legal team is, and I thought about how much I would lose, and I decided to just move forward,’ she said. The woman continued to have professional contact with Weinstein after the alleged rape, and acknowledged that subsequent communications between them might suggest a normal working relationship. ‘I was in a vulnerable position and I needed my job,’ she told me. ‘It just increases the shame and the guilt.’” Women were afraid their careers would be ruined and that nobody would believe them. Instead of fighting, they became passive. This didn’t just ruin their physical and mental well being but also their careers, because some women quit the entertainment industry before they even entered it.

The article also shows that many men supported Weinstein’s behavior by turning a blind eye, and this shows that although they are not hegemonic men, they are at least not in subordination like women. This is also mentioned in Chapter 6 of *Gender*.

Farrow writes: “None of the former executives or assistants I spoke to quit because of the misconduct, but many expressed guilt and regret over not having said or done more. They talked about what they believed to be a culture of silence about sexual assault inside Miramax and the Weinstein Company and across the entertainment industry more broadly. ... Over the years, she said, she’s heard similar accounts from friends. ‘I know that everybody—I mean *everybody*—in Hollywood knows that it’s happening,’ de Caunes said. ‘He’s not even really hiding. I mean, the way he does it, so many people are involved and see what’s happening. But everyone’s too scared to say anything.’”

What is shocking to note is that there is guilt that women feel when they get sexually assaulted. They express the guilt of not doing enough to fight off a predator, or the guilt of thinking it was their “fault” or that they sent out the wrong message. Farrow quotes one woman: “‘When I see him, it makes me feel little and stupid and weak.’ She broke down as she struggled to explain. ‘After the rape, he won,’ she said.” Women feel guilt and shame because society shames victims with questions such as “What was she wearing?” or “Why do women wear skimpy outfits if they get offended when they get attention?” Or statements such as “If she didn’t want it to happen, why didn’t she stop?”

As Farrow continues in the article, “Everything was designed to make me feel comfortable before it happened. And then the shame in what happened was also designed to keep me quiet.” However, the current time is the perfect time to shed light on powerful men who take advantage. As Farrow mentions, “‘I think a lot of us had thought—and hoped—over the years that it would come

out sooner,' the former executive who was aware of the two legal settlements in London told me. 'But I think now is the right time, in this current climate, for the truth.'"

However, Weinstein wasn't the only one fearing the other sex. Trump dealt with sexual allegations right after the elections, which changed little about his position. But as the year of his presidency approached, powerful men seemed to fall down like dominoes. The popular news station Fox News lost two of its anchormen; NBC lost one of its anchormen. There are allegations against Kevin Spacey, Dustin Hoffman and many more. It's not just Hollywood or politics, but across the industries. However, this gives women from middle and lower classes with regular 9 to 5 jobs encouragement to come forward as well and to unite.

The documentary *Miss Representation* by Jennifer Siebel Newsom shows how women are portrayed in society. It is very different from men. "Media delivers content that shapes our society," according to the documentary. As Alice Walker states, "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any."

Women learn that what brings them further in their career is how they look, and only beauty will bring them success. Men grow up thinking women are only there to entertain them, and that women give up their power to the men in their lives. It's not only that men objectify women, it's also women objectifying themselves.

"The media treats women like shit," comedian Margaret Cho says in *Miss Representation*. Yet so many women comply with the system. Being strong, smart and accomplished isn't enough as a woman in our contemporary society; women have to be, usually, beautiful to get approved in the eyes of men. According to the documentary, "65% of women and girls have an eating disorder" and "17% of teenagers start to cut or self-harm."



Source: <https://www.out.com/popnography/2015/10/20/margaret-cho-slams-snl-inviting-donald-trump-host>

There's so much negativity towards women in the media, which scrutinizes women because of how they look; on the flipside media also shows how women should look. "It's all a (mis)representation of how women feel and how they should conform to men's ideas," says a high school student in the documentary. For men, there's a lot of anxiety around status and power, according to the documentary. This leads us to believe that men act the way they do because of insecurities and because society portrays them to be a certain way and women another.

Nevertheless, one of the reasons why women find the binary system "unfair" is because most women still deal with the outcome of living in a hierarchical society that encourages sexism and misogyny, which is part of the inequality. According to Wade and Marx Ferree, "In other words we still live in societies that are characterized by patriarchal relations. Specifically, three relations of inequality shape the hierarchical nature of contemporary gender dynamics: sexism, androcentrism and subordination" (118). That means society believes women can have jobs in male-dominated fields, but with obstacles and challenges, always referring to them being the "weaker" and less pleasant "sex," because they are women. And if they want to seek powerful positions it is connected to unwanted approaches by men in higher positions.

That's also why a lot of women fear to react to unwanted comments, because of their fear of being policed and judged after a sexual assault takes place. Although there is no hierarchy that exists of women leading men, there is still hierarchy between women and women. Women often bash other women faster than men do, making it hard to form a unity between women to fight against sexism that comes from men. However, this seems to have drastically changed as more women come forward and speak about sexual assault with the #metoo that went viral on social media. For the first time, media is not used to portray women as weak but encourages this movement of empowerment to stand up against powerful men.

I think one of the reasons that more men than women sexually harass is because more men than women are in power or have powerful positions. The way society is constructed, it is built on patriarchy and a particular hierarchy. It doesn't exist for women. However, a lot of times it's also insecurity and a power struggle that comes from men. Some men constantly need to prove themselves and others that they are "powerful." That can mean being a CEO, a president or being wealthy and having connections to other successful "men." Power equals sex and money. Money makes men feel powerful. A lot of times, men who are powerful due to wealth or occupation lack other qualities. Therefore these men convince themselves they are above anyone else, especially women. Even worse, they feel women owe them the time of the day because they are powerful, wealthy and successful.

Women on the other hand oftentimes use their skill set and their qualities

to become successful, and it's not to prove to themselves or others what they have. I do think that there is this type of "hegemonic woman" out there that men want to be with and other women want to be, but only as long as she doesn't overshadow the powerful men in society. Because society still goes by traditional gender rules, no matter how much change and shift there has been.

The way we do gender and the way we live by certain strategies has a lot to do with our surroundings and who we associate with. But I also think it's something we often do unconsciously.

As trends have changed over decades and how we perceive gender roles, as well as the media, we are open for new ideas, but often we also go back to how we looked at gender roles in the 1950s, for example. However, if society follows Freire's "problem-posing method," and applies it to the way we "do" and "live" gender, we would be able to live freely as individuals and as ourselves. This is because gender rules wouldn't apply anymore. That also goes for sexuality. Most people then would identify as bisexual beings. Nevertheless, if society would change the way it addresses masculinity and femininity, as well as stop oppressing men from how they feel and encourage them instead, it could prevent hate crimes as well as violent acts and could eliminate most sexual crimes.

If there were no gender roles, the depression and suicide rate would sink as well, and women and men could become individuals and live freely, rather than continue to be sheep blindly following an unrealistic image that media portrays of society, by oppressing men and women and assigning them unnatural roles to conform to. Instead of viewing femininity as something "bad" or something men don't want to associate with, we should embrace the fact that it actually is manly to show emotions, instead of holding them back. It shows courage and power, whereas hiding feelings shows weakness and insecurity as well as being unhealthy for men and women because both genders suffer from it.

Bibliography

- Davis, Angela Y. "Standards for a New Womanhood," in *Women, Race, & Class*. The Women's Press Ltd., 1982.
- Farrow, Ronan. "From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Harvey Weinstein's Accusers Tell Their Stories," *The New Yorker*, 2017.
- Freire, Paulo. "The 'Banking' Concept of Education," in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 1993.
- McLeod, Saul. *Psychosexual Stages*, 2008. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/psychosexual.html>
- Newsom, Jennifer Siebel. *Miss Representation*, documentary, Girls' Club Entertainment, 2011.
- Newsom, Jennifer Siebel. *The Mask You Live In*, documentary, The Representation Project, 2015.
- Wade, Lisa, and Myra Marx Ferree. *Gender*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015.

Transgenderism, Social Construct or Mental Illness?

Sholom Gutleizer

Fall 2017

MH 1100 | Introduction to Human Services

Professor Susan Ednie

“Discovering an Unimagined Life” is an essay about the struggle of a transgendered human trying to gain acceptance, both within herself/himself and from others. Alic Custer-Shook describes how as a child she never felt comfortable as a girl. She was described as a tomboy, although that didn’t make her feel any more comfortable with herself: “My discomfort was about my gender itself” (32). When she reached puberty and all her friends were excited about the female experience, she wasn’t. She wanted a boyfriend, yet did not want to be a girlfriend. Therefore, she transitioned from female to male with hormone therapy and chest reconstruction. His/her mother was very accepting of her transition to becoming a man, although her father was not. Custer-Shook was uncomfortable with him/herself and felt like she would never find love. He/she felt like nobody could love her, at least until she found her spouse, a cisgender gay male named Kevin Custer. Custer-Shook seems to make many references to still not being fully comfortable with him/herself, even after the transition. Kevin calls him/her “a well-rounded gender” (33) and his/her mother says, “I knew that you would never be comfortable in a male space or in a female space and that you would have to find a space of your own” (33) as well as his/her own observation “I was neither bride nor groom... I never wanted a husband. I dreamed of being seen, of sharing my life with someone who could see beyond male and female” (33). What is transgenderism? Did the transition help Cluster-Shook become comfortable? Was he/she suffering from a mental illness?

“Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth” (Altilio 380). These men and women usually feel distress at the sex of body have. The men feel like they are women and the women feel like they are men, but they are trapped in the wrong body.

To relieve this distress, there are a few options. Many do hormone therapy. “Exogenous testosterone is used in transgender men to induce virilization and

suppress feminizing characteristics. In transgender women, exogenous estrogen is used to help feminize patients, and anti-androgens are used as adjuncts to help suppress masculinizing features” (Unger). In order to change their bodies to resemble the body and feelings of the opposite gender, they inject the primary hormone of the other gender. The male to female variety will take estrogen and the female to male type will take testosterone.



Alic Custer-Shook, left, and Kevin Custer-Shook at their home in the Bay Area.
Credit: Jason Leclas for *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/21/fashion/weddings/transgender-groom-wedding.html>

Another form of therapy is sex reassignment surgery. “The goal is to give transgender individuals the physical appearance and functional abilities of the gender they know themselves to be” (Gender Confirmation Surgeries). This is when the transitioning person gets surgery to change their genitalia and other body parts to that of the opposite sex. It is generally irreversible. These methods are meant to make people who experience gender dysphoria feel more comfortable by matching their external bodies with their internal feelings.

This is all part of the emerging idea that gender identity and expression are societal constraints which are not needed. These differ from biological sex. “Sex refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences. ‘Gender’ is more difficult to define but can refer to the role of a male or female in society (gender role), or an individual’s concept of themselves (gender identity)” (Newman). So, one can be whatever gender they choose and express themselves how they would like, regardless of their genetics. Transgender people feel as though they belong in a different body permanently, but there are also gender-fluid people: “Noting or relating to a person whose gender identity or gender expression is not fixed and shifts over time or depending on the situation” (Gender-Fluid). Their gender expression and/or identity changes over time or they feel as though they fit into a category which is completely genderless. Those of the fluid variety have an array of pronoun preferences, many of which are complete fabrications, like “xir,” “hir” and “xe.” “Harvard University made a buzz after allowing students to select gender-neutral options like “ze,” “e,” and

“they” on registration forms” (Poon). So, because one feels different, that means he/she/xe actually is different, leading them to take action based on this feeling, like the changing of one’s pronoun.

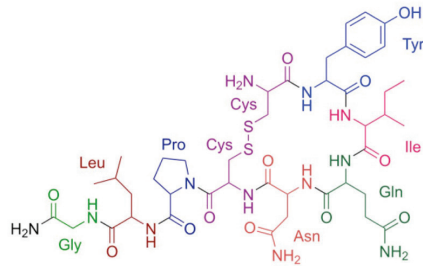
All of this is part of a heatedly debated issue. One of the main criticisms of transgenderism has to do with the seeming manipulation of reality. The difference between the sexes is a long-standing objective fact, as well being founded upon a genetic basis. “The presence (XY) or absence (XX) of this gene takes the embryo down two alternative pathways -- male versus female” (Sinervo). Every species of animal in the known world is separated into male and female; even plants often have these separations. Transgenders say that they feel as though they belong in a different body. They feel that the body they were born into is wrong and that they belong in the body of the opposite gender. Saying that this is in fact the reality seems to contradict scientific fact.

