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Volume 5 Issue 1: Editorial

Sarah Attfield, University of Technology Sydney
Matthew Sparkes, University of Cambridge

We are writing this editorial during tumultuous times. 2020 has been the year of the Covid19 pandemic which has left many people around the world dead and unprecedented numbers of workers without jobs. In the preceding years, working-class people have experienced growing precarity, legal challenges to collective action, and heightened disrespect and stigmatisation as the 'causes' of inequality are increasingly viewed through a tainted lens of moral and individual failure. Yet, the pandemic has highlighted what working-class people have always known – that insecure work is not sustainable, and that working-class people make up the majority of 'essential workers'. The impact of precarity and the associated lack of access to health care, sickness benefit and safe working conditions has been felt by working-class people – the people who have kept societies functioning during this crisis. We expect that future issues of this Journal will spotlight some of the stories of working-class experience during the pandemic, and further reveal the significant contribution working-class people have made to mitigate the pandemic's worst effects.

2020 has also seen the Black Lives Matter uprising in the United States, with supporting protests taking place in France, the UK, Spain, Australia, South Africa, Japan, Germany, Brazil and the Netherlands. These protests are deeply significant because they indicate global recognition for the systematic and systemic oppression of Black and minority ethnic communities, and offer hope for real change to racialised structures and institutions. We stand in solidarity with people fighting for racial justice and support the Black Lives Matter movement. This movement has inspired activism across the world and shown the power of collective action. The Working-Class Studies Association's statement in support of Black Lives Matter can be read here.

Although the articles and reviews included in this issue were mostly submitted before the Covid19 pandemic and before the Black Lives Matter uprising, they are each concerned with the intersections of class with race, ethnicity and gender; the contributing authors therefore animate our understanding of oppression and injustice, and demonstrate the importance of working-class studies in our current era.

The first article, 'On Government, Agency, and the Violence of Inaction' by Lawrence M. Eppard and Noam Chomsky outlines the role of government in addressing structural inequalities in American society. They point to the problems within the American political system that prevent the government from acting in the best interests of the people, but they end on a hopeful note, acknowledging the activism of young Americans.

Following is an account of the campaign to raise the minimum wage in the state of California. In 'Raise the Wage LA: Campaigning for Living Wages in Los Angeles and an Emergent Working-Class Repertoire', Paul Doughty discusses the challenges and the successes of the campaign and presents the experiences of the union and community organisers and the workers who were involved in this significant campaign.

Andrew Dawson and Bryonny Goodwin-Hawkins offer some insights into the pro-Brexit vote in some deindustrialised towns in the UK. 'Post-Industrial Industrial *Gemeinschaft*: Northern Brexit and the Future Possible' points to the way that the Brexit campaign included promises of work to some communities, particularly the industrial work that had previously supported their towns.

The next article takes us back to the US – in 'Differential Opportunity for Men from Low-Income Backgrounds across Pennsylvania' Lawrence M. Eppard, Troy S. Okum and Lucas Everidge examine equality of opportunity among low-income men in Pennsylvania counties and point to the place-based issues that can impact on opportunities.

George Towers, Joan R. Poulsen, Darrin L. Carr and Aimee N. Zoeller discuss the challenges faced by working-class faculty in finding suitable career mentors in 'Mentoring for Faculty from Working-Class Backgrounds' and consider the successes and lessons learnt during a pilot mentoring program at their institution.

The issue then moves in another direction and the next two articles are literature focused. Leah Richards examines themes of class anxieties present in the story popularly known as Sweeney Todd in 'Class, Crime, and Cannibalism in *The String of Pearls*; or, The Demon Barber as Bourgeois Bogeyman' and argues that the story of the murderous barber operates as an 'eat the rich' revenge fantasy that disturbed the middle classes.

Erika Meyers' 'Nationalizing Realism in Dermot Bolger's *The Journey Home*' considers how Irish author Dermot Bolger uses graphic accounts of poverty and abuse in his realist novel to illustrate the ways that capitalist structures oppress working-class people.

There is a turn to television in 'Are we All "BBC Dad" Now? What Covid19 Restrictions Reveal about Comedy, Class, Paid Work, Parenting and Gender', where Liz Giuffre looks at the inequities of working from home and the implications relating to the class and gender of the at-home worker. She suggests that not all working from home is equal, and she uses examples of comedians broadcasting shows from home to illustrate these inequalities.

The popular culture theme is maintained in Gloria McMillan's two review essays, 'Anti-Union Clichés float *On the Waterfront*: Rhetorical Analysis of the Film' and '*Citizen Kane* and *How Green was My Valley*: Have We Sold Ourselves Short?'. In these essays she uses the case studies to demonstrate the anti-union sentiment in some classic Hollywood film and compares this to more sympathetic portrayals of working-class life.

And the article section ends with Sara Appel's curated selection of working-class undergraduate student essays on a diverse range of topics. The essays cover working-class environmentalism, the problematic aspects of documentary photography that uses poor people as subjects, the importance of understanding sex work as work and the role of public transport in both crossing and reinforcing the class divide. The student writers in this collection show insight, research and great enthusiasm for their chosen topics.

A number of book reviews complete the issue (seven altogether). The book reviews editor, Christie Launius, brings a diverse range of books to the attention of readers. Books reviewed cover topics such as working-class writing and working-class writers, the experiences of working-class adults in the anthracite coal region of rural Pennsylvania, poverty and class

inequality in contemporary America, the impact of capitalism on workers' health, a history of dockworkers in South Africa and the San Francisco Bay Area, pedagogical approaches to teaching about class and inequality and the experiences of working-class students at small liberal arts college in the US. We hope that readers will be inspired to seek out these books!

The Journal continues to develop apace, and the editors are delighted to see the growing interest from authors wishing to submit and from readers all around the world. We thank the authors and the reviewers for all of their work (particularly during such challenging times). We hope readers enjoy this issue and find much within the articles to challenge, provoke, inspire and activate.

On Government, Agency, and the Violence of Inaction

Lawrence M. Eppard, Shippensburg University
with Noam Chomsky, University of Arizona[1]

Abstract

In this piece, Eppard and Chomsky argue that government is crucial to the realization of true agency for millions of Americans. They also explore the manner in which political and cultural factors work to curtail the U.S. government's ability to address social problems like poverty and economic inequality, thus limiting opportunity and freedom for many.

Keywords

Agency, economic inequality, government, individualism, OECD, poverty, racism, social welfare

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'True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.' – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.[2]

'We need to make red and blue understand freedom in a much fuller way. How free are we really if we are an extremely unequal society? I think inequality—whether it is class inequality, racial inequality, or gender inequality—makes us less free.' – Arlie Hochschild[3]

'We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence.' – Franklin D. Roosevelt[4]

Introduction

Suppose you and a handful of your friends or colleagues decided to form a small functioning democratic society together. You would likely debate how the society should be governed and then structure the government accordingly. You would also have to decide on the things that were of value to the group and that were therefore crucial to have in your society—things such as roads, schools, defense, clean water, breathable air, etc. Then you would need to decide how your government would pay for and administer those things.

A fair measure of whether your democracy—and any other democracy for that matter—is functioning is how the citizens feel about their government and about paying their taxes. On

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[1] Author Lawrence M. Eppard can be reached at leeppard@ship.edu, while contributor Noam Chomsky can be reached at noamchomsky@email.arizona.edu.
[2] From King's *Beyond Vietnam* speech on April 4, 1967, at Riverside Church in New York City. For more: https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm.
[3] From Eppard, Hochschild & Wilkinson 2018, p. 144.
[4] From Roosevelt's 1944 State of the Union Message to the U.S. Congress. For more: http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/addresstext.html.

tax day each year, for instance, when each member of your fictional society contributed their share in order to fund the things that the group valued, would it be a day of mourning or a day of celebration? When your government administered the programs you considered vital, would you view them positively or negatively? If the system the group had developed was truly democratic, taxes and government programs would represent the collective interests and preferences of the group. Because of this, wouldn't these things be celebrated? After all, you came together and collectively identified the things that were most important to the group, things that benefited both you personally as well as your society more broadly, and agreed upon a reasonable way to pay for them and share the burden. Only in a flawed democracy would a faction emerge that was opposed to the government, its programs, and its funding mechanisms.

The United States, it seems, is one such flawed democracy.[5] Large numbers of Americans are not only skeptical of many government programs and their recipients, but have lost faith in government more generally. This is especially true among non-Hispanic Whites, political conservatives, older Americans, and the more affluent.

Fifty-one percent of Americans prefer a smaller government with fewer services, compared to 40 percent who prefer a bigger government with more services (Pew Research Center 2014a). Sixty-four percent of Americans are in favor of cutting government spending in order to improve the economy (ISSP 2016). Confidence in government institutions is low: only 11 percent of Americans express confidence in Congress, 24 percent in the criminal justice system, 38 percent in the Supreme Court, and 38 percent in the presidency (Gallup 2019). Only 32 percent of Americans believe they have a say concerning what their government does, and just 21 percent believe most civil servants can be trusted (ISSP 2016). Fifty-six percent of Americans believe the government is almost always wasteful and inefficient (Pew Research Center 2019).

Only 43 percent of Americans believe that conditions for the poor (including opportunities in education, housing, employment, and healthcare) are bad. When asked who has the greatest responsibility for helping the poor—between government, individual poor Americans themselves, families, churches, and charities—only 35 percent chose government (Lauter 2016). A mere 40 percent of Americans believe the government needs to do more to assist people in need (Pew Research Center 2019). When asked whether government is responsible for the well-being of all its citizens and has an obligation to take care of them, or whether this responsibility should fall on people themselves, 70 percent of the non-poor said people themselves. Sixty-one percent of non-poor Americans believe that welfare benefits make poor people dependent and encourage them to stay poor. Forty-eight percent of Americans say government anti-poverty efforts have had some positive impact (43%) or a big positive impact (5%), while a nearly identical 47 percent say they have either had no impact (13%) or made things worse (34%). Almost three-quarters (73%) of Americans say that even if the government were willing to spend whatever is necessary to eliminate poverty, it could not be accomplished (Lauter 2016). Sixty-one percent of likely voters believe Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (or SNAP, commonly referred to as food stamps) applicants should be drug tested, 82 percent support SNAP work requirements, and 56 percent of Americans believe too many people are receiving welfare who should not be getting it (Rasmussen 2017a, 2017b; Dickerson 2019).

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[5] In fact in 2019, the U.S. did not qualify as a 'full democracy' but as a 'flawed democracy' on The Economist's Democracy Index. For more: https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index .

To be clear, Americans also have many structuralist beliefs and social democratic preferences. Many Americans want government involved in their lives in a number of ways, often saying so in response to different questions on these same surveys.[6] But these aforementioned beliefs regarding skepticism of government, social programs, and program recipients, along with racist and individualistic beliefs, are also widespread and compete with social democratic preferences when Americans consider the merits of government and social policies. If beliefs rooted in racism, individualism, and government skepticism are not activated by political or public discourse, Americans' social democratic tendencies shine through. But when activated, racism, individualism, and government skepticism can undermine support for policies that Americans might otherwise favor.

Good Government Works

Freedom from the government telling you what you can and cannot do is of course an important aspect of liberty. But an equally important aspect is the freedom to live the life that you wish to lead, and government is vital in helping to enable this aspect of freedom.

True freedom requires agency, or the ability to freely choose the life that you want to lead and to be able to think and act autonomously in pursuit of that desired life. To do this, one needs to (a) have their abilities developed and (b) have unobstructed access to important resources and opportunity pathways. Government is crucial to ensuring that the conditions exist which allow all Americans to possess true agency.

Americans have every right to criticize their government for failing to do more to enable true freedom for all citizens. But the solution is not the absence of government, but government administered in the most democratic, equitable, and effective fashion possible. And there is good evidence from across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries to suggest that, when well designed and effectively implemented, government social policies help to *enable* freedom for millions.

As one example, Figure 1 demonstrates the association between social spending and income inequality reduction post-tax/transfer among OECD countries. The positive correlation between these two variables is strong ($r = 0.72$, $p < .001$). This association represents a 6.4 percent reduction in a country's Gini coefficient for every 5 percent increase in social spending (as % of GDP). Countries most committed to equality achieve significant income inequality reduction,[7] while less-committed countries fail to do so. The median Gini coefficient reduction across the other non-U.S. countries is 35 percent, with countries like Finland (48%) performing even better. In comparison, the U.S., whose social spending is below the OECD average,[8] achieves only a 23 percent reduction. This leaves income inequality in the U.S. at the top end among OECD countries, or in the words of David Brady, 'iconically unequal' (2009, p. 4) (see Table 1).

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[6] There are many great sources of data on this topic. Visit the Pew Research Center's website (pewresearch.org), for instance, for a wealth of survey data on Americans' beliefs about government, agency, poverty, inequality, race, gender, and more.

[7] A result of both taxation (which brings income groups closer together) and social spending (which increases household resources, particularly at the bottom of the income hierarchy).