I definitely agree wholeheartedly that we can express ourselves how we would like, regardless of what anyone says, so transgendered people have the freedom to be, act and call themselves what they like. However, to say that gender identity is solely a societal construct seems to deny some well-established biological facts. Gender stems from sex. In fact, these words used to be synonymous. Sex is genetically defined based on our X and Y chromosomes. Females have two Xs while males have one X and one Y. There are rare genetic issues where a male can have two Xs of a female or a female can have the one X and one Y; the genetics of a male. These are genetic *disorders* and cause issues, but these phenomena are not good nor normal. Therefore, sex is obviously based on genetics and gender comes from sex. Recently, the words gender and sex started being defined differently. Gender means the *expression* of a sex and sex is the *biological* difference.

It would seem that gender roles and expression come from biological differences as well. “The differences between female hormones and male hormones may not be as specific as you might think. The definition of a hormone is a chemical substance produced by an endocrine gland that has a specific effect on the activities of other organs in the body” (Writers). Estrogen, the hormone mostly associated with femininity, causes and is released by what would traditionally be described as “womanly activity,” such as sitting tight and small, crossing of the legs to take up less space. Testosterone, the hormone most connected to masculinity, causes and is triggered by traditionally “manly activity,” such as putting one’s feet on the desk, getting comfortable and taking up a lot of space. The connection of hormones to gender is well established even in the transgender community, as they use hormone therapy to transition their gender. Either way, there are definitely a few biological factors that constitute differences between boys and girls.

From genetic, hormonal and other biological conditions stem the sociocultural and evolutionary differences. Since we have different biology, we feel

different, act different and look different. The particular expressions of these things are culturally constructed expressions of an underlying biological reality. Women tend to be more nurturing, as a primary neurotransmitter in their brains (specifically during childbirth) is oxytocin. “It is oxytocin that triggers the bond between a mother and an infant, and it may also play a role in recognition, sexual arousal, trust, and anxiety” (Oxytocin). It generates a feeling of love and connect- edness. This is because they have babies and nurture them.



Oxytocin – the so-called love hormone. Image via Nauka.
Source: <https://www.zmescience.com/medicine/weight-loss-oxytocin-09032015/>

Men are more conquering, physically bigger and more aggressive (because of testosterone); men will tend to be more dominant. In addition, females are geared more for child rearing, as they carry the offspring through physical and then emotional development and can only have few children. Men in general are more geared to go out and provide and can sire many children with different women. Psychologically, there are larger differences within groups (like between males and between females) than between groups (i.e. between men and women), but the between group differences have a large effect when spread over large populations. This last point is strongly connected to evolution.

From prehistory on there have been differences between the sexes. Without it, we could not reproduce. Perpetuation of a gene is the prime desire and motive of all known life and since homo sapiens need the male and female dichotomy to replicate, we *need* the two sexes. So, we evolved to have differences and be able to notice the differences. That way when we try to fulfill the desire to have children, we can get that done. This created a basis of physical differences as well as emotional differences. These differences do not seem to be subjective, as they apply to the whole species equally. However, I must mention that these all have exceptions. Some women are as tough as any man, some men are more caring than any woman, but I don't think that these “expressions” make much of a difference to whether or not one is a male or a female.

All these things seem universal to humanity (and most other known life as well). It would seem fair to call this an objective state. One that is not changeable based on one's feelings, no matter how strong. Couple these facts with the consensus of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) that transgenderism is a Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria,

and it seems pretty clear.

There are many reasons transsexuality was categorized as a disorder in the DSM-4, as it comes with a host of other psychological issues, like anxiety, depression and higher rates of suicide. These rates climb significantly after sex reassignment surgery. All these issues seem to stem from an uncomfortability with one's physical appearance, very similar to other body dysphoria like Body Dysmorphic Disorder.

However, The DSM-5 removed the categorization of disorder and instead listed it as a dysphoria, removing from it the status of illness. "The group recommended changing the diagnosis to one based on distress rather than on identity, on which the current diagnosis is based. Hence, they proposed changing the name of the diagnosis from Gender Identity Disorder to the more accurate and less pathologizing Gender Dysphoria" (Fraser). Seemingly this was because of politics. There was a tremendous amount of political pressure from within the community of mental health and from without. I do not believe these are legitimate sources of influence when it comes to science. People want to remove all the categories relating to gender issues from the DSMs in general.

The Task Force hails the APA's revision and renaming of GID to "Gender Dysphoria" as a step in the right direction, and applauds the APA continuing to take a positive stance on transgender civil rights. However, it is our firm stance that both "Gender Dysphoria" and "Transvestic Disorder" should be removed from the DSM entirely. While we support retaining "Gender Dysphoria" for the time being, the "Transvestic Disorder" diagnosis should be removed immediately. (Whalen)

The reasons backing these changes should and have to be empirical and scientific, or else it is not science. Not only is it unscientific, if these people are in fact suffering from a sickness of the mind, they may need help. We may be handicapping transsexuals by not encouraging them to seek the help they need, especially with the higher rates of suicide and extreme anxiety and depression almost all of them suffer.

A recent study shows that the rates of suicide increase almost twenty percent post sex reassignment surgery.

The overall mortality for sex-reassigned persons was higher during follow-up (aHR 2.8; 95% CI 1.8–4.3) than for controls of the same birth sex, particularly death from suicide (aHR 19.1; 95% CI 5.8–62.9). Sex-reassigned persons also had an increased risk for suicide attempts (aHR 4.9; 95% CI 2.9–8.5) and psychiatric inpatient care (aHR 2.8; 95% CI 2.0–3.9)." (Dhejne)

This number is in addition to the already higher suicide rate of transgenders pre-surgery. Plus, many people regret the surgery after the fact, and the surgeries are generally irreversible. This seems to suggest that these surgeries, at least for many, may be doing more harm than good to people suffering from gender dysphoria.

To elaborate even further, where does this end? If we accept people who say they were born in the wrong body and they feel like a different gender, why can we not accept people who say they were supposed to be born into animal bodies or the bodies of fictional characters, such as fairies, leprechauns and elves? “People who identify as other than human have been described (and describe themselves as ‘animal-people’, ‘ycanthropes’, ‘therianthropes’ and, most recently, ‘otherkin’” (Why Be Human When You Can Be Otherkin?). What about people who are “transabled,” people who cut off limbs because they feel that they should have been born to disabled bodies? These are not mere projections; people are saying and doing just this. “John says that having his leg amputated would finally allow him to move on with his life” (Moran). It seems to be blurring the lines on which humanity is based and without sufficient reason other than people’s feelings, not on fact. Feelings are malleable, reality is not. The line of reasoning which seeks to bend reality based on feelings seems to follow extreme relativism, something that does not seem to function at all and which may have extreme political ramifications.

In Canada, a bill passed which forces people to refer to others by their desired pronoun, no matter how outrageous. “This enactment amends the Canadian Human Rights Act to add gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination” (Wilson-Raybould). These pronouns go beyond the conventional “he, she and they,” which was the original pool from which people on the gender-changing spectrum took. These pronouns include complete fabrications, such as “hir,” “xir” and “xem” to name a few. In Ontario, failure to use these pronouns is considered hate speech similar to the “n word” and “kike.” This would seem to infringe on people’s most basic rights. The right of free speech is possibly being undermined.

None of these ideas preclude the liberty of people to express themselves and dress how they wish. This is a part of our constitution and one of the tenants of liberty. I am questioning the nature of the widespread acceptance of this phenomenon as normal and healthy and whether things should be a bit different, as maybe these people are sick and need to seek help, rather than surgery.

If transsexuals are in fact mentally ill and we applied the same approach used with other mental disorders, there would be disarray. Say someone is schizophrenic and we tell them that the voices are real and that they should do as they say. People drinking themselves to death would not be placed in rehabs and detoxes, and chaos would reign supreme. So, we possibly need to reexamine the popular approach regarding transgenderism. It may save lives.

Going back to my original questions, it seems like Custer-Shook is a classic example of this. He/she seems to be extremely uncomfortable with himself/herself throughout the essay. Thinking no one will ever love him/her, being happy when Kevin calls him/her “a well-rounded *gender* [emphasis added]” (33), not a well-rounded man, and his/her mother explains how she always knew Custer-Shook didn’t fit into *either gender*. On the other hand, it seems that all the positive feelings Custer-Shook had were derived from external things, like his/her spouse and community. Therefore, I venture to say transitioning may have been a mistake and he/she may never get the real help needed.

Works Cited

- Altilio, Terry, and Shirley Otis-Green. Oxford Textbook of Palliative Social Work. Oxford University Press, 2011. Digital Copy.
- Custer-Shook, Alic. “A Transgender Groom Sees Beyond What He Ever Imagined.” *New York Times*, 21 June 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/06/21/fashion/weddings/transgender-groom-wedding.html.
- Dhejne, Cecilia, et al. “Long-Term Follow-Up of Transsexual Persons Undergoing Sex Reassignment Surgery: Cohort Study in Sweden.” PLoS ONE, Public Library of Science, 22 Feb. 2011, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3043071/.
- Fraser, Lin. “Recommendations for Revision of the DSM Diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder in Adults.” Recommendations for Revision of the DSM Diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder in Adults, 17 Sept. 2010 www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15532739.2010.509202.
- “Gender Confirmation Surgeries.” *American Society of Plastic Surgeons*, 2017, www.plasticsurgery.org/reconstructive-procedures/gender-confirmation-surgeries.
- “Gender-fluid.” Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 6 Dec. 2017. <Dictionary.com <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/gender-fluid>>. Web.
- HowStuffWorks, HowStuffWorks, 25 Apr. 2005, health.howstuffworks.com/sexual-health/sexuality/estrogen-and-testosterone-hormones-dictionary.htm.
- MediLexicon International, 24 Mar. 2016, www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/232363.php.
- Moran, Jessica Mulvihill, and Karlie Pouliot. “Determined to Amputate: One Man’s Struggle With Body Integrity Identity Disorder.” Fox News, FOX News Network, 20 May 2009, www.foxnews.com/story/2009/05/20/determined-to-amputate-one-man-struggle-with-body-integrity-identity-disorder.html.
- Poon, Linda. “‘Ze’ or ‘They’? A Guide to Using Gender-Neutral Pronouns.” CityLab, 28 Sep. 2015, <http://www.citylab.com/life/2015/09/ze-or-they-a-guide-to-using-gender-neutral-pronouns/407167/>
- Sinervo, Barry. “Sex Determination and Differentiation.” Sex Determination and Differentiation, 1997, bio.research.ucsc.edu/~barrylab/classes/animal_behavior/SEX_DEVO.HTM. Web.
- Unger, Cécile A. “Hormone Therapy for Transgender Patients.” Translational Andrology and Urology, AME
- Whalen, Kayley. “(In)Validating Transgender Identities: Progress and Trouble in the DSM-5.” National LGBTQ Task Force, 13 Dec. 2012, www.thetaskforce.org/invalidating-transgender-identities-progress-and-trouble-in-the-dsm-5/.
- “Why Be Human When You Can Be Otherkin?” University of Cambridge, 16 July 2016, www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/why-be-human-when-you-can-be-otherkin.
- Wilson-Raybould, Jody. “Bill C-16.” Openparliament.ca, openparliament.ca/bills/42-1/C-16/.
- Writers, DiscoveryHealth.com. “Estrogen and Testosterone Hormones.”

From Rebel to “Rockstar”: How African Americans Won the Battle for Pop Culture Supremacy and Relevance through Hip Hop

Anthony Charles

Spring 2017
ENG 2400 | Freshman English II
Professor Esther Gabay

The hip hop movement, which began in the late twentieth century, has become the catalyst in placing African Americans and their associated culture into the upper stratosphere of relevant pop culture. Through its linguistic characteristics of anger, style, and slang, the “black voice” has become the most tantalizing and profitable voice in the national music landscape. While many question the current representation of hip hop today, there is no uncertainty in the assertions that the genre was born out of frustration towards the harsh realities of being an African American in American society. The art form gave blacks an outlet to express their grievances towards the system they lived in and its conditions. With antisocial behaviors and polarizing songs, the politically challenging genre of hip hop was able to gain widespread commercial success among those in need of emotional fulfillment and identity construction. The scene of music and pop culture thus shifted towards the voice and aesthetic of the African American and his or her identity.