[8] OECD average social spending is 20.1% of GDP, versus 18.7% in the U.S. By comparison, social spending in the U.S. is only 65% of that in Finland (28.7% of GDP). For more: https://data.oecd.org/socialexp/social-spending.htm.

Figure 1. Association between Social Spending and Income Inequality
Reduction Post-Tax/Transfer among OECD Countries.
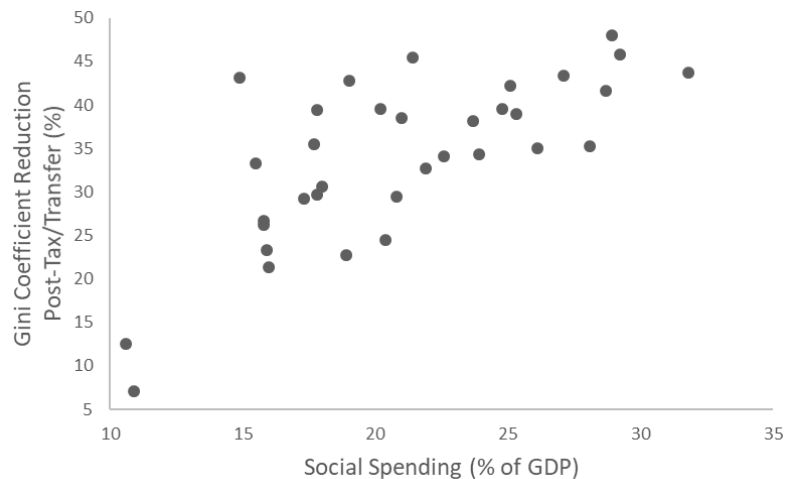
Note: r = 0.723, p < .001. All data latest available between 2014-2017. All
OECD countries with available and appropriate data included (N = 34).
Source: Authors' calculations using OECD data (2020b).

In another example of the effectiveness of good government, Figure 2 demonstrates a similar
association between social spending and relative poverty reduction. This positive correlation is
also strong (r = 0.65, p < .001). This association represents an 11 percent reduction in a
country's relative poverty rate for every 5 percent increase in social spending (as % of GDP).
Countries most committed to reducing poverty, such as Finland, achieve impressive poverty
reduction (82%), and the median reduction among non-U.S. OECD countries is 65 percent. In
the U.S., poverty is reduced post-tax/transfer by only 34 percent, leaving it with a very high
relative poverty rate among OECD countries (see Table 1).

Figure 2. Association between Social Spending and Poverty Reduction Post-
Tax/Transfer among OECD Countries.
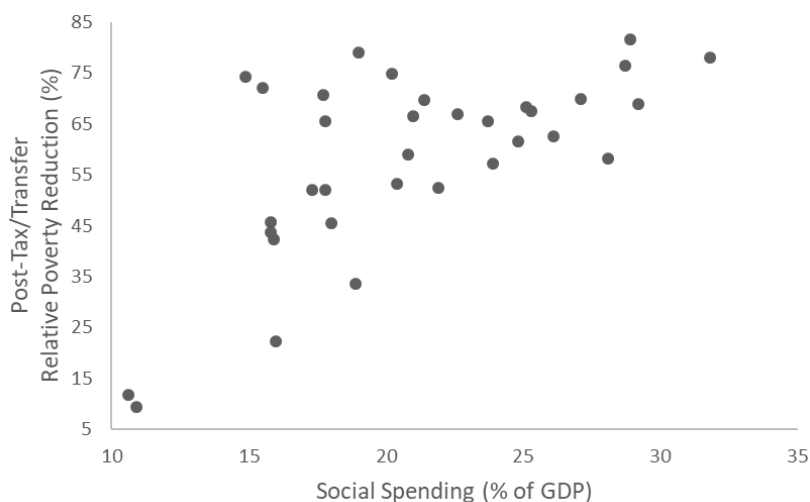
Note: r = 0.649, p < .001. All data latest available between 2014-2017. All
OECD countries with available and appropriate data included (N = 34).
Source: Authors' calculations using OECD data (2020b).

Table 1. Income Inequality and Poverty among OECD Countries.

OECD Country	Gini coefficient	Poverty rate	Child poverty rate
OECD median (excluding U.S.)	0.309	10.7	11.6
Chile	0.460	16.5	21.5
Mexico	0.458	16.6	19.8
Turkey	0.404	17.2	25.3
United States	0.390	17.8	21.2
Lithuania	0.374	17.3	18.4
United Kingdom	0.357	11.9	12.9
Latvia	0.355	16.6	11.1
South Korea	0.355	17.4	14.5
New Zealand	0.349	10.9	14.1
Israel	0.348	16.9	22.2
Japan	0.339	15.7	13.9
Italy	0.334	13.9	18.7
Spain	0.333	14.8	19.6
Luxembourg	0.327	12.2	13.9
Australia	0.325	12.4	13.3
Portugal	0.320	10.7	12.2
Greece	0.319	12.6	15.9
Canada	0.310	12.1	11.6
Estonia	0.309	15.8	9.8
Switzerland	0.296	9.1	9.5
Ireland	0.295	9.0	8.7
France	0.292	8.1	11.2
Germany	0.289	10.4	11.3
Hungary	0.289	8.0	9.9
Netherlands	0.285	8.3	10.9
Sweden	0.282	9.3	9.3
Austria	0.275	9.4	11.5
Poland	0.275	9.6	6.8
Finland	0.266	6.3	3.6
Belgium	0.263	10.2	13.2
Norway	0.262	8.4	8.0
Denmark	0.261	5.8	3.7
Iceland	0.257	5.4	5.9
Czech Republic	0.249	5.6	6.8
Slovenia	0.243	8.5	6.4
Slovak Republic	0.241	8.5	13.9

Note: All data latest available from OECD.
Source: OECD 2020a.

In one final example, consider single parent family poverty. In the U.S., it is often assumed that single parenthood is almost a guarantee of financial struggles, given how high single parent family poverty is in America.[9] Yet single parent family poverty rates vary significantly across OECD countries, and the reduction post-tax/transfer is strongly correlated with family benefits public spending ($r = 0.50$, $p < .05$).[10] This association represents a single parent family poverty rate reduction of 7.5 percent for every one percent increase in family benefits public spending (as % of GDP). Some countries, like Denmark (78%) and the U.K. (77%), achieve impressive reductions in single parent family poverty, while the U.S. (33%) lags far behind the median OECD reduction (50%).[11] This is perhaps not surprising, given that the U.S. is 35th out of 36 OECD countries in family benefits public spending, while the U.K. is second and Denmark is third (OECD 2020a). Post-tax/transfer, single parent family poverty rates fall below 10 percent in countries like Denmark, while remaining above 30 percent in countries like the U.S., whose poverty rate for single parent families is very high among OECD countries (Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis 2015, p. 3).[12]

Richard Wilkinson argues that, 'If Americans went to countries like Sweden and Norway they would feel more rather than less free' (in Eppard, Hochschild & Wilkinson 2018, p. 143).[13] This is hard to disagree with, given the lower levels of poverty and income inequality in each country (9% poverty, 9% child poverty, and 0.28 Gini coefficient in Sweden, 8%, 8%, and 0.26 in Norway) compared to the U.S. (18%, 21%, and 0.39) (OECD 2020a).

Despite lagging behind most OECD countries on a number of measures of government effectiveness, there is much about American government that works well. Take Social Security as an example. In a recent analysis, it was estimated that Social Security helped bring the

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[9] Forty-one percent of children in single-mother families live in poverty in the U.S., compared to only 8% in married-couple families. For more: https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/children-in-poverty.

[10] Authors' calculations using data from OECD (2020a) and Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis (2015).

[11] Reduction among non-U.S. OECD countries. All data from 2010, except Hungary (2012) and Japan (2008).

[12] See appendix for associated figure and a related analysis of child poverty.

[13] Wilkinson similarly states that, 'I suspect a great many people think about freedom as if it is about freedom from government regulation. But things like health inequalities deprive large swathes of the population of more than ten percent of life expectancy. The effects of poverty and inequality are forms of structural violence and limitations on true freedom. These things affect the quality of life very deeply' (Eppard, Hochschild & Wilkinson 2018, p. 143). In a related sentiment, Heather Bullock argues that, 'There is a very negative and pervasive framing of the government equaling regulations, or bureaucracy, or red tape, instead of government as an engine of mobility, of potentiality. I think that we got to a place where the framing of the government is entirely negative and not the government as a potential launch pad for opportunity, or for freedom, or for the pursuit of individual dreams or goals' (Eppard, Rank & Bullock 2020, p. 153). Jamila Michener posits that, 'What we expect is a kind of negative liberty—you don't stop me from doing X if I wanna do X—as opposed to a kind of positive and affirmative responsibility on the part of the government and other major social institutions and entities to create an environment that allows anyone to thrive. That's not even really part of our discourse; it's not something that we're deeply committed to. I think part of that is because equality itself is not something that we're deeply committed to. I think that's part of the ideational change that would have to occur in order to think differently about the possibilities of social policy. Part of that ideational change will have to come from a more robust understanding of what life is like for people who are nothing like 'us'' (Eppard, Rank & Bullock 2020, p. 154). Sharon Krause argues that, 'I think about freedom as the collection of conditions—social, political, economic, cultural—that make the exercise of agency possible. . . Providing freedom and protecting freedom for all of us means that as much as it means respecting other people's rights to religious freedom or freedom of assembly. It means actively fighting against economic inequality and implicit bias and cultural values that stigmatize particular groups of people. Because those things stand in the way of individual freedom every bit as much as attacks on religious liberty or freedom of assembly. So none of us can enact our freedom by ourselves' (Eppard, Rank & Bullock 2020, pp. 156-157).

elderly poverty rate down from close to 40 percent (39%) to below 10 percent (9%) (Romig 2019). This program is successful in helping to alleviate the burdens placed on the elderly by forces beyond their control, allowing them to lead longer, healthier, and happier lives.[14] There are many groups in the U.S.—such as children, as but one important example—who could have their freedoms expanded in a similar fashion by better social policies.

If government social policies, when properly designed and funded, actually work quite well,[15] why is the U.S. not doing more to reduce economic insecurity? Why are measures of poverty and economic inequality in the U.S. at the top end among wealthy countries? Why isn't the U.S. government attempting to enable true freedom for all its citizens?

There are a variety of factors which impact the design and generosity of American social policies, many of which involve the interplay between politics and culture. As David Brady argues, 'social equality results from the reciprocal relationships among welfare states, ideologies, and interests' (2009, p. 8). Brady's institutionalized power relations theory, which he outlines in *Rich Democracies, Poor People* (2009), holds that the ideologies and interests of different groups in a given society influence the types of coalitions that form to put pressure on politicians to develop more generous and effective social policies. The quantity and power of these coalitions help to determine how institutionalized leftist politics become and how consistently politicians are pressured to alleviate social inequality through social policy. The generosity and design of the resulting social policies then impact the level of economic insecurity in the society. Finally, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these policies feeds back, influencing both interests and dominant ideologies.

A variety of political and cultural factors are important to consider when determining the source of the American welfare state's relative minimalism. A few important factors that we want to focus on are dysfunctional features of the American political system, as well as widespread ideologies of racism and individualism.[16]

Dysfunctions in the American Political System

There are a number of features of the American political system which help to ensure that Americans' social democratic tendencies are underrepresented in social policy. These include the impact of money in American politics, the structure of the electoral system, aspects of the political system which encourage plurality rule,[17] low voter turnout among the poor and

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[14] Social Security is popular and effective, and there is no reason why it should not be sustainable. The problem is not whether we have solutions, but whether our politicians are up to the task of implementing them. One very easy change, for instance, is simply removing the payroll cap on taxable earnings. For more: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/what-impact-would-eliminating.

[15] As David Brady's empirical work demonstrates, 'across all varieties and types of welfare states, there is a strong linear negative relationship between welfare generosity and poverty. The welfare state's influence is unmatched by any other cause. The effects of welfare generosity are always significantly negative regardless of what one controls for. . . The generosity of the welfare state is the dominant cause of how much poverty exists in affluent Western democracies' (2009, p. 166).

[16] Alberto Alesina and his colleagues demonstrate that, 'Americans redistribute less than Europeans because (1) the majority believes that redistribution favors racial minorities, (2) Americans believe that they live in an open and fair society and that if someone is poor it is their own fault, and (3) the political system is geared towards preventing redistribution' (2001, p. 39).

[17] In 2016, for instance, Republicans gained control of the presidency, the House, and the Senate, despite failing to win a majority of the votes for any of the three (Barnicle 2020). As Simon Barnicle points out, 'Democrats can routinely win the majority of votes cast in federal elections but fail to translate those votes into power

working class, a low level of unionization, weak leftist politics, numerous checks and balances, the decentralized nature of American government, and the disproportionately low percentage of elected government officials who are female, non-White, and/or marginalized in some other manner. While all of these factors are important, for the sake of narrowing our discussion to the confines of this piece, we will focus on one particularly important factor: the influence of money in American politics.