Historically speaking, African Americans have been held to separate, marginalized standards from the white race by the white race. Bell Hooks affirms this in “Teaching to Transgress.” In the chapter on conventional and unconventional wisdom, Hooks details her origins in segregated classrooms that drove her into a predetermined profession. Her black teacher’s teachings were fundamentally political because of the curriculum’s roots in antiracist struggle (Hooks 295). Hook’s usage of the description of the teachings as an opposition to racism, along with the presence of an all-black school, illustrates the African American plight in the early nineteenth century. The segregation of black and white students creates a self-image to the black students themselves as the racially ousted. The oppositional teaching to the then current racial treatment of African Americans demonstrates that African Americans have seen an unjust political system that they felt needed change.

Besides racial segregation, the plight of African Americans is deeply

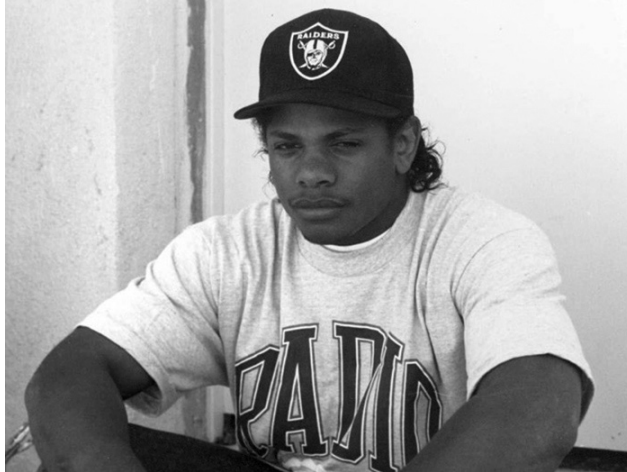
rooted in the injustices done upon the group. Police officers were known to have beaten blacks, with some of these incidents sparking riots in Los Angeles (Gladney 292). Other forms of injustice against African Americans include their subjugation into impoverished communities and their depressed socioeconomic conditions (Eberhardt and Freeman 305). These conditions under which African Americans lived relegated them to a sub-human status in the cultural world. Poverty and subversion by authority created a subset of beings oppressed and neglected by the white world at large. By effect, this created an “underground” group of people whose sentiment towards the mainstream white world would become tinged in anger and indifference.

The “outcast treatment” of African Americans was met with the politically charged art of hip hop. Born out of the South Bronx in the 1970s to the early ‘80s, hip hop emerged as a way to let out anger and frustration towards racism and the systemic neglect of the civil rights of African Americans (Gladney 292). In Marvin J. Gladney’s “The Black Arts Movement and Hip-Hop,” Gladney outlines the relationship between black rage and hip hop. He looks back at the Los Angeles Riots of the ‘60s and correlates the events to a hip hop poem by Amiri Baraka. Baraka’s poem, a worded manifestation of frustration, is the exact premise of hip hop at work. As the riots were caused by the beating of an African American man named Rodney King in the hands of police, black poets and writers began expressing discontent for the events that were transpiring in front of them. As a result came the tradition of black Americans “rapping” in order to get their message of anger across. An example of this at play can be found in rap group NWA’s song “Fuck Tha Police.” The first line of the first verse of the song starts off with “Fuck the police! Comin’ straight from the underground” (1). The expletive and controversial tone towards a symbol of authority is the rage of young black artists directly attacking the racially tinged government in which they reside. The lyric becomes mantra like to the hip hop movement, as its bluntness and vulgarity is a direct reflection to the harsh realities and treatment of African Americans in the nation.

A further look at songs such as “Fuck Tha Police” show how hip hop was to serve as a public forum in spoken word to address varying issues within the African American community. To address his frustration on the treatment towards his skin color, Ice Cube raps: “A young nigga got it bad ‘cause I’m brown, and not the other color, so police think they have the authority to kill a minority” (2-4). These lines are a look at the racially and politically charged voice in hip hop. Ice Cube’s lyrics are a spoken grievance to the LAPD and government at the time, as he asserts that his skin color is a cause for a death warrant in society. The song also critiques the social image of African Americans at large.

Rapper Eazy-E states that “They put out my picture with silence / ‘Cause my identity by itself causes violence” (73-74). Here, Eazy-E suggests that government helps facilitate the image of African Americans as a violent race to

further their racist agenda of discrimination to the public. With the expansion of that agenda, the government would be reverting to racism’s old tricks of subversion and alienation of African Americans, tarnishing their social standing to the rest of the country.



Eazy-E. Source: <https://www.morrisonhotelgallery.com/photographs/rSeWjs/NWA-Eazy--E-Los-Angeles-CA-1989>

Hip hop even allowed room for the emotional voice, which reflected the many injustices imposed on blacks. KRS-One in “Stop the Violence” raps: “Time and time again as I pick up my pen, as my thoughts emerge these are my words” (Gladney 292). KRS-One, through the writing of rap lyrics, is able to express his thoughts about what he sees in daily life. His thoughts, now tangible, can be distributed and heard by a whole host of people. The allowance of many voices in hip hop creates different sub genres within the musical art form such as protest music and conscious rap. These sub-genres allow the genre to spread into different avenues of life such as political movements or the inside of homes, expanding the presence of the African American voice in all walks of life.

As the voice of aggression and rage in hip hop music was rebellious in its lyrics, so became the black identity to the world at large. The poor conditions of which rappers and poets expressed in their songs led to an aversion to accepted cultural norms and the creation of a new identity. In Pierre Bourdieu’s “The Choice of the Necessary,” Bourdieu asserts that “taste is almost always the product of economic conditions identical to those in which it functions, so that income tends to be credited with a causal efficacy which it in fact only exerts in association with the habitus it has produced” (Bourdieu 375). With the racially inferior habitus subjecting African Americans to a lower status than whites, the result was an opposition to white cultural and fashion trends. Those involved in hip hop created street corner fashion, which was able to overcome the already established music fashion of the time (Gitonga and Delpont 986). The overtaking of the already established trends of the time shows how people outside hip hop

culture, specifically the youth, became keener to another version of art that was rebellious.

Priscilla Nyawira Gitonga and Aletta Delport, in “Exploring the use of hip hop music in participatory research studies that involve youth,” found that adolescents experienced hip hop as a liberation and escape from their realities (Gitonga and Delport 991). Upon listening to the art form and surveying its culture, adolescent outsiders began finding appeal in the black identity. This is a stark contrast to the early image of African Americans in the early nineteenth century as separate, unreachable people. The change in the perception of African American culture over the years provides the route as to how the youth, the main participants of pop culture, have allowed and provoked the placement of African Americans and their culture in their conversations of relevant culture.

With hip hop and the black identity at the center of the youth’s cultural attention, many artists outside the original narrative of hip hop have begun to incorporate aspects of black culture in order to capitalize on its commanding audience. White female Australian hip hop artist Iggy Azalea scored a number one song with her single “Fancy” using “African American English,” or “AAE” (Eberhart and Freeman 309). Copula absence, a trademark of AAE, is found throughout the song and her music (Eberhart and Freeman 305). Azalea’s appropriation of a black linguistic trait in a historically successful song underscores two points. The first is that her song couldn’t have been so successful without the inclusion of “blackness.” With the rise in her career, Azalea’s success is owed to African American culture and its identity. Insertion of this “blackness” in her art garnered the ears of the youth, a group already enchanted with the aggressive, rebellious hip hop culture. The second is that outsiders of African American culture now view African American culture as commercially viable, thus deeming it a commodity in the music industry. Some argue that appropriation can simply lead to whites gaining more profit than the originators because of their white privilege (Eberhart and Freeman 306). The benefits of appropriation, however, create a new narrative for the African American identity. If every song included any trademark of AAE, the African American-made trait would live on through future generations of music. As artists would be influenced and compelled to write songs in the style of “blackness” in order to sell their music, the voice of the African American would become inescapable when listening to a piece of music. The identity of African Americans would thereon become the whole of the music industry and the root of mainstream culture. Its required presence in music would solidify its credibility and viability as the most dominating cultural force in the world.

The current hysteria about rappers and hip hop has far exceeded any expectations of the genre’s commercial success, dating back to the beginnings of the hip hop movement. Today, the modern rapper has become a cultural symbol of wealth, success, and celebrity status. Philadelphia rapper Lil Uzi Vert is the

ideal example of just how far hip hop and African Americans have come to becoming “primetime” in pop culture. *The New York Times* calls Lil Uzi a “rockstar” to describe his and his genre’s level of success in the music industry. The youth aren’t going to festivals to hear unfulfilling white rock musicians, but rather a black, purple-haired young adult full of charisma and will (*The New York Times*).



Lil Uzi Vert

Source: <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/hip-hop/7785111/rolling-loud-day-3-travis-scott-lil-uzi=vert-migos>

Uzi’s musical success, such as a top ten song on the Billboard Hot 100, is matched with his social media presence and fashion conscious mindset. It’s here where Lil Uzi matches, but yet ventures away from his hip hop predecessors. His songs do little to critique or comment on the plight of African American struggle, yet his aesthetic and fashion is one that fits with the label of a charismatic, rebel superstar (*The New York Times*).

The entrance of hip hop into mainstream pop culture is a move that’s met with criticism. Detractors of current hip hop cite the shift away from meaningful songwriting as a slight towards the foundational aspects that made hip hop what it was to begin with (*The New York Times*). In general, many also question whether a hip hop artist’s art can go unaffected by commercial conditions (Gladney 293). What these people fail to realize, however, is that the entrance to pop culture for many hip hop artists accomplishes a dream that’s far beyond what the originators of hip hop had envisioned. As African Americans were once a people subject to slavery and work in chains, those chains have now become diamond encrusted symbols of wealth (*The New York Times*). Lil Uzi Vert, a purple-haired youth from Philadelphia, shouldn’t have great amounts of wealth if the history of his race is correct. The stark contrast in the appearance of an African American today versus two hundred years ago shows how without the participation in mainstream pop culture, there simply wouldn’t be opportunities to raise these substantial amounts of income. The raising of income would in effect raise the economic capital of the hip hop artist, placing him or her in a higher economic status than

those slaves had ever conceived of. With the acquired wealth comes economic empowerment, as money and the distinction of a higher economic status would yield economic power to the African American. The entrance of pop culture can thus feed the black mouth enormously and give it power that it has never seen.

Hip hop has come a long way to becoming the force of nature in music it is today. More importantly, an African American-made aesthetic has invaded the national landscape, a landscape filled with a history of resentment towards blacks. The voice and identity of the African American has gone from unheard and oppressed to loud and commercially profitable. This change is one that the originators of the hip hop movement can be proud of, as it has given the black voice a newly perched throne atop of contemporary culture. While racism and its mechanisms may still be present for years to come, the throne to popular and relevant culture can potentially become a gateway towards a system rid of these vices.

Works Cited

- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Choice of the Necessary." *Distinction*, Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 375.
- Eberhardt, Maeve and Kara Freeman. "'First things first, I'm the realest': Linguistic appropriation, white privilege, and the hip-hop persona of Iggy Azalea." *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2015, pp. 305-306, 309.
- "Fuck Tha Police." *Rap Genius*, www.genius.com/Nwa-fuck-tha-police-lyrics.
- Gitonga, Priscilla Nyawira and Aletta Delpont. "Exploring the use of hip hop music in participatory research studies that involve youth." *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 18, no. 8, 2015, pp. 986, 991.
- Gladney, Marvin. "The Black Arts Movement and Hip-Hop." *African American Review*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1995, pp. 292-293.
- Hooks, Bell. *Teaching to Transgress*. Routledge, 1994, p. 295.
- "How Lil Uzi Vert Turned Rap Into Rock and Became a Pop Star." *The New York Times*, 28 April. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/04/28/arts/music/popcast-lil-uzi-vert.html?_r=0.