Massive economic inequalities in the U.S. are leaving 'the American social fabric, and the country's economic sustainability, fraying at the edges' (Stiglitz 2013, p. 2). The top 10 percent owns almost three-quarters (73%) of all wealth and brings home nearly half (47%) of all income (WID 2020). As Joseph Stiglitz notes, the top one percent of Americans earns 40 percent more in one week than the bottom fifth earns over the entire year (2013, p. 5). The U.S. is dividing itself into a plutonomy and a precariat, each living in very different worlds.[18] Over the last 40 years, real wages have stagnated, with many Americans earning now what they could have earned in the late 1960s before the current neoliberal period began. There has of course been economic growth since that time, but it has gone into very few pockets. As a result, many Americans end up angry, bitter, and resentful. And of course the concentration of wealth into very few hands automatically leads to an undermining of democracy.

A number of studies demonstrate the corrosive manner in which money helps to undermine democratic principles in the U.S. Some notable studies investigate a very straightforward question: whether Americans' policy preferences correlate with the votes of their elected representatives. The votes are public, and people's attitudes and beliefs are well documented by extensive and reliable polling, so it is a fairly easy question to answer. These studies reveal that for the vast majority of middle-, working-, and lower-class Americans, their preferences do not correlate with the votes of their elected representatives (Gilens 2012; Gilens & Page 2014). This means most Americans are quite literally disenfranchised, which is pretty striking. It is not until you get to the very top of the income hierarchy that you see a strong correlation. That tells you something about the state of American democracy.

Thomas Ferguson has studied the association between campaign funding and electability in the U.S. for many years. The implications of this work, Ferguson and his colleagues argue, is that campaign finance 'follows the basic axiom of the investment theory of politics,' which holds that, 'Campaigning isn't free. . . either everyone pays a little to fund campaigns or a few pay for nearly everything—and control the system' (2018). Ferguson's work has shown a remarkably close correlation between the amount of campaign funding a candidate receives and their likelihood of being elected.

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because their voters are in the wrong places. For example, in the 2018 midterms, Democratic Senate candidates collectively beat Republican candidates by nearly twenty percentage points. But because of where those votes were cast, Republicans didn't just hold on to their majority in the Senate, they actually *increased* it, picking up two seats. . By 2040, it is estimated that 40 percent of Americans will live in just five states. Half the population will be represented by 18 Senators, the other half by 82' (2020).

[18] As Noam Chomsky notes, 'For the general population, the 99% in the imagery of the Occupy movement, it's been pretty harsh—and it could get worse. This could be a period of irreversible decline. For the 1% and even less—the .1%—it's just fine. They are richer than ever, more powerful than ever, controlling the political system, disregarding the public. And if it can continue, as far as they're concerned, sure, why not?. . . Plutonomy refers to the rich, those who buy luxury goods and so on, and that's where the action is. . . As for the rest, we set them adrift. We don't really care about them. We don't really need them. . . These days they're sometimes called the 'precariat'—people who live a precarious existence at the periphery of society. Only it's not the periphery anymore. It's becoming a very substantial part of society in the United States. . . the world is now indeed splitting into a plutonomy and a precariat.' For more: https://chomsky.info/20120508/.

In order to be able to run in the next election and keep their jobs, representatives in Congress end up spending many hours a day simply appealing to donors. That's the effect of bought elections. While they are raising money, well-resourced lobbyists are meeting with representatives' staffs and writing legislation. This is not hard to see if you look back through American legislative history.

While your average American citizen may not read political science journals, they are well aware that their preferences are not being represented in the political system. The popularity of Congress, for instance, is often extremely low, as we documented earlier. Many people think Congress would be better off if it was picked randomly. Huge numbers of Americans simply do not vote. There is an intuitive understanding that those in power are not working for regular people, but for somebody else.

Take the working class as an example. Neither of the parties represents them. The Democratic Party used to have the working class as a large part of its constituency, but not anymore. Republicans say they are committed to the working class, but that is pure rhetoric. If you look at their actual policies, they are dedicated (even more so than the Democrats) to the welfare of corporations and the wealthy. In Donald Trump's campaign, for instance, there was a lot of talk of solidarity with workers, but the actual programs called for sharp tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy, along with new burdens for the rest.

Much of the population has been essentially cast aside by policies which are harmful to them and have threatened their economic security, dignity, and hopes for the future. They are resentful and want to change it. That is showing up in many ways both in the U.S. and in Europe, some of which are rather frightening.

If you look at OECD statistics, the U.S. ranks very poorly on a number of measures of social justice, including infant mortality, social mobility, poverty, and economic inequality. The intergenerational earnings elasticity (IGE) in the U.S. today has been estimated to be as high as 0.60 or higher,[19] compared to as low as 0.20 or lower in some wealthy countries. As OECD researchers note, these differences in social mobility are associated with differences in income inequality: 'Across countries, higher levels of income inequality are associated with less social mobility, and hence lower equality of opportunities' (2014, p. 1). Figure 3 is the famous 'Great Gatsby Curve' from Miles Corak, which demonstrates the strong association between Gini coefficients and IGEs cross-nationally (r = 0.77).[20] Raj Chetty and his colleagues found a similar relationship within the U.S., demonstrating a -0.58 correlation between income inequality and upward mobility across American communities (2014, Online Appendix Figure XI).

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[19] Economist Bhashkar Mazumder estimates that it is likely higher than 0.60. For more: http://conference.iza.org/conference_files/inequality_2015/mazumder_b3665.pdf.

[20] See p. 161: http://www.stateofworkingamerica.org/subjects/mobility/index.html%3Freader.html.

Figure 3. The Great Gatsby Curve.
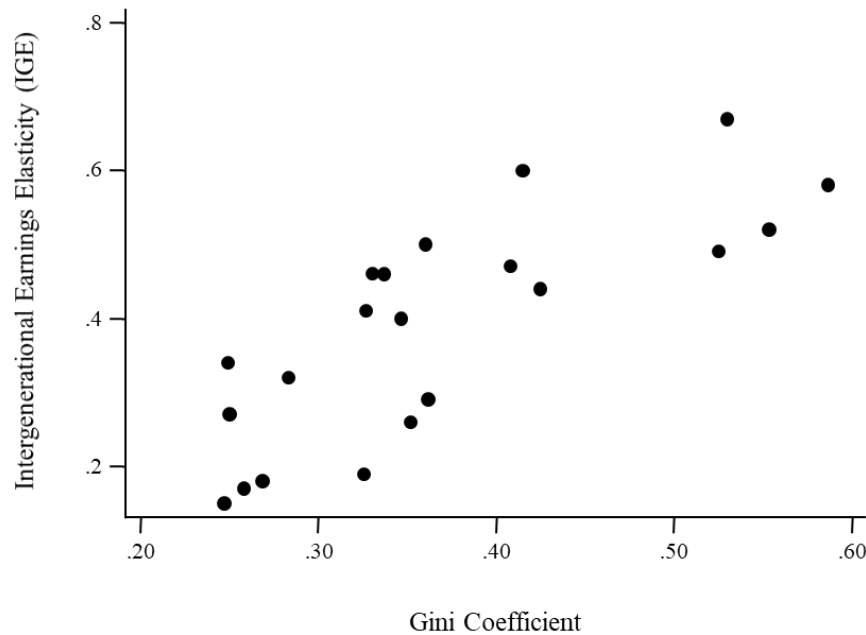
Source: Authors' reproduction of Corak 2016, p. 12.

Why doesn't the U.S. have better social policies to address these unnecessary inequalities in opportunity? Why is it one of the rare advanced societies which does not have guaranteed universal healthcare, but instead a highly complex and inefficient system which has twice the per capita costs of comparable societies? Why does the U.S. have astronomical college tuition and a student debt crisis, rather than something resembling affordable systems in places like Finland, France, Germany, and Mexico—or even the U.S. earlier in its history? One reason is that, to an unusual extent, the U.S. is run by business and economic elites. These studies we have mentioned, among many others, underscore this point. Business and economic elites do not support many of the social policies which aid and/or are popular among the middle- and lower-classes. Disproportionate elite influence in the American political system ensures that, most of the time, those with more power and influence get what they want when their preferences and interests diverge from the rest of the population (Gilens 2012; Gilens & Page 2014).

Widespread Racism and Individualism

Beyond the political dysfunctions which limit the American welfare state, there are important cultural factors as well, including racism and individualism. Much like a doctor cannot prescribe the proper treatment plan without knowing what afflicts their patient, Americans cannot solve social problems if they cannot first identify their causes. Widespread ideologies of racism and individualism cause Americans to misrecognize the causes of many social problems. As a result, such ideologies help to ensure that politicians in the U.S. do not face the same degree of pressure as their European counterparts to develop and/or maintain robust and structurally-oriented social policies. In the absence of racism and individualism, American politicians might face such pressure, given the many social democratic tendencies of the general population.

Prejudice toward African Americans is widespread in the U.S. Experimental studies routinely find the existence of pervasive bias against Black Americans—so much so that researchers often find that real-world employers respond as positively to White applicants with a criminal record as they do to equally-qualified Black applicants with a clean record (Pager, Western & Bonikowski 2009).[21] Less than half of Whites (47%) and only 28 percent of Republican-leaning respondents agree that White Americans benefit from advantages that Black Americans do not have (Pew Research Center 2019). Sixty-six percent of Americans and 75 percent of White Americans report that race is not an important factor in the availability of the American Dream (*Atlantic*/Aspen 2015). Fifty-four percent of Whites report that African Americans who cannot get ahead have mostly themselves to blame, compared to only 35 percent who cite discrimination (Pew Research Center 2017). Only 43 percent of Americans say the U.S. needs to go further to give Black Americans equal rights (Pew Research Center 2019). Majorities of Whites report that African Americans are treated fairly compared to Whites in getting healthcare (77%), in getting a good education (75%), at work (74%), in getting housing (73%), while shopping (72%), in hiring for jobs they are qualified for (67%), and in dealing with the police (52%) (Gallup 2020). Sixty-two percent of Whites say their race has not had much of an impact on their ability to succeed (Pew Research Center 2016).

As Ibram Kendi argues, 'When you truly believe that the racial groups are equal, then you also believe that racial disparities must be the result of racial discrimination' (2016, p. 11). Americans' ignorance—or worse, rejection—of the structural causes of racial inequality on surveys is clearly a sign of their negative judgements of African Americans. And yet survey results, as damning as they are, likely *understate* the amount of prejudice and racial ignorance among White Americans. In one important study, for instance, only 30 percent of White interview participants expressed outright support for interracial marriage, even though 90 percent of these same participants had claimed to have approved of interracial marriage on a previous survey (Bonilla-Silva & Forman 2000, pp. 57-59). Additionally, the widespread real-world discrimination demonstrated by experimental studies would not exist without widespread racial prejudice, suggesting that survey results are masking Americans' true degree of racial bias.

In her book *Strangers in Their Own Land*, Arlie Hochschild (2016) documents working-class Whites' racist claims about non-Whites supposedly 'cutting in line' in order to unfairly pass Whites on their way to the American Dream. It seems that improvements in the standard of living of non-Whites relative to Whites over the last few decades, despite still leaving non-Whites far behind on a number of measures of well-being, were perceived as unjust and something akin to 'reverse discrimination' by Hochschild's participants:

> 'In the right-wing deep story, you are standing in line, as in a pilgrimage. At the top of the hill in front of you is the American Dream. You have been standing there a long time, your feet haven't moved, and you're tired. You feel a sense of deserving for that American Dream. You're middle-aged or older, you've worked hard, and you feel you have played by the rules. Then, in another moment of this deep story, it looks like people are cutting ahead of you in line. And you think, 'Well, who are they?' And they are African Americans. There are women cutting in line. There are undocumented immigrants and refugees.

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[21] In the experimental study cited here, Devah Pager and her colleagues found that 17% of employers responded positively (either a callback or job offer) to White *ex-felons*, compared to lower positive response rates for equally-qualified Latino (15%) and Black (13%) applicants *with clean records* (2009, p. 786).

> You feel like you have been moved back in line, and that something unfair has been done to you. In another moment you have Barack Obama, who you believe should be impartially supervising the line, but who is instead waving to the line cutters. He is sponsoring them and pushing you back. You've been forgotten' (Eppard, Hochschild and Wilkinson 2018, p. 137).

Racism in America, which we have only briefly outlined here, is a major influence on Americans' individualism and skepticism about government. This is something that has been known for some time. Writing in 1870, for instance, Karl Marx wrote that, 'the working class is *split* into two *hostile* camps' in the U.S., with native-born White workers occupying a more privileged position which distorted their perceptions of social inequality (Lipset & Marks 2000, p. 29).[22] Today, widespread racist notions of poverty as a 'Black problem,' combined with racist assumptions about the supposed immorality and laziness of African Americans, reinforce individualism and government skepticism among White Americans.

Welfare is a prime example. Welfare has been demonized, especially by Ronald Reagan with his tales of Black 'welfare queens' supposedly driving around in their limousines to steal Americans' hard-earned money at the welfare office. Now most of the poor are not Black and most Black Americans are not poor, and neither a majority of the poor, nor of African Americans, are immoral or lazy. But if these racist and individualistic (and sexist, in the case of welfare queens) notions are activated, regardless of their veracity, support for social policies can be effectively undermined.

Perhaps the classic statement on this phenomenon was the book *Why Americans Hate Welfare* by Martin Gilens (1999). If you take a look at Table 2, based on his work, you will see how influential racism is in Americans' thinking about poverty and welfare. When Americans think most welfare recipients are White (a more 'moral,' 'hard-working,' and 'deserving' group in their minds), they are much less critical of recipients' morality, work ethic, and deservingness. When they believe most recipients are Black (supposedly more 'immoral,' 'lazy,' and 'undeserving'), however, they are much more critical.

Table 2. Race and Americans' Perceptions of Welfare Recipients.

	Think most welfare recipients are Black	Think most welfare recipients are White
In your opinion, what is more to blame when people are on welfare?		
Lack of effort on their own part	63%	40%
Circumstances beyond their control	26%	50%
Do most people on welfare want to work?		
Yes	31%	55%
No	69%	45%
Do most people on welfare really need it?		
Yes	36%	50%
No	64%	50%

Source: Gilens 1999, p. 140. Reprinted with permission of The University of Chicago Press.

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[22] The authors note that, 'Marx and Engels pointed to the role of ethnic diversity in undermining class consciousness by giving native-born white workers a privileged position' (Lipset & Marks 2000, p. 29).

A second cultural factor limiting social policies, American individualism, has also been well-documented. In a recent cross-national survey of 44 countries, for instance, the U.S. was much more individualistic than most other countries concerning the role that forces outside of one's control play in determining their success in life (see Table 3). Sixty-percent of Americans say that most people can get ahead if they are willing to work hard (Pew Research Center 2019). When asked which is more important to achieving the American Dream—when given the choice between hard work, circumstances of birth, and luck—61 percent of Americans cite hard work, 28 percent circumstances, and 11 percent luck. Almost three quarters of Americans (72%) say they are either living the American Dream (50%) or believe they can (22%) (*Atlantic*/Aspen 2015).

Table 3. Individualism across 44 Countries.

Survey question: Please tell me whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with the following statement: Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control.

Countries	% mostly/completely disagree
Global Average (excluding the U.S.)	38%
United States	57%
Advanced Economies	
Advanced Economy Average (excluding the U.S.)	41%
United Kingdom	55%
Israel	51%
France	50%
Spain	47%
Japan	44%
Greece	37%
Italy	32%
Germany	31%
South Korea	23%

Source: Pew Research Center 2014b.

Furthermore, surveys suggest that even among Americans who acknowledge unjust barriers faced by some groups and not others, there is still an insistence that these barriers can be overcome with hard work, ambition, and smart choices. If agency requires abilities, opportunities, and resources, as we have argued, these survey results suggest that Americans want the disadvantaged to grasp opportunities they do not have access to, with underdeveloped abilities, and without the necessary resources. This is an extremely flawed view of how the American stratification system functions. As Amartya Sen argues, 'Without the substantive freedom and capability to do something, a person cannot be responsible for doing it' (1999, p. 284).

Unfortunately, a number of studies suggest that the more one supports individualistic beliefs, the less likely they are to support many government programs (Hunt & Bullock 2016).[23]

In the spring of 2020, Lawrence Eppard and his colleagues conducted a survey with 353 American college students enrolled in introductory sociology courses at universities in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia (publication forthcoming 2020).[24] Table 4 displays their answers to questions regarding agency, meritocracy, and government in the U.S., while Table 5 displays their beliefs concerning the causes of American poverty. Table 6 demonstrates the manner in which racial prejudice and individualism associated with government support among the sample.[25]

White participants' responses to questions regarding racial inequality were mixed. Only 29 percent of White participants identified race-based school inequalities as a problem, and only 32 percent of Whites identified discrimination against Black Americans in hiring as a problem. Only about a quarter of Whites (24%) responded that they were not very concerned about the negative impacts of undocumented immigration. However, 83 percent of Whites placed blame mostly on society, not African Americans themselves, for Black/White inequalities, and a slight majority of Whites (53%) agreed that the criminal justice system is biased against Black Americans. These results suggest that while most of our sample espoused support for structural explanations of racial inequality in abstract terms, they were unable (or unwilling) to identify important aspects of the racial stratification system in the U.S., signifying a rather empty definition of racism that likely allows for prejudiced assumptions and discriminatory behavior in their everyday interactions.

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[23] Matthew Hunt and Heather Bullock note that 'dominant ideology beliefs (e.g., individualism) generally decrease support for redistributive policies, while system-challenging beliefs (e.g., structuralism) generally increase support for such initiatives. Feagin (1975) and Kluegel and Smith (1986) both document that individualistic beliefs about poverty reduced support for welfare spending, while structuralist beliefs increased such support. Numerous studies have replicated and expanded on these basic findings' (2016, p. 106). David Brady argues that 'the welfare state is the culmination of a society's beliefs for how economic resources ought to be distributed' (2009, p. 8).

[24] Sample characteristics: 74% non-Hispanic White, 10% African American, 6% other, 4% Hispanic/Latino, 4% two or more races, and 2% Asian-American; 58% female, 41% male, and 1% other; 3% poor, 13% working class, 18% lower middle class, 44% middle middle class, 22% upper middle class, and 1% wealthy; 44% Democrat-leaning, 56% Republican-leaning; 19% very religious, 42% somewhat religious, 24% not very religious, and 16% not at all religious.

[25] In this piece we summarize only some of the highlights and major findings of a much larger peer-reviewed quantitative study forthcoming in *The New York Sociologist* by Eppard, Nazarenus, Everidge, and Matesun: https://www.newyorkstatesociology.net/journal (forthcoming Summer/Fall 2020).

Table 4. Beliefs about Agency, Meritocracy, and Government among College Sample.

Belief	% agreement
Despite the fact that some Americans may face barriers to success that others do not, most could succeed, despite these barriers, if they really tried.	87%
Factors beyond the control of women are mostly to blame for gender inequality.	87%
Most Americans get back from life what they put into it— success or failure generally matches how much effort they put into life and how smart their choices are.	84%
The differences between American adults (income, wealth, career, etc.) are due mostly to the choices people make for themselves and things they personally control.	78%
With ambition, hard work, and smart choices, most Americans can succeed, even if they come from disadvantaged backgrounds.	78%
Most Americans are free to make their own decisions and free to choose the life they want to live.	77%
60% or more of Americans' outcomes in life are the result of their efforts and choices.	73%
America is the land of opportunity where most people who work hard end up succeeding.	73%
Most Americans can get a college degree if they want to.	72%
Adults should have to pass drug tests in order for their family to receive SNAP benefits.	71%
Government assistance programs have a mostly positive impact on society.	70%
Higher-income Americans should pay higher taxes than middle- and lower-income Americans.	66%
Adults should have to work in the paid workforce in order for their family to receive SNAP benefits.	62%
70% or more of Americans' outcomes in life are the result of their efforts and choices.	59%
It is unfair that Americans with more money can afford better education than those with less money.	51%
Support for national government single-payer healthcare	46%
SNAP should be expanded.	46%
It is unfair that Americans with more money can afford better healthcare than those with less money.	43%
It is the responsibility of the American government to reduce income inequality.	38%

Table 5. Beliefs about the Causes of American Poverty among College Sample.

Causes of poverty	Rank (most to least important)	% who ranked cause #1 or #2
Bad family upbringing	1	41%
Lack of effort or laziness	2	39%
Poor choices	3	30%
Poor morals and/or values	4	13%
Racism	5	25%
Poor quality schools	6	14%
Low intelligence	7	6%
Not enough good jobs	8	11%
Sexism	9	13%
Bad genes	10	4%
Bad luck	11	3%

Note: In order to understand the rankings, note that #1 was the most important, and #11 the least important, meaning #1 had the lowest mean ranking, while #11 had the highest mean ranking.

As Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate, a majority of our participants were very individualistic, blamed families and individuals for their own poverty, viewed the U.S. in meritocratic terms, and believed all Americans have agency. While a majority supported progressive taxation, most were skeptical of the social welfare functions of government and suspicious of recipients of government assistance. Table 6 demonstrates significant gaps in government support based on one's degree of racial prejudice and individualism.

Table 6. Association between Racial Prejudice/Individualism and Government Support among College Sample.

Government/social policy belief	% agreement
SNAP should be expanded	
High-prejudice individuals	27%
Low-prejudice individuals	80%
Strongly-individualistic individuals	35%
Weakly-individualistic individuals	89%
Government assistance has a mostly positive impact on society	
High-prejudice individuals	57%
Low-prejudice individuals	81%
Strongly-individualistic individuals	62%
Weakly-individualistic individuals	89%
Government is responsible for reducing income inequality	
High-prejudice individuals	25%
Low-prejudice individuals	62%
Strongly-individualistic individuals	26%
Weakly-individualistic individuals	83%
Adults need to pass drug tests to receive food stamps/SNAP for themselves and their families	
High-prejudice individuals	90%
Low-prejudice individuals	45%
Strongly-individualistic individuals	82%
Weakly-individualistic individuals	28%
Adults need to work in the paid work force to receive food stamps/SNAP for themselves and their families	
High-prejudice individuals	81%
Low-prejudice individuals	42%
Strongly-individualistic individuals	73%
Weakly-individualistic individuals	39%
High-income Americans should pay higher taxes than middle- and low-income Americans	
High-prejudice individuals	51%
Low-prejudice individuals	88%
Strongly-individualistic individuals	50%
Weakly-individualistic individuals	100%
U.S. should adopt government single-payer healthcare system	
High-prejudice individuals	29%
Low-prejudice individuals	77%
Strongly-individualistic individuals	33%
Weakly-individualistic individuals	100%

Our prejudice and individualism index variables were strongly correlated with each other ($r = 0.63$, $p < .001$), as well as strongly correlated with our government support index variable (prejudice $r = -0.55$, $p < .001$; individualism $r = -0.60$, $p < .001$). We also ran a regression model with prejudice and individualism as our independent variables—along with

race/ethnicity, social class, gender, religiosity, and political orientation—and government support as our dependent variable. Prejudice, individualism, and Republican political orientation were each associated with less government support, while none of the other variables were statistically significant. Our model explained 54 percent of the variance in the dependent variable.[26]

As our survey and a number of other studies demonstrate, racism and individualism both play major roles in Americans' 'skeptical altruism' (Eppard, Rank & Bullock 2020) toward disadvantaged groups. What is meant by this term is that many Americans are indeed bothered by many aspects of inequality, are morally committed to helping the poor, and have many social democratic tendencies. But they are also suspicious of the morality, work ethic, and deservingness of many recipients of government assistance (especially Black recipients), believe Americans possess a high degree of agency regardless of background, are skeptical of government, and prefer individualistically- rather than structurally-oriented social policies. Because of this, they are overly concerned with whether a social program rewards a truly 'deserving' recipient who is worthy of aid (a person who works hard, makes smart choices, has 'responsible' fertility, etc.), or whether it rewards an 'underserving' recipient who does not merit aid.

Support for or opposition to a given social policy often hinges not on whether Americans agree with the structuralist and/or social democratic principles which inform the particular policy, but whether policy opponents can successfully frame the policy in racist and/or individualistic terms. In the absence of the activation of prejudice and individualism in political and popular discourse, a policy which aligns with Americans' social democratic tendencies might expect support. But if a program can be sufficiently linked to racist and/or individualistic fears, it can be defeated.

As an example, a recent Kaiser Family Foundation survey revealed that a slight majority of Americans supported a national government healthcare plan which covered all Americans. When the question was worded differently, however, responses changed. While 63 percent expressed a positive reaction to 'Medicare-for-All,' only 46 percent reacted positively to 'socialized medicine.' Likewise, 71 percent of respondents supported a Medicare-for-All plan that would guarantee health insurance coverage as a right for all Americans, but only 37 percent if it led to an increase in taxes (KFF 2020). These changes in support seemed to be driven less by opposition to government-run healthcare generally, but whether such a program violated critical beliefs concerning government and individualism.

The same type of relationship exists between race and social policies: when a program is framed in a manner which conjures images of African Americans, the policy in question typically receives less support than it would otherwise. Fifty-eight percent of Americans believe government spends too much on 'welfare,' compared to 15 percent who say too little. But only 16 percent believe government spends too much on 'assistance to the poor,' compared to 56 percent who say too little (Jardina 2018). The wording of these questions makes a big difference in whether racist and individualistic fears are triggered in respondents' minds. When such fears are not activated, their social democratic preferences are more likely to inform their answers. As Ashley Jardina notes, anti-poverty policies can be made popular by 'avoiding racialized terms, like welfare. . . otherwise popular policies may be dragged down' (2018). Here she explains further:

[26] Model p < .001, prejudice p < .05, individualism p < .001, and Republican political orientation p < .001.