Issues Faced by Homeless Students in New York

Candida Knight

Fall 2017
SOC 3200 / Urban Sociology
Professor Anna Karpathakis

Homelessness has affected a vast number of New York students of different races, ethnicities and age groups. Of the 63,169-homeless people sleeping in shelters in November 2017, 15,712 were families and 23,694 were children, with African Americans and Latinos being disproportionately represented among their ranks (Coalition for the Homeless; New York City Homelessness Basic Facts).

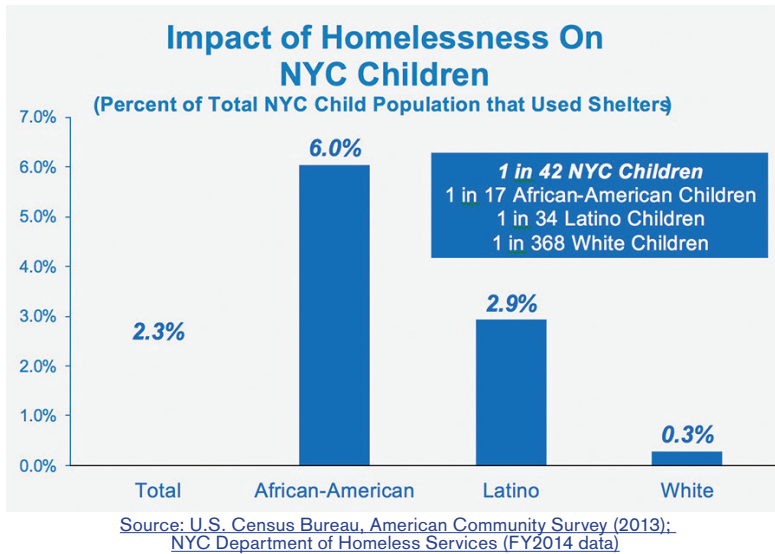
Records show that the issues arising from being homeless do not just affect the children now but also their future. “1 in 43 New York City children (2.3 percent of the city’s population under 18 years old) spent at least one night in the municipal shelter system. 1 in 17 African American children (6.0 percent of New York City’s African American population under 18 years old) and 1 in 34 Latino children (2.9 percent) are utilizing New York City’s shelters compared to 1 in 368 white children (0.3 percent)” (Coalition for the Homeless).

According to the demographics of homeless families with school-aged children in New York, homelessness related issues disproportionately affect African American and Latino students. The homelessness related issues they face prevents them from having the basic needs of life. They are living unstable lives, which cause (a) them to move around constantly, (b) transportation issues of getting to school and (c) having poor nutrition/lack of food and shelter. Homelessness affects their health conditions as most suffer from (a) asthma, (b) common colds, (c) flu, (d) dental problems, (e) mental health challenges due to trauma and toxic stress. With poor and debilitating health conditions students are prevented from regularly attending school, which leads to absenteeism. Missing daily lessons in subject areas bar these students from obtaining the knowledge they should be getting. Low grades eventually lead to retention in class. These issues hinder children’s lives, which then cause their education to suffer as a result, causing their school performance to diminish, with lower grades and eventually retention in class-levels when compared to their housed peers. Homeless students live unstable lives, sometimes in fear of their lives in unsafe shelters and are never at

peace.

Homelessness is a very broad topic and it is different for everyone that is experiencing it. It is the lack of necessities of life like food, clothing and shelter, it is a major problem and is the symptom of many other problems that homeless people suffer from. Students experiencing homelessness have lives that are chronically unstable; they do not know where they will be sleeping on any given night. Not having a steady place to call home can be very unsafe and scary to anyone, but especially to children. They move around constantly, either from shelter to shelter, or from transitional housing to a shelter or a home. Most of the homeless children are underdeveloped due to chronic illnesses due to homelessness.

These children’s lives are not the same as the lives of their housed peers. They must either be moving from shelter to shelter, in transitional housing, living in cars or sleeping on park benches.



According to the Coalition for the Homeless, school children are often in shelters, at times doubled up with other families to be eligible. Within the five boroughs the population with the poorest people and the most ethnic population was the highest with the doubled-up family intake in shelters.

Also, students are often placed in shelters that are not close to their schools, resulting in students having difficulties getting to and from school. In some cases, older students are placed in shelters in the Bronx and must use public transportation to go to school in Brooklyn, which is an added stressor. As a result, to avoid the added stress of going to and from school on transportation, students may just succumb to being absent from school. According to the Coalition for the Homeless, the percentage of families placed in shelters near to the school of the youngest child in 2017 has dropped by 12 percent from the previous year. However, the other children may have to commute to school, which is difficult

for them.

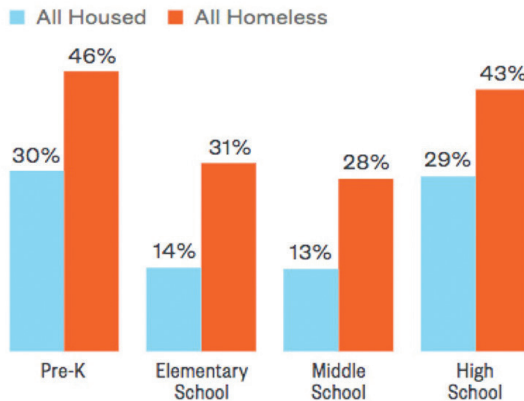
The homelessness issues faced by children takes a toll on them being present at school. They could be absent for many different reasons given the nature of their situation. Because of their housing instability and lack of food, which can cause malnutrition and poor personal hygiene, they can develop major illnesses and ailments such as common colds, the flu, asthma, dental problems, infections and mental health challenges due to trauma, and toxic and emotional stress (National Coalition for the Homeless Education). With the harsh weather conditions, whether it is the winter or the summer, homeless students face it with very little clothing or sometimes without a shelter over their heads. Although they sometimes may get accepted in a shelter, it is not always in the condition to prevent illnesses like the common cold or the flu. Asthma is another illness suffered by homeless students on a regular basis.

Some of these students will suffer with dental problems, since they cannot fulfill their habits of personal hygiene, being highly mobile with no steady running water to do so. They may have infectious diseases being exposed to all the harsh elements in the atmosphere. Some of them may go through trauma and abuse, which may cause them to suffer from mental illnesses. Being unprotected, young girls can get raped and or get pregnant young. Some may even end up with sexually transmitted diseases or something as deadly as AIDS. However, without health insurance these students may not be able to see a doctor or get help to improve their health conditions. Instead they must stay away from school. So, chronic absenteeism is very common in students living in shelters. Any one of these homelessness symptoms can be the main reason why almost half the students living in shelters go absent for more than 20 days in the school year (Institute for Children Poverty and Homelessness, ICPHP 2017).

Chronic Absenteeism Rates

Percent of Students Chronically Absent
SY 2015-16

By Housing Status and Grade Level



Note that the absenteeism rate for homeless students is between 14 and 17 percent higher than for the housed students.

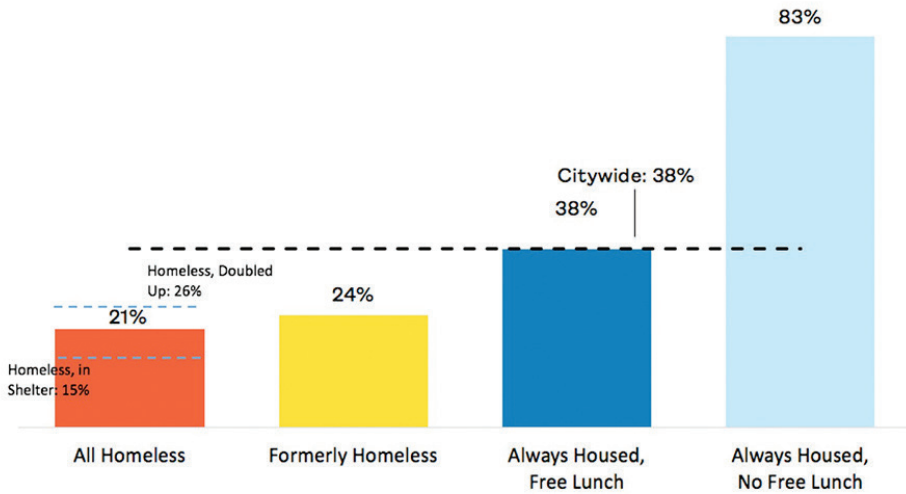
When there is so much absence from school there are implications that eventually result in low school performances and adjustment in school. Homeless students, because of their high mobility condition, often need to transfer to schools that are more convenient to them. Because of these laws these students often have a hard time getting into school immediately. The transfer of documents from school to school may take a while to complete and be submitted. The transfer rate of homeless students is very high. As these students go from shelter to shelter, they go from school to school.

There are the students who are homeless and have disabilities who face additional educational barriers. These students may not be identified as needing special education services, which may be difficult to diagnose due to mobility and other stressors.

These bureaucratic issues lead to the school academic issues. Students who are absent often, transfer often or have unidentified disabilities will have difficulties adjusting in school and keeping up with the academic standards.

3rd–8th Grade State Math Test Proficiency Rates

District 1, SY 2015–16

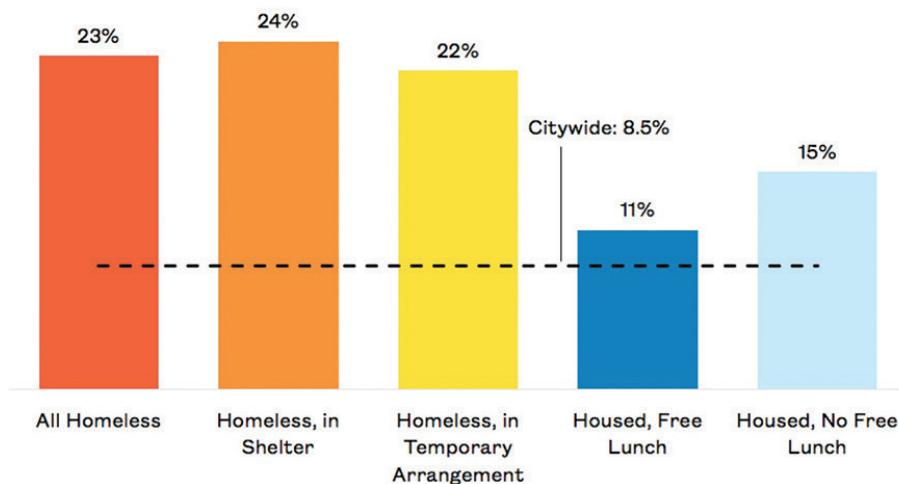


The performance of homeless students can be so low that they start to have mental and emotional problems. Some become depressed that they are failing and start to think that they are no good. Others may become frustrated and start to act out inappropriately. They may become disruptive to teachers and class and eventually this may lead to suspensions. The suspension rate of homeless students is 28 % higher than the housed students. After these homeless students are suspended so many times, with all the other stressors they are going through,

they sometimes then succumb to dropping out of school.

Four-Year Dropout Rate, Class of 2016

District 1, SY 2015-16



The dropout rates for homeless students in NYC is an astounding 69%, higher than for housed students. Fewer than a quarter of homeless children in NYC complete high school.

These are the issues faced by homeless students in New York City.

Works Cited

- Annual Homeless Assessment Report <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hdx/guides/ahar/#reports>
- Coalition for the Homeless www.coalitionforthehomeless.org
- Institute for Children Poverty and Homelessness(ICPH) http://www.icphusa.org/new_york_city/student-homelessness-in-new-york-city-school-districts/
- National Coalition for the Homeless http://www.icphusa.org/new_york_city/student-homelessness-in-new-york-city-school-districts/
- National Center for the Homeless Education <https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/enrollment.pdf>

American Food and Popular Culture

Ethan Sapolsky

Spring 2017

HIS 2100 | Popular Culture in America

Professor Michael Sokolow

Food is an essential element of our planet. Even though all living beings need it in order to maintain life, humans taste food differently. Throughout history, humans have developed an appreciation for food, and it became more than just a necessity. They created what Libby O’Connell calls *foodways*, “a term that includes growing, harvesting, preserving, preparing, cooking and eating food” (O’Connell, XVIII). This relationship with nutrition is ubiquitous in all humans, it has always been, and that’s what differentiates them from other beings.