'Despite the fact that white Americans benefit more from government assistance than people of color, means-tested aid is primarily associated with black people and other people of color—particularly when the term welfare is used. For many Americans, the word welfare conjures up a host of disparaging stereotypes so strongly linked to stigmatized beliefs about racial groups that—along with crime—it is arguably one of the most racialized terms in the country. . .

. . . part of why Social Security is so relatively popular compared to welfare is because of how both policies are racialized. Social Security. . . has been framed as a policy that is both universal—that is, it benefits all groups—and as one that has been contrasted with welfare as an earned reward for hard work (stereotypes associated with white people), rather than a handout for the lazy and dependent (stereotypes associated with black people)' (Jardina 2018).

The Violence of Inaction

In the sport of American football, there is a drill that many coaches use in practice called a 'gauntlet drill.' The objective of the drill is to help players become better at staying on their feet and maintaining possession of the football amidst the chaos and physical contact of the game. Figure 4 demonstrates how this drill works. One player starts with the football and must run between two rows of players and make it to the other side. They must accomplish this without falling down or losing the ball. As the ball carrier passes through this gauntlet, the opposing players attempt to swipe the ball away and/or knock the ball carrier down.

Figure 4. The Unequal Gauntlet of Life.
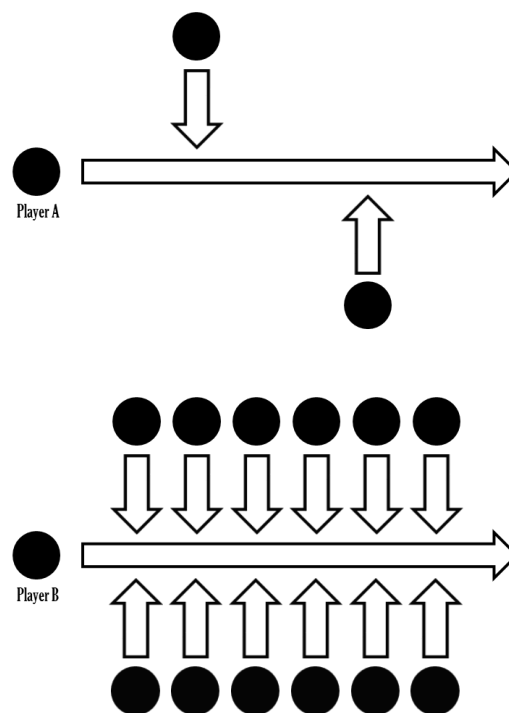
The American stratification system works in a similar fashion. We are each born with different (either more or less challenging) gauntlet configurations based on our starting social position

(our race/class/gender, family, neighborhood and community, region, country, historical period, etc.). In Figure 4, Player B faces far more opposing players than Player A, not unlike the likelihood that somebody born at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy will face more obstacles to success than somebody born at the top. Does this guarantee that Player B will fail and Player A will succeed? No, but the risk of failure is much higher for Player B, and neither player is truly responsible for the different configurations that they face. Furthermore, if this is truly a metaphor for society, the *abilities* of these players to confront these challenges would likely be unequal and heavily influenced by forces beyond their control. Neither the challenges (both in number and severity) they face, nor the abilities and resources they possess to overcome them, are primarily the result of choices they have made for themselves. As Raoul Martinez argues:

> 'We do not choose to exist. We do not choose the environment we will grow up in. We do not choose to be born Hindu, Christian or Muslim, into a war-zone or peaceful middle-class suburb, into starvation or luxury. We do not choose our parents, nor whether they'll be happy or miserable, knowledgeable or ignorant, healthy or sickly, attentive or neglectful. The knowledge we possess, the beliefs we hold, the tastes we develop, the traditions we adopt, the opportunities we enjoy, the work we do—the very lives we lead. . . This is the lottery of birth' (2016, p. 3).

These unequal gauntlets that we face are a form of 'structural violence,' or the:

> 'avoidable limitations society places on groups of people that constrain them from achieving the quality of life that would have otherwise been possible. . . Because of its embedding within social structures, people tend to overlook them as ordinary difficulties that they encounter in the course of life. . . Unlike the more visible forms of violence where one person perpetrates physical harm on another, structural violence occurs through economically, politically, or culturally driven processes working together to limit subjects from achieving full quality of life. . . Structural violence directly illustrates a power system wherein social structures or institutions cause harm to people in a way that results in maldevelopment or deprivation' (Lee 2016, p. 110).

Government policies can help to mitigate or even eliminate structural violence. Unfortunately, the dysfunctional U.S. political system hinders the development of more generous and effective social policies, making government inaction itself a form of structural violence.

Ideologies infused with racism, individualism, and government skepticism can cause, exacerbate, and/or help to perpetuate structural violence, constituting a second form of violence: symbolic violence. Symbolic violence refers to 'power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force' (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990, p. 4). When dominant culture ignores or misrecognizes structural violence, it reinforces it and helps to perpetuate it.[27] As Johan Galtung

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[27] Pierre Bourdieu argues that symbolic domination is 'something you absorb like air, something you don't feel pressured by; it is everywhere and nowhere, and to escape from that is very difficult' (Bourdieu & Eagleton 1992, p. 115). Further explaining this point, Dan Schubert argues that, '[Symbolic violence] is everywhere in that we all live in symbolic systems that, in the process of classifying and categorizing, impose hierarchies and ways of being and knowing the world that unevenly distribute suffering and limit even the ways in which we can imagine the possibility of an alternative world. It is nowhere because, in its gentleness and its subtleness, we

notes, 'The object of personal violence perceives the violence, usually, and may complain—the object of structural violence may be persuaded not to perceive this at all' (1969, p. 173).

Luckily, Americans have many social democratic tendencies. To allow them their full impact, we need to continue to fight against ideologies of racism and individualism. As Henry Giroux contends, 'Politics often begins when it becomes possible to make power visible, to challenge the ideological circuitry of hegemonic knowledge' (2008, p. 113). We need to build upon the momentum of Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, Occupy, the activism of countless young people[28] and teachers, and the efforts of many others, all of which have helped Americans develop a more structural and critical vocabulary of inequality. In the aftermath of the deaths of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, public outrage over systemic racism has exploded into the open, which could lead to meaningful change.

We need to give power to all Americans, regardless of race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or any other social categorization unnecessarily undermining our solidarity. We need to highlight the importance and effectiveness of good government. And we desperately need to strengthen our democracy—get money out of politics, reform our political system, get out the vote, bolster the power of unions, and just generally make our elected representatives more responsive to the preferences and interests of the majority of the population.

These are all tall tasks, and yet it seems that a generation of young people has emerged which is not only committed to achieving these things, but has already realized many successes. Let us commit ourselves to ensuring that they achieve many more. This may be a major inflection point if we are unrelenting in our demands for change.

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fail to recognize its very existence, let alone the way it is at the root of much of violence and suffering. . . If [social] worlds are constructed, then they can be re-constructed in other ways' (2008, pp. 195-196). Symbolic violence helps to ensure that 'a misrecognized vision of the social world is legitimated—a vision that reproduces, with the complicity of the dominated, a stratified social order' (Appelrouth & Desfor Edles 2008, p. 693).

[28] Including people like Greta Thunberg (https://time.com/person-of-the-year-2019-greta-thunberg-choice/) and the student activists from Parkland, FL (https://time.com/collection/most-influential-people-2018/5217568/parkland-students/).

Appendix Figure 1. Association between Family Benefits Public Spending and Child Poverty among OECD Countries.
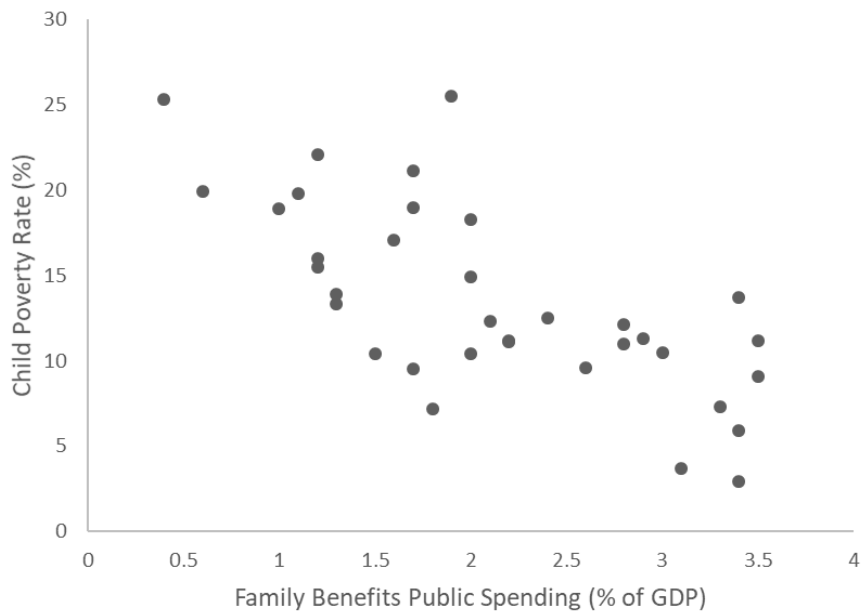
Note: r = -0.705, p < .001. All data latest available for countries with matching family spending and child poverty data (N = 35).
Source: Authors' calculations using OECD data (2020b).

Appendix Figure 2. Association between Family Benefits Public Spending and Single-Parent Family Poverty Reduction Post-Tax/Transfer among 24 OECD Countries.
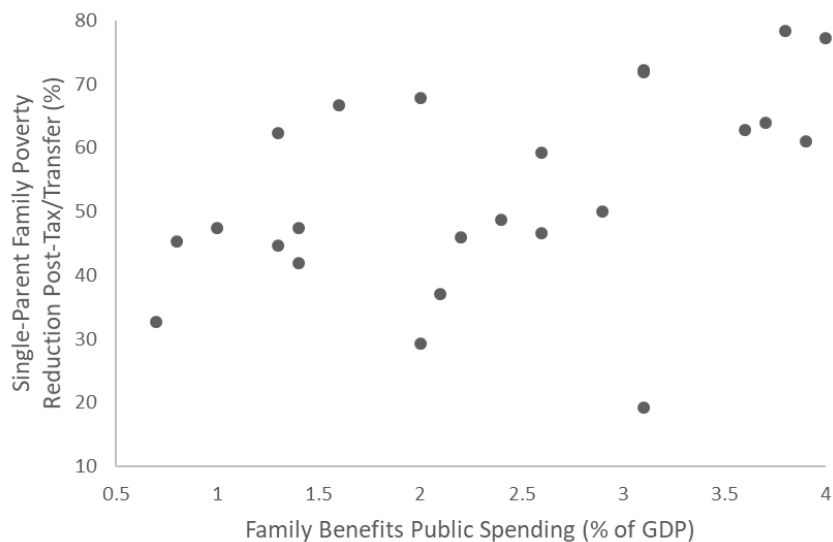
Note: r = 0.495, p < .05.
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from OECD (2020b) and Maldonado & Nieuwenhuis (2015:3).

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Raise the Wage LA: Campaigning for Living Wages in Los Angeles and an Emergent Working-Class Repertoire

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Abstract

In a relatively short period in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis and the Occupy movement, minimum wage campaigns rapidly gained momentum across the United States. In particular a purposeful working-class mobilisation of the Los Angeles labour movement in coalition with worker centres and community organisations, and set against the backdrop of the national *Fight for $15*, deployed a range of tactics and exercised political leverage from 2014-2016 to be successful in securing an increase in the minimum wage to $15 in the U.S.'s second most populous city, in its most populous state. Based on interviews conducted in Los Angeles in December 2016 this article describes L.A.'s *Raise the Wage* campaign in a framework of mobilisation theory (Kelly 1998; Tilly 1978). It is argued that the elements of mobilisation theory are present and that the mobilisations in L.A. of the kind studied represent an expansion of working-class repertoire.

Keywords

Minimum wage, Fight for $15, working-class mobilisation

Introduction

In 21 states of the United States of America the legislated minimum wage remains at $7.25 per hour, but its most populous state California, population of nearly 40 million, will soon have a $15 per hour minimum wage. It was 2016 when the City of Los Angeles confirmed increases to the minimum wage rate, over five increments to $15 by 1 July 2020 (or 1 July 2021 for non-profits and employers with 25 or fewer employees). This was accompanied by a new six day entitlement to paid sick leave and the establishment of the Office of Wage Standards as a newly created enforcement agency of the L.A. City Council which in that year had allocated an extra $US2.6 million towards minimum wage enforcement (Garcetti, 2016: 11). The state of California would soon follow with the phase-in of a $15 minimum wage by July 2022, or 2023 for employers with 25 or fewer employees. This would result, by the end of the phase-in, in over US$24 billion extra being paid to California's nearly 6.4 million minimum wage workers (National Employment Law Project, 2016).