Moreover, the idea of foodways has been incorporated in every culture around the world. Through inventions like foodservice, historians argue that it was already possible to find public cookers and vendors in the streets of the Roman Empire. Then during the Middle Ages, public eateries developed; travelers often dined at inns, taverns, monasteries and hostelrys. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the first cafés were established, where educated people were drinking, snacking and sharing ideas (foodtimeline.org).

“The concept of restaurant as we know it today, was invented in 18th-century France. The word restaurant is derived from the French verb *restaurer*, which means to restore.” Indeed, “they were originally created to cure people who were not feeling well.” The French Revolution had a huge impact on the restaurant industry. A restaurant became a place where anybody could eat the same meals for the same price with the creation of menus. Then all kind of food establishments opened for middle-class customers, such as bakeries and butcheries (foodtimeline.org). A high number of new jobs were created and food became a business in every part of the world.

Previously, people could not find the same ingredients everywhere; regions or countries then developed their own culinary specialties. The establishment of nation-states which emphasized that each ethnic group or country had its own culture helped in the development of various food-cultures. Today, it is easier to find foods from different cultures around the globe.

This is due to the phenomenon of globalization that facilitated importation. The world is now becoming what Marshall McLuhan called a “Global Village.” Foreign foods turned into a must-eat in the Western World. In cities like New York, it is possible to find restaurants for each food-culture.

In fact, the case of the United States is unique. The U.S being a multi-ethnic country, American cuisine is meant to be as diverse as its population. It is not only made of indigenous foods but also of foods brought or created by its different immigrant groups.

This paper will emphasize the singularity of the American plate and its food tastes and preferences, as well as its place in popular culture. In fact, this is different from high culture, often called American Gastronomy, with its high-standard restaurants, cooking contests and critiques appreciated by the upper class. Instead, we will be focusing on the low or middle class foods.

Before the first European settlements, North America was mostly inhabited by tribes of indigenous people known today as Native Americans or American Indians. They were the first humans to live in this part of the world and certainly the first ones to cultivate this land in order to feed themselves. According to O’Connell, American Indian foods “are crops that many tribes grew, harvested, prepared and bartered.” Many of them are still consumed in the United States today, such as “the Three Sisters: Corn, Beans and Squash” (O’Connell, 2).

When Native tribes were cultivating it, corn was known as *maize*. Archaeologists have found the earliest evidence of its cultivation in Mexico. It has been argued that because of the wind and the rain, maize seeds were dispersed in different locations. The cultivation of maize then spread north into today’s states of Arizona and New Mexico around 4,000 years ago. It reached New England a few thousand years later. When the British settlers arrived they called it corn, which was a term used in England to refer to a region’s local grain. In fact, maize was considered the typical grain of the American Indians (O’Connell, 3-4).

Today, corn and corn products are highly represented in the United States. To support and illustrate this point, let’s take the example of *cornbread*. Cornbread is an established American dish, it is very easy to make, the ingredients being only cornmeal and baking powder. But cornbread represents more than just a bread made of corn, it also represents the history of the United States. Similar to its country and society, this dish was created by people coming from different parts of the world. While the Native Americans had been cultivating maize for so many years, it was also spread by European settlers, who learned from the different tribes the original recipe. They then passed it to all other immigrant groups coming to America. Cornbread represents the unity of the American people. Moreover, it is for this reason that cornbread is served and appreciated by American families during the holiday of Thanksgiving.

If the indigenous people had a significant influence on the American palate, they were not the only ones. Undoubtedly, the British colonizers also

participated by bringing various provisions from the mother country. Tea can be cited as an example; it was a highly consumed beverage among the newcomers. British merchants were shipping their black shriveled leaves from China. It became so popular that in the 1750s, 50 percent of the households in the colonies owned a tea set. Tea also became a major cultural symbol during the American Revolution.



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cornbread_in_cast_iron_pan.jpg

Highly taxed by the British Crown, it helped provoke the Boston Tea Party in 1773 and the rejection of this drink, because tea was so associated with Great Britain. Colonists then replaced tea with coffee, which was considered less “British.” Americans eventually returned to tea-drinking after the peace treaty with the UK in 1783. Tea and coffee soon became the two most popular hot beverages in America and this has not changed since then (O’Connell, 76-77).

During the following centuries, the United States continued to attract immigrants. Not only those coming from Europe but from every continent. As the British did in the past, immigrants were bringing their food-culture with them, such as their family recipes or tastes. They opened restaurants in the country and their foods became popular, which means accessible to anybody. For example, the Japanese popularized sushi, a dish which contains rice dressed with vinegar, formed into various shapes and garnished with raw seafood or vegetables (Merriam-Webster). The Italians popularized pizza, a dish made of flattened bread dough with spread tomatoes and mozzarella cheese as well as other toppings (Merriam Webster). The list of dishes brought by the different immigrant groups would be too long to list, but it is important to emphasize that these immigrant groups were facing a lot of problems at their arrival. Besides cultural differences as well as racism and discrimination, these people were struggling financially.

They became part of the lower or middle class because most of them didn’t have many job qualifications, so the opportunities were poor and the

salaries small. In order to feed their families, opening a restaurant seemed like the best idea, because they had already been cooking food in their country, they were used to it and mostly good at it. Unfortunately, their means were limited in terms of staff, ingredients and space. To attract American clients to eat foreign foods, they started to put their meals at low prices. It was a success. “Popular food” was born, a term which refers to food that almost anybody can buy because of its affordable price. These restaurants were different from the “American” restaurants, mostly frequented by the upper class. Selling food at a low price then became a marketing strategy. Unlike expensive restaurants which only attracted customers from the upper class, inexpensive restaurants attracted people from all classes.

After World War II, the United States faced what O’Connell calls an “unpredicted new world” (O’Connell, 231). She refers to the prosperity of the country after the war but also to the Cold War, the fear of nuclear attack and the anti-communist sentiment (O’Connell, 231). The baby boom changed American society and a new generation appeared. This new generation grew up with a huge social and technological change. For example, in terms of food preferences, the baby boomers wanted to eat in front of the TV, unlike their parents who were used to a family dinner without any technology. The growth of the population triggered mass consumerism and the development of huge grocery stores. Diverse businesses were created to supply Americans with a very large choice of products. Americans were just consuming food, without really considering the process of cooking the food. Technological progress brought so much to everyday life that food-making became “a waste of time.” The foodservice industry changed, too, with the development of fast-food restaurants. Fast-food restaurants are “specialized in food that can be prepared and served quickly” (Merriam Webster). Indeed, it changed the restaurant experience people were used to. In a fast-food restaurant, there is no waiter, the client doesn’t have to wait a long time to be served or give a tip. Before, when an American wanted to save money in foodservice, he would go to a foreign food restaurant. With fast-food, he was now able to save time and money by eating quickly. As foreign food restaurants were at the beginning of the 20th century, fast-food restaurants became even more accessible for the lower and middle class.

To sum up, the popularity of fast-food restaurants in the United States is not surprising. It fits perfectly with this country. Any American can find them, anywhere in the country, either through restaurants or through drive-ins (even alongside national highways). Any American can eat there (they even have kids meals) while saving money and time. Fast-food is the “All-American” choice and that is why 50 million Americans eat it every day (jonbarron.org). Fast-food became a symbol of popular food. It became almost obvious to ask if fast-food had surpassed non-fast food restaurants, in terms of number. Indeed, the number of fast food restaurants increases every day in the US as well as the variety of

food served in these restaurants. In 2013, America was ranked as the country that consumed the most fast-food in the world (therichest.com).

According to the *New York Times*: “In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast-food; in 2000, they spent more than \$110 billion. Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher education, personal computers, computer software, or new cars. They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music -- combined” (nytimes.com). In less than a century, the United States transformed its entire foodservice industry and became a “Fast Food Nation.”

At the end of the 1990s, globalization brought another vision to fast-food chains. They could now export their restaurants to other countries through franchising. “A franchise is a type of license that a party (franchisee) acquires to allow them to have access to a business’s (the franchiser’s) proprietary knowledge, processes and trademarks in order to allow the party to sell a product or provide a service under the business’s name” (Investopedia). Instead of finding the same ingredients around the world it has become possible to find the same restaurants around the world through fast-food. It is believed American fast-food succeeded in its expansion because the United States became the world’s “Hyperpower” (which means one country influences all the other world’s countries in every sphere of activity such as economy, military and most importantly popular culture) after their victory over the USSR and the end of the Cold War. The influence of this country on the others was such that many countries adapted their food-culture to the United States’ by eating the same fast foods.



Source: <https://www.sketchport.com/drawing/6237091595812864/burger>

The most popular fast-food in America is certainly McDonald’s. McDonald’s is also the fast-food restaurant that has the most franchises, with more than 36,000 restaurants worldwide in more than 100 different countries (mcdonalds.com). The sociologist George Ritzer called the phenomenon of fast-food globalization McDonalization in his book, *The McDonalization of Society* (1993). To him, McDonalization is “The process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as

of the rest of the world” (Ritzer, 1). In this book, he argues that McDonald’s has achieved something nobody had achieved before. McDonald’s dominates the fast-food industry by its number of outlets and clients. It became a model for the industry. McDonald’s was the first successful fast food restaurant and influenced many others like Burger King and Wendy’s. Most importantly, McDonald’s now occupies a “central place in American popular culture” (Ritzer, 5) but also in the “Global Village” popular culture. McDonald’s even became a “sacred institution . . . Kowinski argues that indoor shopping malls, which almost always encompass fast food restaurants, are the modern ‘cathedrals of consumption’ to which people go to practice their ‘consumer religion’” (Ritzer, 7). George Ritzer agrees with Kowinski’s statement, in fact, it is almost like McDonald’s, which we consume everyday through food, movies, TV, and ads became a new religion, a new religion which would put fast-food as a god and a Big Mac as its prayer book. Ritzer emphasizes the fact that “a new McDonald’s opening in a small town can be an important social event. ‘Nothing more exciting ever happened in the town of Dale City, Virginia,’ said a high school student” (Ritzer, 5).

McDonalization had a big impact on how people saw food and consumed it. The United States is no longer the only “fast-food nation.” Planet Earth is becoming a “fast-food world.” “McDonald’s not affects only the restaurant or the fast food industry but also: education, work, the criminal justice system, healthcare, travel, leisure, dieting, politics, family, religion and virtually every other aspect of society” (Ritzer, 2). McDonald’s is a symbol that represents a new society, a new generation and globalization.

The American plate is diverse, it has always been. The Native Americans followed by each immigrant group coming to America contributed to it, each in its own way. It is now possible to find any kind of food-culture in this country through restaurants or at home. The United States is a diverse food-country that became a fast-food country with the development of fast food restaurants in the post-World War II period. Fast-food became an important element of American food, created and consumed in mass by Americans. Fast-food as a popular food ended up surpassing upper class food. The “All American” restaurant became a symbol of the American Dream. McDonalization permitted other countries to have a taste of their American Dream through the institution called McDonald’s. The world entered then into a new era where the technological progress brought so much to everyday life, where communication in any part of the world became easier and food has been reduced to mass consumerism and to a fast-food diet.

Bibliography

- “Fast-food” in Merriam-Webster Dictionary. www.merriam-webster.com. Accessed on June 18, 2017. Web
- “Foodservice, Restaurants and Catering” in FoodTimeline Library. www.-foodtimeline.org. Accessed on June 18, 2017. Web.

- “Franchise” in Investopedia. www.investopedia.com. Accessed on June 18, 2017. Web.
- Levine, Beth. “US Fast Food Consumption Statistics.” The Baseline of Health Foundation. Natural Health Blog. jonbarron.org. 2013. Accessed on June 18, 2017. Web.
- McDonald’s. “About Us: McDonald’s Facts and Stories.” Accessed on June 18, 2017. www.mcdonalds.com. Web.
- O’Connell, Libby H. *The American Plate: A Culinary History in 100 Bites*. Naperville, Illinois: Source Inc., 2014. Print.
- “Pizza” in Merriam-Webster Dictionary. www.merriam-webster.com. Accessed on June 18, 2017. Web.
- Ritzer, George. *The McDonaldization of Society*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 2004. Print.
- Said, Sammy. “Countries That Consume the Most Fast Food or Junk Food”. The Richest. www.therichest.com. 2013. Web.
- Schlosser, Eric. “Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal.” *The New York Times*. 2000. Accessed on June 18, 2017. www.nytimes.com. Web.
- “Sushi” in Merriam-Webster Dictionary. www.merriam-webster.com. Accessed on June 18, 2017. Web.

Venezuelan Dreams Cruise

Jing Yu Carolina Cen Feng

Fall 2017

BA3300 | Business Communication

Professor Michael Goldstein

Potential Venezuelan Customers in Miami, Florida

Venezuela was one of the richest countries in South America due to its main reserve: oil. When the country was prosperous, many Venezuelans operated businesses alongside American corporations and possessed vast swaths of lands in Southern Florida. Since then, Southern Florida has become a second home to Venezuelans. They invested substantially and became the majority of homebuyers in Florida from a Latin American country, as Carmen Sesin stated in “In Miami, Recently Arrived Venezuelans Face Desperate Times.”

The wave of emigration did not start until the country fell under the regime of the current president, Nicolas Maduro, who is Hugo Chavez Frias’ successor. Venezuela is now broke due to the collapse of the oil industry and the mismanagement of the economy, which has led the country to starvation and a shortage of medicine. In “How Food in Venezuela Went from Subsidized to Scarce,” Mercy Benzaquen states that Venezuela depended heavily on imports and used the insufficient reserve to pay its foreign debts. As a result, the economy has collapsed and inflation has risen dramatically; they are facing shortages of food and medicine and the crime rate has increased exponentially.

Because of this desperate situation, many middle-class Venezuelans have decided to move to another country to find a more stable life. Some of the most frequent locales for immigration are the United States, Spain, Italy, Colombia and Portugal. According to Pew Research Center, the estimated number of Venezuelans currently residing in the U.S. is 248,000 in 2013, and that number is increasing. Florida is the state that most Venezuelans reside in with an estimate of 100,000 individuals; they compose one of the largest growing Hispanic populations in Florida.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_Caribbean.jpg

Overview of the “Venezuelan Dreams” Cruise

Many Venezuelans who live abroad now are hoping that they will one day be able to go back to their families and friends and especially to the lives they have left behind. Therefore, the development of a theme cruise about Venezuela, “Venezuelan Dreams,” will give these people an opportunity to relive the old and good days in their home country and spend some time with their panas (“friends” or “buddies” in Venezuelan slang). Also, they will enjoy the authentic Venezuelan cuisine and do activities related to the traditions of their homeland. This relaxed and nostalgic vacation will also help to strengthen the bonds among Venezuelans living abroad. This specialty cruise will be able to provide them with an experience and a feeling of going back home.

The “Venezuelan Dreams” cruise will sail from Miami, Florida, on February 11, 2018, embarking on Carnival Conquest to several tropical stops in the Southern Caribbean, including Puerto Rico, Curacao and Aruba. We are having our theme cruise on a Carnival Conquest ship because this company sails often to southern Caribbean countries that are located near Venezuela. The cruise will allow passengers to experience the tropical weather. Carnival Corporation also provides a program called “Carnival Cruise for Charity,” which supports many non-profit organizations in raising funds. This program facilitates these organizations to raise much-needed funds and give the donors all the fun of Carnival cruise vacations.

This target market is of Venezuelans living abroad, who have been

away from the country for several years, and who still miss and want to support their country. Therefore, with our specialty cruise, they will be able to enjoy a memorable and charitable vacation of sailing in a Venezuelan style cruise. The cruise will let them have the feeling of going back home by enjoying the concert of “Nacho.”

The “Venezuelan Dreams” cruise will attract new types of customers who used to enjoy arranging large family gatherings but do not have the free time nowadays. Venezuelans love to spend time on enchanted beaches with families and friends. Therefore, from the business’s perspective, our cruise will be able to attract them by exploring a familiar Hispanic island, Puerto Rico, and also by visiting two neighbor islands near Venezuela, Aruba and Curacao.

Charity Organization

Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit charitable organization that helps in fundraising and delivering resource packages to as many people in Venezuela as possible. Its funding was begun in October 2016 by four Venezuelan women living in the United States with the intention of encouraging action to help their country. This organization concentrates on providing specific needs in the areas of health, nutrition and education.

One of the events held by this organization at the Boston University Central Campus was raising awareness of Venezuela’s humanitarian crisis with the help of BU’s Latin American Student Association. This informative session was able to spread the awareness and help Venezuela with each participant’s donation, either money or non-prescription medicines. According to Elena Giralt, in July 2017, Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation was able to raise and deliver 10,000 lbs. of products to more than 30 hospitals, orphanages, schools and other institutions of Venezuela. All the donations were collected with success due to the excellent promotion of their cause by having musicians, artists, restaurants, and universities as partners.



**Cuatro Por
Venezuela**
Foundation

Therefore, in order to make this voyage meaningful, we, Magic Sunrise Inc., will collaborate with Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation in the creation of this specialty theme cruise about Venezuela. Fundraising activities will be happening throughout the entire trip, beginning with the press conference announcing the “Venezuelan Dreams” cruise to the Sky Lantern Festival. Ultimately, we are

going to donate 5% of our gross profit from the theme cruise to assist this charity to send help to relieve the basic shortages of products which are affecting the Venezuelan population.

Sponsorships

In Sean Horrigan's "The Five Things Corporate Sponsors Want From Nonprofits," he states that the percentage of consumers with the tendency of switching from one brand to another one that has corporate social responsibility is 91. Also, 50% of the consumers would be willing to spend more on purchases in companies that give back to society. As a result, if sponsors are associated with doing charitable activities, they will be able to build their brands and increase sales.

Besides Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation, La Tienda Venezolana, Latin Candy Inc., Doggi's Arepa Bar, and El Arepazo Restaurant are going to be the sponsors for the entire project of this specialty cruise about Venezuela. They are going to be providing Venezuelan food and raffle prizes. These sponsors, besides having strong affiliations with Venezuela, will be able to take this chance to have their brands being recognized for their generosity and their disposition for a good cause.

Marketing

Since many Venezuelans are living dispersed around the world, social media is the most useful tool that keeps most of us connected and updated. So, using social media is the most effective way of spreading the word. This useful tool can reach any type of demographic. Miguel Ignacio Mendoza, as known as Nacho, is a famous Venezuelan singer who will be performing on board. He has millions of followers on his Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. And thus, Nacho will use his influence in promoting our cruise in his social media.

Aside from partnering with Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation, we also have sponsors to support this idea. They are restaurants and shops which sell mainly Venezuelan products, discussed previously in the section of sponsorships. Horrigan's article states that using cross-promoting, which is another marketing technique where the sponsor uses his products to be promoted along with other related products under the same customer base foundation, would reach many potential customers, either my target market or a new target market, at low cost. We are going to use their help in promoting our cruise on their social media and in their physical stores.

A press release is another technique of delivering this project. A press release would tell the story of this project to be covered in magazines, newspapers, blogs and other media with the purpose of earning media coverage across the community.

Contact: Carolina Cen
MAGIC SUNRISE
Phone 718-928-4959
Fax 718-928-4958
Carolinacen12@gmail.com

6428 8th Avenue
New York, NY 10102



MAGIC SUNRISE INC.

Press Release

Great Photo and Interview Opportunities with Nacho:

Magic Sunrise Inc. Announces the First Ever “Venezuelan Dreams” Cruise with Nacho at El Arepazo Restaurant

“Venezuelan Dreams” Cruise Will Sail from Miami, Florida, on February 11, 2018, Embarking with Carnival Conquest to Several Tropical Stops in the Southern Caribbean

Miami, Florida: October 16, 2017 – This coming Saturday, October 21 (at 12:00 noon), Magic Sunrise Inc., a themed cruise company located in Miami, will be hosting a press conference featuring the famed Venezuelan singer and political activist Miguel Ignacio Mendoza, better known as Nacho, to release a statement about the current turmoil in Venezuela. The event will take place in a well-known Venezuelan restaurant in Miami, El Arepazo. In a collaboration with Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation, this event aims to raise funds so that we can deliver resource packages to as many of the afflicted people in Venezuela as possible. The event welcomes local families and friends to enjoy a fun-filled day including having an authentic Venezuelan lunch and then all guests will have the opportunity to learn and purchase the traditional recipes of Venezuelan food sponsored by El Arepazo.

“Family and friends are there fighting to smile every day through all the adversity they have faced and are still facing. I hope this movement will be able to provide food and medicine to people’s homes,” said Nacho.

The event is the highlight of the day in which Magic Sunrise Inc. will be announcing the “Venezuelan Dreams” cruise to sail this coming spring from Miami, which includes: having an exclusive and exciting concert of Nacho on the way to San Juan, Puerto Rico, enjoying a variety of Venezuelan cuisine and cultural activities, and fundraising challenge activities in Aruba and Curacao.

*

ITINERARY OF THE TRIP

Day 1: Departing from Miami, Florida

Date: February 11, 2018

Time: 4:00pm

Location: Carnival Cruise Terminal (1435 N. Cruise Blvd., Miami, FL 33132)

Day 2: Fun at sea – “Concert of Nacho”

Date: February 12

Time: 09:00pm-10:00pm

Location: RedFrog Rum Bar

Program: Concert, Q&A session, raffle tickets, sale of Venezuelan products

Day 3: Arriving San Juan, Puerto Rico

Date: February 13

Estimated time of arrival: 8:00am

Estimated time of departure: 10:00pm

Day 4: Fun at sea – “Fiesta de Carnaval”

Date: February 14

Time: 12:00 noon-2:00pm

Location: Dodgeball court

Day 5: Arriving Curacao Port

Date: February 15

Estimated time of arrival: 9:00am

Estimated time of departure: 10:00pm

Day 6: Arriving Aruba Port, Shore Activity: “Sky Lantern Festival”

Date: February 16

Time: 8:00pm-9:30pm

Location: Druif Beach, Aruba

Days 7 & 8: Fun at sea: “Raffle Prizes”

Date: February 17-18

Time: 2:00pm-3:00pm

Location: SkyBox Sports Bar

Day 9: Arriving Miami, Florida

Date: February 18

Time: 8:00am

Location: Carnival Cruise Terminal (1435 N. Cruise Blvd., Miami, FL 33132)

Main Events Featured on Board

Day 2 - Concert of Nacho in RedFrog Rum Bar: On February 12, we will be having an exclusive and exciting concert of Miguel Ignacio Mendoza, better known as Nacho, who is a famous singer and political activist in Venezuela with a huge influence on young people, who he has called on to fight for their freedom and the freedom of the country. Through the influence of Nacho on board, we will be able to build different types of our customer base since he recently won a Latin Grammy American Award in 2017, which increased his popularity even more.

After enjoying the concert with a sense of familiarity, we will hold a Q&A session with Nacho to discuss the current big turmoil in Venezuela and share his ideas on what we Venezuelans living abroad could do to help our people. When the Q&A session is finished, there are going to be raffle prizes and sales of products to raise funds for our named charity organization.

Day 4 - Fiesta de Carnaval: An entertaining charity event is going to be happening on February 14 to raise funds while also celebrating the craziest and jolliest holiday in Venezuelan culture, Carnaval. This festivity is usually celebrated in public with quirky masks, a vivid parade of costumes, and dances under water and confetti. However, it can also be celebrated in another way. In many neighborhoods of the District Capital, Caracas, young people will throw water balloons and eggs at pedestrians as a prank and as a sign that Carnaval is around the corner. This prank will help to cheer up people after a stressful day.



During this event, we will have water balloon fights while “dancing” under the water. The idea is to give Venezuelans the experience of the vivid moments when they used to play and celebrate the Carnaval party on the streets. Nonetheless, a survey conducted by *The New York Times* reports that about 93% of the population in Venezuela experiences difficulty in affording food, which means that they are more worried about finding a way to bring food to their home table than wasting an egg to celebrate the Carnaval party. Therefore, the donors will have the opportunity to relive that experience and all the profits earned during this event are going to be donated to our partnered charity.

Day 6 - Sky Lantern Festival: On February 16, after all the fun, we will be holding a Sky Lantern festival on Druif Beach in Aruba. By tradition, sky lanterns release one’s worries and problems into the sky and bring back good luck. (See “History of Sky Lanterns - Who Invented Sky Lantern?” 2017).