Lauded by the mayor as the 'largest anti- poverty measure in our city's history' (Garcetti 2016, p. 1) the package of reforms – including the paid sick leave provisions, the enforcement resources, and the number of people to whom it applied – was at the time the most comprehensive and significant in any local area in the U.S.

Just over two years earlier, representatives from about forty organisations had gathered on the steps of Los Angeles City Hall in front of two enormous banners to launch a campaign, 'Raise the Wage L.A.', and its objective, '$15'.

What had happened in the intervening period was an example of the L.A. labour movement's relatively recently built capacity as a mobilised social movement deploying a range of tactics consistent with theories of mobilisation. This article will describe and record the events and argue that the now mature and highly refined model of campaigning of L.A. unions and worker centres is an example of a new working-class repertoire of the kind described by social movement theorists Charles Tilly (1978) and John Kelly (1998). This article begins with a brief description of the mobilisation literature, in particular how Tilly (1978) and Kelly's (1998) mobilisation theory explains the circumstances in which people mobilise and describe some of its relevant central concepts. It will also describe what has been referred to as the 'L.A. model' of advocacy (Milkman et al. 2010) before providing background on U.S. minimum wage campaigning and characteristics of the city itself. It will describe the strategy and key elements of the two year effort to which moved lawmakers to enact a $15 minimum wage in L.A. and California, arguing that the L.A. model is an established and distinct working-class repertoire.

## Social movement unionism, organisation and mobilisation

Recent developments in worker voice are sometimes grouped under the label 'social movement unionism', that is a unionism that takes on the attributes of social movements rather than adopting a more traditional industrial approach (Engeman 2015, p. 445). Social movement unionism in the U.S. is most often associated with the developments of the last three decades, being pioneered by campaigns such as *Justice for Janitors* (Milkman 2006; Savage 2006). In analysis of unions' strategies is it therefore worth turning to social movement theorists such as Tilly who analyse social movements to explain the occurrence of collective action. Although Tilly maintains that 'no one owns the term 'social movement'', he defines his use of it, which embraces that of Kelly (1998), as a 'distinct way of pursuing public politics' that has developed over the last two centuries, contains specific elements, and has evolved and spread across the western world (Tilly & Wood 2015, p. 9). As will be demonstrated, in L.A. the organised working-class has developed a phenomenal capacity to influence political decision makers. A key element is coalition building with community and other organisations often in the traditional manner of Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and its community organising approach. The focus is on building strong relationships between coalition partners to work together on issues of common interest (Holgate 2013; Tattersall 2010). The power of these coalitions have been enhanced by the relatively recently established presence of new forms of worker collectivism in the U.S. such as worker centres (Fine 2011, pp. 607, 615, in Milkman 2014) and have only made the capacity of L.A.'s coalition-driven campaigns more potent.

The campaigning studied in L.A. exhibits the elements of a social movement as described by Tilly. He identifies 'five big components' in the analysis of collective action: '*interest*, *organisation*, *mobilisation*, *opportunity*, and *collective action* itself' (1978, p. 7, emphasis added).

For Tilly, *interests* are 'the gains and losses resulting from a group's interaction with other groups' (1978, p. 7), and *organisation* is the aspect of a groups structure that most directly affects its capacity to act on its interest (1978, p. 7). Organisation is the product of two things: shared interest within a group placing them in a distinct *category, 'catness'* in Figure 1, and '*netness'*: the strength of the group's network and the ties between its participants. 'The more

extensive its common identity and internal networks, the more organised the group', as Tilly shows in figure 1, with examples:

Figure 1: Tilly's relationship of organisation, categories and networks
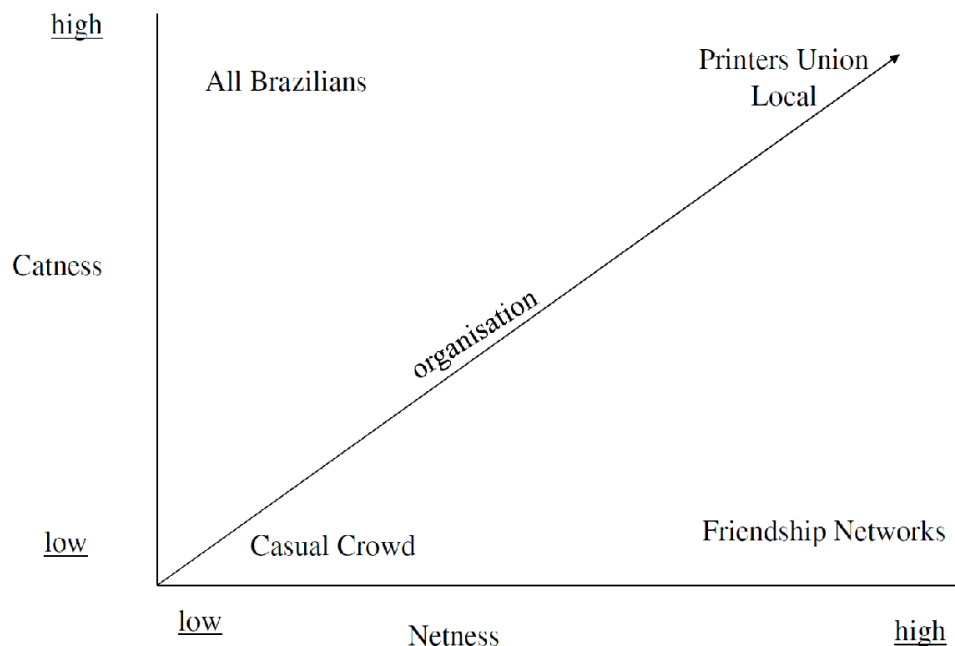
Source:

Tilly (1978: 63).

Tilly defines *mobilisation* as the 'process by which a group acquires collective control over the resources needed for action' (Tilly 1978, p. 10). In this model, 'the broad factors within a population affecting its degree of mobilisation are the extent of its shared interest in interactions with other populations, and the extent to which it forms a distinct category and a dense network: its interest and its organisation.' (1978, p. 81).

Mobilisation can occur when there is an *opportunity*. Opportunity, according to Tilly, 'concerns the relationship between a group and the world around it. Changes in the relationship sometimes threaten the group's interests. They sometimes provide new chances to act on those interests' (Tilly 1978, p. 7).

Collective action 'consists of people's acting together in pursuit of common interests', and results from 'changing combinations of interests, organisation, mobilisation and opportunity' (Tilly 1978, p.56).

To complete this picture, Tilly described the treatment of groups by the state or other target after successful mobilisations as starting from repression, moving through to tolerance, and finally, to facilitation. The response to collective action is determined by its scale and its power; the power of a party being 'the extent to which its interests prevail over the others with which it is in conflict' (1978, p.115).

According to Tilly (1978) and as later applied by Kelly (1998) the circumstances for mobilisation begin with the combining of three elements. These are a shared *injustice*, or grievance (economic, racial, or other injustice). The second element is *attribution* to another party (employer, politician, party, government or decision maker), from which comes shared identity among those disadvantaged by the injustice. Finally, in order to embark on collective

action *efficacy* is required – a sense that working together will achieve change (Badigannavar & Kelly 2005).

Further to this, the extent to which a group is mobilised is a product of the amount of collective goods obtained (or conversely, adverse consequences) and the amount of resources expended. Mobilisation is more likely when the collective goods obtained exceed the resources expended – which may only happen when such an *opportunity* exists (Tilly 1978, p.121).

The various actions conducted by groups in pursuit of their claims are familiar: presenting petitions, holding a demonstration, going on strike and so on. These 'performances clump into *repertoires* of claim making routines that apply to claimant-object pairs', such as 'bosses and workers' (Tilly 2006, p. 35).

Tilly notes that repertoire deployed by groups changes over time, but this is relatively rare, and when change does occur, it is notable. 'A flexible repertoire permits continuous, gradual change in the group's means.' It may occur through imitation of other groups, most likely when the 'members of one contender observe that another contender is using a new means successfully' (Tilly 1978, p. 155). Changes to repertoire can also occur as a result of *innovation*, which is rarer still (Tilly 1978, p. 156). The history and composition of L.A. and its labour movement along with societal and economic shifts have meant that strategies in pursuit of working-class interests have evolved to the extent that they represent a new repertoire of action and the exercise of influence.

This article draws on research from a broader study of living wage campaigning in L.A. It draws upon semi-structured interviews with 15 fast food workers, union leaders and worker centre representatives. Primary sources including numerous campaign materials and scripts and related documents were used in conjunction with a voluminous body of secondary reporting and online material describing the events from various perspectives. Workers are anonymised whereas spokespeople for organisations are identified in this study so their perspectives owing to their position are transparent and added to the context. These sources have been used together to verify events studied.

'Citadel of the open shop' to 'the Labor Movement's great success story'

The history of recent decades of the L.A. union movement has been well described in various accounts of some of the seismic events of the U.S. union movement. The city's labour movement was central in many of these campaigns which have significantly influenced union movements globally. A body of literature has developed around the often pioneering work of L.A. unions particularly in the area of organising low-wage service workers (eg Milkman et al. 2010; Milkman 2006). In a sea of literature documenting and dissecting the decline – in density as well as influence – of the U.S. labour movement, the movement locally in L.A. has typically been held up as the 'Labor Movement's great success story' (Cohn 2013).

But this wasn't always the case. L.A. had a reputation in the early 20th century for being a non-union city, in contrast to its east coast counterparts, and was known as the 'citadel of the open shop' (in Milkman 2006). This was affirmed in the aftermath of the bombing of the L.A Times building in 1910 that resulted in the deaths of 21 people and in terms of public attention was the 'equivalent to the 2001 destruction of the World Trade Centre' (Irwin 2010). Two union members were later convicted of the bombing following confessions. Organising efforts of the early 1900s never recovered, and union density in L.A. remained at much lower levels than the rest of the U.S. for most of the remainder of the century.

The composition of industry and other factors meant that unlike the industrial union strongholds where unions affiliated to the former Confederation of Industrial Organisations (CIO) on the east coast and mid-west, CIO unions did not establish as much of a foothold in L.A. even compared to other cities of the West Coast such as San Francisco. Unions affiliated to the American Federation of Labor (AFL) such as the Teamsters and the SEIU's predecessor unions had the strongest presence, meaning the AFL and AFL unions remained predominant in L.A. (Milkman 2006, p. 38).

In the second half of the nineteenth century there was significant change to the fortunes of the labour movement when the state of California became the epicentre of organising of agricultural workers. Organisers trained by the Saul Alinsky-influenced Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) began working with immigrant farm worker activists who were excluded from protection and avenues available to other workers under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). The campaign deployed new tactics including focusing on community support and use of consumer boycotts. These farm boycotts and strikes including a five year grape strike led to gaining rights for agricultural workers to form and join unions. During this phase the farmers faced fierce counter-mobilisation from employers and the state. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) chief's initially disastrous invention in 1969 of the 'SWAT' (Special Weapons and Tactics) squad was credited to inspiration by the farmworker strikes (Jaffe 2016, p. 229). The United Farm Workers (UFW) 'organising victories became an enduring symbol of the transformative potential of unionism for Mexican immigrant communities in California' (Milkman 2006, p. 122) under the leadership of Cesar Chavez, who then led the UFW into the 1980s.

Other celebrated campaigns centred on the L.A. labour movement have included the Justice for Janitors campaign throughout the 1990s in which years of organising efforts culminated in rolling strikes in L.A. in 2000 resulting in securing new contracts for the city's janitorial workers (R. Milkman 2006; Savage 2006). SEIU organising in the homecare sector led to 74,000 homecare workers joining the union and winning union contracts in 1999 (Smallwood Cuevas, Wong, & Delp 2009). Low wages remain a widespread cause of hardship in L.A., however. As Muñiz noted, 'while the SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign has brought to light the plight of the maintenance worker, most non-union janitors employed in Los Angeles still make subminimum wages, work six to seven days a week, do not get paid overtime, and are often not paid for all the hours that they work' (2010, p. 212).

Amongst the workers who took action with other farm workers in the 1960s and 1970s, (and once, on expiry of their union contract, were sacked and blacklisted), were the Contreras family including their son, Miguel. In 1996 Miguel Contreras was elected as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the L.A. Country Federation of Labor (LACFL), which he led for nine years. Such was his legacy from that period that on his death in 2005 he was called 'the real architect of the new Los Angeles' (Meyerson 2005). This article studies an example of how the L.A. labour movement he revitalised operates, and how it successfully campaigned to raise the wage for millions of low paid workers.