Each participant or group will get their own lantern on which they will be asked to write a message wishing the best to their homeland. Since we will be having the event in Aruba, which is one of the islands closest to Venezuela, we are going to send our best wishes to the sky and let the wind blow them in the direction of Venezuela. Even though many Venezuelans have left their homeland for many reasons, there is going to be a little gem in their deepest heart of remembering the once beautiful and safe Venezuela.

*

Carnival Cruise Corporation & Magic Sunrise Inc.

Carnival Cruise Corporation is one of the three largest cruise lines in the world, along with Royal Caribbean Cruise and Norwegian Cruise Line. Carnival offers a great variety of cruises with enhanced and additional programming on board, which are known as theme cruises. These themes range from a cooking classroom with well-known chefs, to enjoying a memorable concert of Selena Gomez on a private island, to participating in a challenging spicy-food competition, as well as the “Disney World” and “Star Trek” theme cruises. Specialty cruises offer the opportunity to enjoy a few days of a trip of immersion with like-minded people who have common interests. Today, Magic Sunrise Inc. is presenting to Carnival the unique and adventurous but also charitable cruise: the “Venezuelan Dreams” cruise.

We, Magic Sunrise Inc., are a tour and travel company based in Miami, Florida. We organize tours and travels to more than 60 countries worldwide and we also provide services that are associated with planning events and conventions. Our goal is to bring a unique amusement and also deliver an innovative adventure to all our travelers who will be able to bring memories back home.

Because Venezuelans are known to have the most active, joyous and cheerful personalities, the decision of collaborating with Carnival is that it fits perfectly with our target market. Carnival Cruise Line provides a larger variety of entertainment and dining options in comparison with other Latin American countries. In addition, the name of “Carnival” matches perfectly with the name of one of the main events happening on board which is also called “La Fiesta de Carnaval” (The Carnival Party).

This new route sailing from Miami to San Juan, Puerto Rico, then to Curacao and eventually to Aruba is going to help Carnival Cruise Line to attract many Venezuelan customers who are interested in having a relaxed vacation while also visiting neighbor islands of their homeland with Carnival ships. Although Venezuela was known for its oil production industry, besides this aspect, it was also known for its potential tourism. Venezuela’s diversity of landscape, gastronomy, constant tropical climate and favorable geographical position drove the country to be one of the ideal destinations for tourism.

Thus, opening a new route to Venezuela will eventually attract many other Hispanic groups who would like to visit South America and enjoy the tropical beaches. With this startup, we will be able to build the Hispanic customer base, and since Venezuela is a neighbor to other South American countries, the possibility to attract other Hispanic groups will increase as well. Over time, we will be able to expand and offer more destination options to our customers.

Works Cited

- Anonymous. (n.d.). “History of Sky Lanterns - Who Invented Sky Lantern?” History of Sky Lanterns - Invention of Chinese Lantern. Retrieved on November 1, 2017, from: www.historyoflamps.com/lantern-history/history-of-sky-lanterns.
- Benzaquen, Mercy. (July 16, 2017). “How Food in Venezuela Went from Subsidized to Scarce.” *The New York Times*. Retrieved on October 11, 2017, from: www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/07/16/world/americas/venezuela-shortages.html.
- Carnival Cruise Line. (n.d.). “Carnival Conquest | Conquest Cruise Ship.” *Carnival Cruise Line*. Retrieved on October 11, 2017, from: www.carnival.com/cruise-ships/carnival-conquest.aspx.
- Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation. (n.d.). “About Us.” *Cuatro Por Venezuela Foundation*. Retrieved on October 25, 2017, from: <https://www.cuatroporvenezuela.org/about-us>
- Gillespie, Patrick. (September 2017). “Venezuela’s dreams are dying: The tragic impact of a country’s collapse.” *CNN*, Cable News Network. Retrieved on October 25, 2017, from: www.cnn.com/interactive/2017/politics/state/venezuela-mauro-crisis/?iid=EL.
- Horrigan, Sean. (July 20, 2016). “The Five Things Corporate Sponsors Want From Nonprofits.” Nonprofit Hub. Retrieved on October 29, 2017, from: www.nonprofithub.org/nonprofit-marketing-plan/five-things-corporate-sponsors-want-nonprofits/.

Feminist Movements in Turkey: The Three Waves, 1908-2017

Lilia Teal

Fall 2017

HIS 3700 | The Middle East: World War I to the Present
Professor Abraham Edelheit

Over the last century, the existence of patriarchal hegemony as enforced by the Ottoman Empire and reforms mandated by a newly formed Turkish Republic have spurred the development and evolution of feminism in Turkey known as the Three Waves Feminism. The First Wave Feminism was established by key pioneering actors in Ottoman-Turkey and Kemalist modernization reforms between 1908-1935. Radical activism during the 1980s ushered in a new period called the Second Wave Feminism, while the Third Wave Feminism is attributed to the ongoing Kurdish freedom movement. Under these influences, the Three Waves Feminism evolved beginning with the modernization of the female in the public sphere for the welfare of the state, growing through the radical activities of women's rights organizations, continuing its development through the eschewing of nation-state repression, and by challenging feminist objectives to stretch beyond ethnic boundaries.

The seeds for the First Wave Feminism were planted in 1908 with the founding of the first recorded women's association in Ottoman-Turkey, The Welfare Organization of Women (W.O.W.). The organization was the first inception of a social milieu that included two prominent figures of the movement, Nezihe Muhittin (1889-1958) and Halide Edip Adivar (1884-1964). Muhittin and Adivar used W.O.W. as a platform to advocate for the rights of not only Muslim women but all women. The organization survived the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Similar to the First Wave Feminism Western counterpart, the concerns of the Turkish First Wave Feminism focused on women's suffrage, and educational and political equality. The Turkish First Wave Feminism adopted the Western image of the modernized woman as an ideal representation of the female character. Women's collectives and publications featuring women's perspectives were used to disseminate feminist ideology. It was through these devices of dissemination that women's rights activists gained a public platform.



Nezihe Muhittin

Source: <https://www.duzen.com.tr/tr/takvimdetay/2018/Subat>

Coinciding with the establishment of the Republic in 1923, the Women's People's Party was founded by the eminent author Nezihe Muhittin. Notably one of the most salient women's rights activists of her time, Muhittin published novellas featuring female heroines who exemplified the quintessential modern woman. It was through these images of the modern female with the central theme of Ottoman-Turkish woman-hood at the heart of the narrative that a new feminist identity proliferated.

The objective of the Women's People's Party was to raise the issue of women's suffrage to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey as well as to the general public. After a well-run campaign throughout the country, the party's petition was ultimately rejected by the newly established Turkish State. Muhittin then founded the Turkish Women's Union in 1924 as a platform to advocate for political equality through the publication of women's journals.

Women's rights pioneer Halide Edip Adivar was a prominent Turkish writer and political activist. Throughout her novels, she criticized the suppressed social status of women, placing blame on women for their status because, from her perspective, they were not active agents of change. Adivar was politically active throughout the Turkish War of Independence and gave a speech to thousands at the Sultanahmet demonstrations protesting the Greek occupation of Izmir. Subsequently, she joined the Turkish National Resistance and co-founded the Anadolu Ajansi news agency as a national platform to focus on the developments of the Turkish War of Liberation.



Source: <https://statikenerji.net/2010/09/12/kalp-agrisindan-ufak-bir-alinti/>

After the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk distinguished the new Turkish State from the archaic Sharia Law of the Ottoman predecessor through the implementation of a series of reforms, decreeing modernity through forced assimilation. These reforms included the adaptation of the Swiss Civil Code which granted Turkish women formal civil and legal rights. His sweeping reforms co-opted Turkish feminist ideologies in conjunction with Western movements toward equality. In addition to establishing democracy, secularism, and state-sponsored education, feminist reforms included the abolishment of polygamy, divorce and inheritance rights to women, the unveiling of women by decree, mandates for women to adopt Western dress, and the access to trades and professions for women.

Under Attaturk's rule, women's suffrage was legally recognized in the first municipal and general elections of 1930 and 1934. However, despite these seemingly progressive Kemalist reforms, the social position of women in Turkey remained suppressed within the domestic and private sphere. The new state-sanctioned "rights" were deployed for the purpose of legitimizing women as vehicles for disseminating and promoting the values of the Republic. However, the promotion of public rights illuminated the discrepancy with private rights, and through this observation, the intentions of the state were clearly positioned to perpetuate patriarchal hegemony within the private sphere.

Once sufficient reforms were in place to maintain the vitality of the social civil code of the Republic, the state began the process of dismantling women's

organizations that promoted feminist ideology, arguing that women's organizations which advocated for gender equality, such as Muhittin's Turkish Women's Union, were a threat to national interest because of their inherent individualistic and sectarian positions. The state also argued that because it had institutionalized so many feminist ideologies through reforms, there was no longer a need for their existence.

Threatened by Muhittin's political activism, the state labeled her a political threat and agitator. Signifying the end of the First Wave Feminism in Turkey, the Republic closed the Turkish Women's Union for investigation. Many lawsuits were brought against Muhittin claiming that the purpose of her activism within the Union was for personal financial gain.

Although the First Wave Feminism saw the institutionalized reforms that opened doors for women in professional fields and embraced progressive standards that promoted the image of the modernized female, patriarchal hegemony remained largely intact. This left the impression that not only was the state the sole entity that had the power to advocate for women's rights but that in the private sphere of the home, the male remained the dominant figure as head of the household.

During the 1960s and '70s, at the time of the flourishing Feminism movement in the West, the radical left dominated the political realm in Turkey, contributing to political instability while Socialist movements were preoccupied with reconstructing the Turkish State. It was against the backdrop of the Turkish military lead coup of the 1980s that the Second Wave Feminism began to percolate. In response to the ideological confrontation between the right-wing groups and the leftists, the military intervened. Political parties and organizations, as well as labor unions, were banned from the political sphere under the enactment of the new constitution of 1982 which compromised individual rights. The crackdown on political expression only exacerbated the independent women's movement and, ironically, created an opening for the movement's discourse. In addition, the resulting imprisonment of many male leftist activists and leaders left a vacuum for the women's movement to proliferate.

Women from academic and urban milieus gathered to discuss translated feminist Western literature through which patriarchal relations and traditional female social roles were analyzed. It was during this period that women activists recognized that the state would not consider the best interest of the female and that inequality was an inherent dysfunction of its polity. In light of this recognition, independent women's organizations focused their discourse and activism to embrace civil code issues such as sexual violence, familial oppression, and domestic abuse. Through organized campaigns, sit-ins, and public protests, the Second Wave Feminism endeavored to disempower patriarchal superiority of the public sphere and challenged male domination in the private sphere through the courts.

One historical demonstration involving 3,000 women took place in Istanbul

on May 17, 1987, in response to a judge who ruled against a divorce case on the grounds that physical force should be applied as a tool for controlling women in the home. The mass demonstration initiated the launch of a massive campaign that raised public awareness of domestic violence. This was a turning point as it was the first demonstration advocating for women's rights by way of politicizing domestic violence, spinning a domestic matter within the private sphere into a political topic that was of national concern.

Another popular campaign was the Purple Needle campaign that was launched in Izmir, Ankara, and Istanbul in reaction to sexual harassment and sexual violence committed on the streets and in public transportation vehicles such as buses and ferries. The campaign was initiated on November 2, 1989, and during the press conference activists sold needles with purple ribbons as a weapon with which to defend themselves in the instance of an attack. The funds raised from the sales were used for the establishment of a shelter for victims of domestic violence. According to reports, street harassments went down significantly during the campaign.