Tale of two cities

For most of the twentieth century it seemed unlikely that the biggest wage increases for the largest number of people perhaps ever would be fought for and won in Los Angeles. As Meyerson noted in 2013, 'by the mid-1990s, Los Angeles had become the nation's capital of low-wage labour and remains so to this day: Twenty-eight per cent of full-time workers in L.A. County make less than $25,000 a year. In Chicago, only 19 per cent of workers earn so little.' (2013).

The image of L.A., 'its built environment the architectural expression of the American history of class war' (McNamara 2010, p. 10) is commonly associated with manifest inequality, both in California, but especially in L.A. While the 10 miles that separate Skid Row and Beverly Hills is evocative of this inequality, statistics reveal its truth: median household income is about 15 per cent higher than the U.S. average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), but housing costs put more people at risk of poverty. Using the California Poverty Measure, which takes into account housing costs, 21.8 per cent of the Californian population live in poverty (Wimer et al. 2012). There is a steep correlation with levels of education: for those who have not graduated from high school the figure increases to 53.2 per cent (Wimer et al. 2012). As Kent Wong the Director of the UCLA's Labor Centre said, the 'lack of affordable housing and overcrowding in apartments, and lack of access to good food, and lack of access to transportation and healthcare – I mean all of the economic indicators just are such a stark reflection of a tale of two cities' (interview 2016).

Los Angeles' income differentials are matched by other measures – race, ethnicity, language, and geographic spread and array of cities and neighbourhoods each with its own distinct composition and feel. Like Montréal, L.A. is a genuinely bilingual city with 3.7 million of the county's 9.8 million residents speaking Spanish at home (United States Census Bureau (USCB) 2017). Sixty per cent of the members of one of the key SEIU locals in the campaign, United Service Workers West (USWW, who organise janitorial and airport workers), are mono-lingual Spanish speakers (interview, Elizabeth Strater 2016). The fast-food restaurants and car washes of L.A. are staffed almost entirely by people of colour. Of L.A. County's population of 10 million, 3 million are immigrants and 1 million of them undocumented (interview, Rusty Hicks 2016).

'Los Angeles' sometimes refers to L.A City and sometimes to L.A. County, the former encompassing dozens of local areas (including the gentrifying Downtown L.A., Koreatown, Beverly Hills, Little Armenia, Little Tokyo, Bel Air, Venice and Hollywood), and the latter to 88 cities, each with its own city council including (among the largest) L.A. City, Pasadena, Culver City, Santa Monica, and Long Beach. 'Greater Los Angeles' spreads even further and takes parts of Orange Country. Baudrillard described the sheer scale and sprawling nature of the city as 'the horizontal infinite in every direction' (1988, pp. 51-52). Clearly, organising and mobilising people to identify as a category and as part of a network (Tilly 1978) into a coherent campaign across this vast territory presents abundant challenges and opportunities.

Impact of density decline and wage stagnation

In recent decades, particularly since the early 1990s the decline in trade union density accelerated in almost all Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (Sullivan 2010), and particularly so in the U.S. where issues flowing from now single-figure private sector union density – 6.2 per cent in 2019 ((U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020), are writ large. The value of the union wage premium, the average extra income received by union members compared with non-members, is considerable, estimated by Gabriel & Schmitz as 22 per cent for men and 11 per cent for women (2014), and provides a continuing incentive for U.S. employers to prevent unionisation, with several hundred million being spent each year in order to do so (Logan 2006, p. 651). The absence of unions in large parts of fast-food, retail and service work has left millions of workers reliant on the minimum wage.

Yet partly as a response to this decline, there are some new forms of worker collectivism in the U.S – an example being worker centres, which have grown in number from four in 1992, to 137 in 2003, to over 200 by 2013 (Fine 2011, p. 607, 615, in Milkman 2014) and in L.A. have established and trustful relationships. There is healthy cross pollination and overlap amongst

the labour movement worker centres and black and immigrant community organisations which also extends nascent organisation amongst non-union service workers with a net result of a common interest and determination and importantly, capacity to achieve results for minimum wage workers.

In the U.S. the national minimum wage peaked in real terms in 1968, and has since declined (Tufts 2016) (see table 1). Not only is the low national minimum wage falling in terms of purchasing power, but the number of workers who rely on it to set their wage rate is growing. As Scott Courtney, vice president of the two-million-member Service Employees International Union noted, '64 million U.S. workers earned less than $15 per hour, and within three years half the U.S. workforce will earn less than $12 per hour' (Courtney 2015) just after the *Fight for $15* had emerged – the huge national movement heavily funded and supported by the SEIU and active in over 350 cities.

Low wages in areas of high inequality such as L.A. are felt to a greater extent. The very real personal impact of low wages was in evidence in studies such as a 2014 report that claimed increasing the minimum wage to just $13 by 2017 would result in 389 fewer deaths of lower-income Californians every year (Bhatia 2014, p.18). Minimum wage workers are likely to have trouble affording housing. The National Low Income Housing Coalition regularly updates what it calls the *Housing Wage* in the U.S., which it defines as the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a decent two-bedroom rental home while spending no more than 30% of income on housing (Arnold et al.,2014). In 2014 the Housing Wage was $18.92. For California the figure is $26.04, and for L.A. $26.37. The result in L.A. according to a homeless services worker is many people living in 'this nexus of instability, whatever may be happening in the family dynamic, also a lot of folks that are injured at work, and low-wage workers who are affected by the economy, and then in a market where there is less than a 3 per cent vacancy rate', a consequence of which is a lot of people who are 'constantly teetering on the edge' of homelessness, 'and it just takes one thing' (interview, homeless services worker, L.A. 2016).

Origins of the L.A. campaign for $15

The origins of the current capacity and effectiveness of the L.A. labour movement goes back thirty years. After a few years of upsurge in activity and innovative affiliated campaigns (including, famously, Justice for Janitors in the early 1990s), a turning point in the politics of both the union movement and the city at large came in May 1996 with the election of the first Latino to the position of Secretary of the LACFL, Miguel Contreras, who also was one of the founders of Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE).

Prior to the election of Contreras as Secretary, the LACFL was regarded as an 'old stodgy federation' (Medina 2009), and, as Gapasin noted, the primary function of the LACFL was 'to curry favour with the traditional Democratic Party forces, and for the most part it did not extend itself to organising or to community issues. In short, the LACFL did not have either the requisites or the behaviours for being an 'organising' [Central Labor Council]' (2001, p.98).

Contreras's election changed that role:

> He was brilliant at putting together a political program that embraced the strongest rank and file organisers from the janitors union and from the hotel workers, and engaging them in political action. … They built this powerful new coalition between labour and the Latino community here in Los Angeles' (interview, Kent Wong 2016).

This approach was acknowledged by subsequent leaders, including Hicks: 'The labour movement in Los Angeles over the last 20-25 years has really invested in civic engagement and the building of political power moving past what we call 'ATM politics' – which is basically where you hand a cheque over to an elected official - to taking that money and putting people on the street in order to have real conversations and change the dynamic of elections (interview 2016).

The legacy of Contreras continued and progressed under the leadership of his successor, Maria Elena Durazo. Just before she stepped down after nine years leading the LACFL, momentum among unions was building for a concerted effort to achieve a $15 minimum for L.A. Rusty Hicks, an Afghanistan veteran, originally from Texas had served as the Federation's political director. In late 2014 he was elected as Executive Secretary-Treasurer: 'I walk in the door and this is the first thing that I've got to tackle and so it was like 'you've got to be successful. You've got to win this.' A lot of people were counting on it' (interview 2016).

A wave of renewed progressive momentum originated around the time of the 2011 Occupy protests. Newspaper reports indicate that the reception of Occupy L.A. differed somewhat from that encountered by protests in other cities. When activists (as they had in other U.S. cities following the initial demonstration in New York City) set up camp opposite L.A. City Hall, the City Council passed a resolution in support of the demonstration, provided portable toilets and chose not to enforce a ban on sleeping overnight in city parks. The then Council President (later Mayor) Eric Garcetti invited protesters to 'stay as long as you need to' and, when it rained, staff of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa handed out plastic ponchos to occupiers (L.A. Times, 2012). Jaffe, however, described the L.A, eviction differently and highlighted the presence of police wearing hazardous materials suits, and participants who then commenced a civil lawsuit for wrongful arrest, later settled by the City of L.A. for $2.45 million (Jaffe 2016, p.218).

Nevertheless the contrast with other cities was sufficient enough for the mayor to remark, when thanking the police officers in the operation, 'I said that here in L.A., we'd chart a different path. And we did' (L.A. Times 2011). Rusty Hicks, Secretary of the L.A. County Federation of Labor (LACFL), echoed this sentiment more generally: 'Los Angeles is a place where, and California, is a place where we've got a different vision for America than what the [Trump] administration does' (interview 2016). But crucially for the minimum wage campaign, Occupy created the 'atmospherics – that the time is right for the conversation' (interview, Rusty Hicks 2016).

Local organising in L.A. for minimum wage rises occurred against the backdrop of the national SEIU-driven *Fight for $15* campaign included a large active local campaign amongst fast food workers headquartered in L.A.'s SEIU local 721. It had spread nationally from November 2011, when 250 fast food workers walked off the job for the first of the fast food strikes in New York City. The growing fast food strikes had captured the attention of the national media and put the stories of low wage workers on TV screens and on the national political agenda.

Political strategy

The launch of L.A. Raise the Wage outside L.A. City Hall in February 2014 was not the first time that the union movement and activists had called on a local jurisdiction to enact minimum wage increases. Yet the concept was still a relatively recent one. The idea had spread from a successful group of activists in Baltimore, Maryland whose campaign around low wage jobs in the early 1990s led them to call upon the city to address the problem. The city had passed a 'living wage ordinance' that required contractors engaged in service work to pay a living wage (Luce 2014, p. 12). By the time Raise the Wage had formed in L.A. to pressure the City Council

to increase it to $15, it already had one of the highest local minimum wages in the country; moreover, there were living wage ordinances in over 140 cities, counties and universities in the U.S. (Luce 2014, p.12).

It was in 1997 that a key player in Raise the Wage Coalition, the then newly launched LAANE, came to prominence when it successfully led the campaign for a living-wage ordinance for employees of companies with City contracts (Meyerson 2013).

This complexity and diversity of the cities and neighbourhoods that make up what is known as L.A. is reflected in the regulatory frameworks and divisions of responsibilities between the local authorities. There are, effectively, five levels of government in L.A. ranging from the various neighbourhood councils comprised of elected volunteers, to the cities, counties, state and federal legislatures. Rather than dispersing energy, the movement in L.A. used these many points of leverage to great effect.

Some L.A. laws that did not apply in other States were favourable to minimum wage campaigners at this time. One banned 'big box' retailing in the City, thereby avoiding the depressive effect on wages brought by the presence of Walmart (Dube & Eidlin 2005).

When it came to Raise the Wage:

> Well, it was spearheaded by the L.A. County Federation of Labor. So they have the strongest political operation in the city, bar none. They have the strongest mobilisation capacity. They have more people campaigning during election season, they have more people on phone banks, they have more people doing door to door than anyone else. Even the L.A. Chamber of Commerce will acknowledge that, that there's no-one that comes close to turning out voters to the L.A. labour movement. As a consequence they have significant influence within the City Council and within the County Board of Supervisors, because the most important endorsement you can get is the endorsement from the L.A. labour [movement] (interview, Kent Wong 2016).

The question arose as to how best to tackle the numerous cities and counties in L.A. and California. One option was 'a strategy of ... just go directly to the state and just get it done that way because there are so many jurisdictions. There were attempts to do that in 2013/2014 and they were not successful. They couldn't get enough votes out of legislature in order to get a wage increase and it certainly didn't get to fifteen' (interview, Rusty Hicks 2016).

The Raise the Wage campaign opted to involve all of the smaller cities and exercise their leverage wherever they could, reflecting the strategy in earlier years adopted by hotel workers organised by UNITE HERE, who had earlier won the first $15 minimum wage ordinance in their Raise L.A. campaign:

> We wanted the entire city council to vote yes on it so we tried to create some committee, some community partner in every single district. We targeted neighbourhood councils, arguing that when people have more dollars in their pocket they spend locally and that helps small business (interview, Rachel Torres 2016).

So with allies assembling and coordination in place, an initial plan was made and the Raise the Wage Coalition set up securing support from decision makers, prosecuting a multifaceted strategy, aiming to firstly:

> win L.A. City, which would cover four million residents, about a million workers. Then get the county, the unincorporated portions of the county which covers another million

residents, gets you about another 200,000 workers under 15 and then try to go to sizeable but smaller jurisdictions in the county of Los Angeles. Keep in mind there's 88 cities in the county of Los Angeles. So it was L.A. City, L.A. County and then try to go to places like Santa Monica, Pasadena, West Hollywood, Long Beach. At the same time there was a move going on at the state level – a track that was running in the legislature and a track that was collecting signatures for a ballot measure to basically leverage the legislature into doing it. Saying 'we're going to go to the ballot or you do it. One of the two but this is going to happen' (interview, Rusty Hicks 2016).