Source: <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/2012/12/pinsneedles>

Suad Joseph and Afsāna Nağmābādī addressed this in their book, *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, “With creativity and innovation, activists gained extensive public notice by adopting and imitating the traditional marketing strategy for the male vendors who ply their trade on the ferries, in order to place sexual violence -- historically considered to be a private concern of women.”¹ Independent women's organizations challenged discriminatory laws

¹ Joseph, Suad and Nağmābādī, Afsāna *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, Vol 3. Brill 2003

that promoted patriarchal hegemony in the private sphere such as the surname law, men being recognized as the head of household, and men overseeing such decisions as schooling and housing for children. In addition, the Second Wave Feminism brought about the eventual institutionalization of the women's movement within Turkish society. An example of this institutionalization is the KA-DER, an organization that was formed with the objective of growing the number of women within the political sphere. The Second Wave Feminism gained audiences on an international level through the United Nations Decade for Women and a monitoring branch of the United Nations called the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was signed in 1985. During the years of 1973 and 2004, the number of women's organizations proliferated. Between 1983 and 1992, they totaled 64 in number, and by the year 2014 there were more than 350 women's organizations.²

Over the last two decades, the Third Wave Feminism has been divided to represent the concerns of two national identities. While remaining a large presence in modern Turkish culture, the movement has diverged, articulating the isolated movement that existed within the margins of the Kurdish population. Expressed through the embrace of identity politics as an intrinsic part of its platform, the Kurdish freedom movement crystallizes its assertions that the Western and Turkish women's movements expose the imperialist patriarchal hegemony as the root of suppression.

The Second Wave Feminism in the West gave rise to identity politics as a result of its exclusive ethnocentric alignment with white heterosexual women. Black lesbian feminists called into question this discrepancy and, in so doing, set a new standard for the marginalized groups on the fringes of the Second Wave Feminism in Turkey. As women's shelter advocate Çağla Diner states in her essay, "Waves of Feminism in Turkey": "Similar to the black and lesbian feminists' challenge to the Second Wave of Western Feminism for its white and heterosexual background, the Kurdish and Islamist feminists raised criticism against Turkish mainstream feminists for being ethnocentric and exclusionary of other identities."³

Recognizing identity politics as an intrinsic element of its platform, the Kurdish freedom movement subscribes to an ideology that is predicated on the requirement of liberation from the interrelated oppressive mechanisms of capitalism, colonialism, and the state. In the 1990s, political Islam disputed Kemalist secularism. During the same period, Kurdish Nationalism began to challenge Kemalist Nationalism, employing identity politics as a means to articulate their perspective.

The fuel for contemporary Kurdish Nationalism was provided in large part by the attack on the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) by the Turkish military

2 Altınay, Ayşe G. and Arat, Yesim *Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Sıddet*, Punto Baskı Cozumlemeleri, Istanbul, 2008

3 Diner, Çağla and Şule Toktaş (2010) *Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islamist and Kurdish women's movements in an era of globalization*, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 12:1, 41-57, DOI: 10.1080/19448950903507388

in the 1990s. The attack precipitated in violence and subsequently resulted in a mass displacement of 3 million Kurds to the western region of the country. This marginalization intensified the Kurdish women's movement by emphasizing their ethnic identity as an important basis for their feminist movement.

The Kurdish freedom movement critiques the Western and Turkish brand of feminism as embracing the values of Western liberal culture that is defined by individualism, capitalism, and imperialism. It's through this critique that the movement investigates the limits of Westernized Feminist discourse as reflected in their ethnocentric isolationism. The Kurdish freedom movement feels further marginalized by the perception that they are a primitive group from an archaic culture that did not fit into Turkey's national modernization agenda. As Dilar Dirik stated in her speech, "Feminism and the Kurdish Freedom Movement": "Turkish feminists, for instance, had the tendency to marginalize Kurdish women, which they perceived as backward, and tried to forcefully assimilate them into their nationalist 'modernization project.' In practice, this meant that all women had to be 'Turkish' in order to qualify for liberation."²⁴

There are also diverging divisions within the Third Wave Turkish Feminism, which identifies with Kemalist ideology and is empathetic to the Kurdish women's movement perspective. One example of these diverging perspectives overlapping is the case of the prominent Kemalist feminist academic Necla Arat, who criticized liberal feminist Eren Keskin for supporting Kurdish female victims of rape by security forces in the south-eastern region of Turkey. From Arat's perspective, Keskin's critique of the atrocity was seen as an endorsement for Kurdish terrorists.

The Kurdish freedom movement seeks to move beyond the limits of the Turkish and feminist ideologies by adopting a new psychological orientation that includes cultivating the will to transform the patriarchal global worldview. In her presentation, Dollar Dirk stated, "Moving beyond means to systematize an alternative to the dominant system through a radical systematic critique... leading a mental revolution, and transforming or figuratively killing the masculine and its multitudinous expressions, as well as questioning and resisting the entire global order, the stage of this violence and oppression."²⁵

Abdullah Ocalan, Kurdish nationalist leader and founder of the PKK, is a vocal advocate for women's rights as a key element of the nationalist agenda for Kurdistan polity. Ocalan's perspective articulates the relationship between patriarchy, capitalism, and the Republic as the three-pronged perpetrators of universal oppression. "All the power and state ideologies stem from sexist attitudes and behavior [...]. Without women's slavery, none of the other types of slavery can exist let alone develop. Capitalism and nation-state denote the most institutionalized dominant male. More boldly and openly spoken: capitalism and nation-state are

4 Dirik, Dilar "Dissecting Capitalist Modernity—Building Democratic Confederalism" Conference at Hamburg University, April 3-5, 2015.

5 Dirik, Dilar "Dissecting Capitalist Modernity—Building Democratic Confederalism" Conference at Hamburg University, April 3-5, 2015.

the monopolism of the despotic and exploitive male.”⁶ He goes on to summarize, “The project of women’s liberation goes far beyond the equality of the sexes, but moreover describes the essence of general democracy, of human rights, of harmony with nature and communal equality.”⁷

On either end of the feminist timeline in Turkey, key actors redefined the image of the female through radical feminist literature and activism. Kemalist reforms and the Kurdish freedom movement both established women’s liberation as a fundamental ideology existing at the core of their respective nationalist interests. Kemalist reforms employed resounding cosmetic practices that served the welfare of society by elevating the Turkish societal image in the global sphere, espoused from western modernity. Although the reforms did not address the persistent hegemonic traditions lodged within the internal cultural framework or the subjugation of the female population within the domestic sphere, they did advance the agency of the female in the global sphere, and in so doing laid the groundwork for future movements.

Antithetically, the contemporary Kurdish freedom movement seeks to reorient society’s consciousness away from the immutable global phenomena of patriarchal dominance and toward a perspective of community and egalitarianism by applying holistic approaches to the deconstruction of patriarchy and rehabilitation of humanity. In addition, the Kurdish freedom movement responds to the Second Wave Feminism model by eschewing the notion of an intrinsic relationship between women’s rights and liberalism.

Over the span of the last century, the Three Waves of Feminism have swept through Turkish society, leaving in their wake evidence of a nation with the will to embrace a vision for equality. By challenging the societal status quo, Turkish society shows signs of the beginnings of a shift in consciousness by accepting modernity through assimilation and politically empowering a previously marginalized segment of the population, the female.

Bibliography

- Altınay, Ayşe G. and Arat, Yesim. *Türkiye’de Kadına Yönelik Sıddet*, Punto Baskı Cozumlemeleri, Istanbul, 2008.
- Baron, Beth and Keddie, Nikki R. *Women in Middle Eastern History, Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, Yale University Press, 1991.
- Diner, Cagla and Toktaş, Şule. *Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islamist and Kurdish women’s movements in an era of globalization*, Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies, February 18, 2010, 12:1, 41-57, DOI: 10.
- Dirik, Dilar. “Dissecting Capitalist Modernity – Building Democratic Confederalism,” Conference at Hamburg University, April 3-5, 2015.
- Joseph, Suad and Nağmābādī, Afsāna. *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health*, Vol 3. Brill 2003.
- Meriwether, Margaret L. and Tucker, Judith E. *Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East*,

⁶ Öcalan, Abdullah, 2011, Democratic Confederalism (Cologne: International Initiative; Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan - Peace in Kurdistan), p 17

⁷ Öcalan, Abdullah, 2010, Jenseits von Staat, Macht und Gewalt (Cologne: Mesopotamien Verlag), p 203

Westview Press, 1999.

Öcalan, Abdullah. *Democratic Confederalism*, Cologne: International Initiative; Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan - Peace in Kurdistan, 2011.

Öcalan, Abdullah. *Jenseits von Staat, Macht und Gewalt*, Cologne: Mesopotamien Verlag 2010.

CONTRIBUTORS



CAROLINA CEN

“Homesickness is a feeling that each foreigner living overseas has experienced, and overcoming it needs time. I am an international student from Venezuela who came to the U.S. three years ago. I wrote this paper to show that even though my country is currently going through hardships, it possesses the most vibrant and beautiful landscapes and islands. The idea of ‘Venezuelan Dreams Cruise’ is to allow Venezuelans overseas to live through the good old days and hope that one day Venezuela will become like it used to be.”



ANTHONY CHARLES

“I focused on this topic primarily because the learning environment Ms. Gabay created allowed for more contemporary and out-of-academic-range subject matter that I think others wouldn’t dare to write about. I go by Tony, Caesar, or ‘the Goat’ for short.”



SHOLOM GUTLEIZER

“My major is Mental Health and Human Services, concentrating in Substance Abuse Counseling. I am extremely interested in removing the taboo of mental illness, spreading awareness and tolerance. My goal in writing and researching this paper is to point out some important facts that seem to be overlooked when considering transgender people in regards to the best way to help them.”



LESLIE IRENE JUNCO

“I’m excited to have accomplished so much in the community and as a person during the time I’ve spent in Kingsborough. This is my final semester, but I leave with great memories and friends.”



CANDIDA KNIGHT

“Making a difference in the world have always been my passion. As I embark on my journey at Kingsborough to become an educator, I came across some students who were hungry and homeless. So, for my Urban Sociology class project, I was prompted to do this research to find out the issues that impact homeless students. What I found out made me respect these students highly.”



NIKA KONDZHARIYA

“I am from Georgia, a small country in Eastern Europe with a difficult history of fighting for freedom and independence. Education has been the thing that liberated people and made them stronger. In the USA minorities, in turn, face inequalities. They are like Georgians having to fight for the liberty to do things which they have the personal right to do. Therefore, in my essay I wanted to show that having an open access to education is necessary for all people, rich or not. A true person is one who can build his/her life in his/her own unique way, without being denied the necessary tools and opportunities, such as education.”



RICARDO MEDINA

“I was born in Queens in 1967 but lived in Brooklyn all of my life. I graduated from Edward R. Murrow High School in 1985 and have been working for the last twenty-six years as a doorman on the Upper Westside. Currently I am pursuing a Liberal Arts degree.”



FEMI OMOJUANFO

“Since I started Kingsborough Community College, I’ve realized that a lot of people do not know a lot of the things that they should know. So I wrote this paper not only with the hope that someone else will read it and maybe learn something new. Just because a system is lawful and widely accepted in society doesn’t mean it’s without great flaws and affecting society in a negative way.”



ISABELL RIVERA

“I’m a Journalism major and the editor-in-chief of the college newspaper, *Scepter*. My passion is to write about social issues, injustice as well as controversial topics. My goal, as a journalist, is to make a difference in society and be the change I’d like to see. Writing this paper helped me understand the construction of society better and I hope whoever reads it will have a better understanding on what’s going on in contemporary society, and to be more aware of how we treat others and raise our children.”



ETHAN SAPOLSKY

“From Paris, France, I started attending Kingsborough in the Fall of 2015 as an international student. As a history buff, I’ve taken most of the History classes available. This paper was written for Popular Culture in America. As a foodie, writing about the history of food in American popular culture then seemed obvious. I will continue to study history and political science at a four-year college next semester, as a double-major.”



LILIA TEAL

“I am a painter and writer who uses both mediums to investigate women’s history within the confines of patriarchy and the movements that have challenged this dynamic as it exists within societal contexts and our intimate, personal narratives. I live and work in Brooklyn with my husband and our three daughters.”

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Distinctions welcomes submissions year-round. The deadline for the Fall 2018 issue is August 15. Submissions that come in after that date will be considered for the Spring 2018 issue (deadline: February 1).

Students: Please submit to *Distinctions* any outstanding research-related course work, whether you wrote it for Honors credit or not. As for visual art, the present editor is most interested in depictions and projects related to New York City and its environs.

Instructors: Please encourage your students who have conducted original and compelling research to submit it to *Distinctions*.

Email the file to me, Bob Blaisdell (Robert.Blaisdell@Kingsborough.edu), with the subject line DISTINCTIONS SUBMISSION and on paper to the Honors House in M377. Include your contact information. I will acknowledge all submissions upon receipt.