Building a coalition

DeFilippis (2004), reflecting on the anti-globalisation protests in Seattle and other cities, plaintively asks 'where were the community organisations?' In L.A., however, community organisations were present alongside the labour movement and citizens and activists motivated to action by the Occupy protests. They were there not out of altruistic solidarity or obligation, but because they shared elements of the same agenda, and because of the knowledge gained by experience that to win required working together in coalition rather than alone.

Nevertheless, subtly different perspectives revealed in interviews with various union organisations suggested that each organisation saw itself as being close to the centre of the campaign – which from their perspective was entirely plausible – but could not be true, at least not in equal measure.

Certainly as the dominant organisation putting a $15 minimum wage on the national agenda, the SEIU were accommodative and encouraging of the localisation of campaigns. Be it local coalition efforts or their directly funded Fight for $15 organisers 'they weren't like *Fight for $15 SEIU Local 721*' says Adam Hall, referring to the downtown L.A. SEIU local that served as the host and home base for Fight for $15 organisers and staff in L.A. 'In Atlanta it was *Raise Up Atlanta*, and things like that, not one of them badged themselves up as SEIU' (interview, Adam Hall 2016). In L.A. the broader campaign 'tried to put sort of an L.A. feel to the campaign and that's where the *Raise the Wage* concept came from' (interview, Rusty Hicks 2016).

Yet, each organisation saw itself as playing a key role and perhaps this was a factor that contributed to their engagement and the campaign's success. Rusty Hicks said 'We created that infrastructure in order to ensure that community groups felt like they were really a part of the effort and that it wasn't just a labour campaign that we were asking them to sign onto and that they were an important part of it' (interview 2016).

In their earlier campaign, UNITE HERE had adopted a comprehensive approach to approaching and assembling allies:

> We broke them up into fifteen categories. We wanted Democratic clubs to endorse the policy because the Democratic Party didn't have it in their platform then. We got a lot of housing groups to sign on, they're just sort of natural allies in our fight. Both tenants' rights organisation like the Coalition for Economic Survival, there's housing corporations and Strategic Actions for a Just Economy which represents tenants as well as many students. We work with professors in different universities that made it part of their class that students had to get signatories in support of the policy. We ended up getting 8000 signatures (interview 2016).

Indeed, one of the most starkly noticeable characteristics of the *Raise the Wage* coalition was the range of organisations that were active. The work of the UCLA Labor Centre was leading and critical. Organising Director of the UFCW local in L.A., Rigo Valdez, commenting on the close collaboration between the union movement, immigrant communities and their organisations, called the UCLA Labor Centre's Project Director, Victor Narro, who had been active on several campaigns including that on wage theft, 'the father of all of this' (interview, Rigo Valdez 2016).

Although active in research and passive forms of engagement, university departments or research centres themselves seldom participate as actors alongside unions or civil society organisations nor, generally, do faculty members see it as their role. The UCLA Labor Center, however, went much further and, according to unions and worker centres alike – remains a key driver of social, racial and economic justice campaigns. This is equally true of a diverse range of organisations that may have begun with a single core issue or function but the leadership then becomes awareness of an interconnectedness of housing, transport, discrimination, economic, and employment issues. The East L.A. Community Corporation (ELACC) is an example: it primarily provides community housing and cultural programmes and advice and advocacy.

Even after UNITE HERE's successful *Raise L.A.* campaign for hotel workers, there were three separate concurrent campaigns in L.A. – the SEIU's *Fight for $15,* the *Raise the Wage* campaign, and the *Wage Theft Coalition.* The Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA), Restaurant Opportunities Centre L.A. (ROC L.A.) and Clean Carwash were the key worker centres involved in the last of these, along with the UCLA Labor Center. The active engagement of these worker centres in the *Raise the Wage* campaign was conditional upon resources for enforcement being a key demand: 'yes, of course we needed a higher minimum wage but we also need enforcement because no one was enforcing the current minimum wage,' said KIWA's Scarlett Deleon (interview 2016).

For Deleon, many instances of wage theft that went further than non-payment of the minimum hourly rate. She described examples of L.A. textile workers who had sought the advice and assistance of KIWA after they attended their workplace to find stock and equipment removed and the premises locked up, management afterwards uncontactable with wages for hours worked and entitlements owed to them (interview 2016).

The membership of and relationships between unions and community organisations in L.A. are overlapping and fluid, largely a result of members having worked on the same campaigns. El Super is a Mexican-based, mostly non-union supermarket chain that for many Latino neighbourhoods in L.A. was the only grocery store. Its employees stood to benefit from a $15 minimum wage, and the chain was the subject of a major United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) organising and campaign effort. The push to unionise this fast growing entrant to the U.S grocery market has deployed tactics typical of other L.A. labour movement campaigns such as coalition building, consumer boycotts, shareholder lobbying, gathering allies among politicians and public figures, and a legal strategy that included filing complaints of unfair labour practices, with El Super sales reducing in line with the consumer boycott (UFCW 2016, p.5). UFCW Local 770 had hired former El Super workers as organisers after they had received leadership and organising training through ELACC and similar organisations.

KIWA, based in the Koreatown district near Downtown L.A., was one of the first worker centres established in the U.S. It is multi-ethnic, organising both Korean and Latino workers, and is an example of how the different experiences and specialisations of each organisation

strengthened the overall coalition. As Deleon said, 'we were all kind of doing the same thing. And as community members we have this expertise that maybe the unions don't always have, because we're working with a lot of the workers that are experiencing wage theft. So we decided to join forces' (interview 2016).

Such as diversity of organisations required coordination. When asked 'how much coordination' was involved, Valdez laughed. 'A lot. Too much.' (interview 2016). Deleon described the process:

> They formed this anchor group: KIWA, the UCLA Labor Centre, Clean Carwash campaign and ROC L.A. The anchor group is not a body that makes decisions. But mostly kind of plans things plans agendas and took a bulk of the work. But the steering committee always vote on things and strategised together. And then there's the broader coalition which is organisations where it's not their priority but it's still something they want to be part of (interview, Scarlett DeLeon 2016).

Several interviewees noted the power of low paid worker stories in media and in testimony before public committees and elected representatives, and this was an area in which the involvement of worker centres was crucial. The workers involved in the *Fight for $15* were adept at articulating their daily struggle and how they sought to improve their lives:

> Everybody thinks that just because we don't have a high education and we're only flipping patties and pushing buttons, we don't deserve a liveable, affordable living wage. That's just wrong because $8 supposedly you could afford rent, but then that's it. That's not including utilities, food or whatever kids need - of course you'd need to get a second job or a third job. That would then cut into our time to afford to go to school to get that education and to get that high end job (interview, Fred, fast food worker 2016).

As Jean Tong explained:

> The quality of the story of these workers are different because if you have union workers, compared to a lot of non-organised, especially underground workers, they're more privileged, they have a union contract, so their story is different, whereas if you have [currently] organising workers then usually they're afraid to speak up because you might get fired. And you have an organising campaign depending on it so you wouldn't want to put that out there. Whereas the workers at the worker centres, they're activists and they have been trained to learn how to speak up so it's a different quality of the stories. And they bring diversity from different sectors (interview, Jean Tong 2016).

Valdez also described them as 'pivotal':

> because if it had just been labour we wouldn't have gotten as far as we had gotten. A lot of the workers who were brought to the table, were brought by worker centres, they weren't brought by unions, so the construction unions were part of the coalition but they didn't produce anybody who was the voice of someone whose wages had been stolen, the Garment Workers Centre absolutely did, KIWA absolutely did, ELACC absolutely did (interview 2016).

Crucial to bring these organisations together was leadership: Rusty Hicks described in different views about which direction to take – there are 'some conversations internally' about strategy choices, 'but ultimately it comes down to leaders saying to other leaders 'I need you on this'.

Ultimately a deal is between two people and that's ultimately how you get to a coalition that's strong enough to do that' (interview 2016).

Deployment

Once this common agenda, campaign objectives, a coalition of allies and a strategy were in place it was time to deploy the movement's political capacity, which was an ongoing legacy of the Contreras era and had continued and strengthened since. Contreras, according to Kent Wong, had said that:

> The very best union organisers are also the very best political organisers. So he was able to implement a program where the unions would buy off their time in election season. So instead of working as a janitor for the one month leading up to the election they were hired as political mobilisers. Instead of working cleaning hotels for the one or two months before the election, they were hired by their union to be political mobilisers (interview 2016).

At the same time a staff team was developed:

> We had an aggressive field program. We had somebody picking up endorsements and that's all they did fulltime. There was people dedicated to bringing more people into the coalition and then there was a full team dedicated full-time to knocking on doors and making phone calls. Part of that was volunteer. Part of that was fulltime folks, so people who came off the job and went fulltime knocking on doors and talking to people. We had a fulltime team doing social-digital. We had a fulltime team doing mail. So the goal was to create a real campaign infrastructure, just like you would to run a campaign to get elected to public office. Over the years labour has become much more sophisticated in political action and so we brought all of that to bear around that one particular issue (interview, Rusty Hicks 2016).

This approach echoes the program of UNITE HERE Local 11 during the earlier *Raise L.A.* campaign:

> We had a team, a communication person, a research person, I would do the community organising and we had student interns and engaged with our membership to do some of the visits to neighbourhood councils, speaking at press conferences, doing organising in their shop, gathering signatures (interview Rachel Torres 2016).

By 2015, another California SEIU local, United Healthcare Workers West, had set about gathering signatures for a state ballot measure to increase the minimum to $15 by 2021 for health care workers, and the state council of the SEIU was pushing for a ballot initiative for a $15 minimum wage to cover all Californian workers by 2022 (Dayen, 2016). The mayor was therefore faced with the prospect of two competing ballot initiatives in early 2016. The politics within different levels of the SEIU at the time was a factor that became a point of leverage, as Hicks reflected:

> As we got to the end of our smaller city campaign the ballot measure qualified for the ballot. There were actually two. As a result of that the Governor and the legislature had certain important things that they wanted to see on the ballot. They didn't want resources taken away from the stuff that they wanted and so they caved (interview 2016).

Despite the ordinances being achieved in such a relatively short timeframe, and the relatively 'friendly' legislatures that were the targets of the campaign, activists at no stage saw the achievement of a $15 minimum wage as inevitable; and the pace at which the campaign proceeded could not be described as one founded in assumptions of complacency about its outcome. Significant increases in the minimum wage were first achieved in 2015 by UNITE HERE Local 11, the Los Angeles hotel workers' union whose *Raise L.A.* campaign won a minimum wage of $15.37 for the biggest hotels (with over 300 rooms) immediately, and for hotels with more than 150 rooms by July 2016 (CBS 2014). 'We had struggled for many years to get that moving,' said Rachel Torres, Senior Research Analyst and Community Organiser from UNITE HERE:

> $15 was like an extraordinary amount of money, like, how can you go to 15 when people are making 7, 8, 9 bucks an hour, so it never saw the light of day for many years. So when the national Fight for $15 movement broke through and *Occupy* happened in 2011, by 2012, 2015, economic inequality was a mainstream idea. It broke through in a really big way (interview, Rachel Torres 2016).

It's been said that 'the minimum wage campaign in Los Angeles really started on Labor Day in 2014, when Mayor Eric Garcetti proposed a $13.25 hourly wage by 2017' (Best, 2017), but when hotel workers won their much larger increase in 2015, following a campaign that had begun many years earlier, 'immediately afterward, like, literally the weekend after, they announced a policy of $15, and the *Raise the Wage* bill then got signed in 2015' (interview, Rachel Torres 2016).

On 13 June 2015, sixteen and a half months after organisations had gathered on the steps of City Hall, against a backdrop of Fight for $15 fast food strikes spreading across the country (see Figure 2), that L.A. City Council voted to approve Mayor Eric Garcetti's bill to phase in a $15 minimum wage together with sick pay and enforcement measures. On 29 September the L.A. County Board of Supervisors approved its application to the entire county.

The extension of the local city and county ordinances to the state of California was no more a natural progression than any other of the incremental victories of the campaign. Again, it wasn't the first time a statewide increase had been attempted; in 2013 a San Francisco State Senator had proposed a phased increase to the California minimum wage to $13 an hour by 2017, thereafter to be indexed to inflation (Bhatia 2014, p. 3). And on 4 April, 2016, surrounded by low-wage workers and SEIU members in their distinct purple t-shirts, California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law the phase-in of a $15 minimum to apply to all workers in California, ensuring a wage increase for the six million who relied on the minimum wage (see table 1), increases which would total over $24 billion (in US 2016 dollars) extra being paid to these workers just in California by the end of the phase in (National Employment Law Project 2016).

Table 1: Schedule of increases to Californian minimum wage

Pay per hour	26 Employees or More	25 Employees or Less
$10.50	1/1/17	1/1/18
$11	1/1/18	1/1/19
$12	1/1/19	1/1/20

$13	1/1/20	1/1/21
$14	1/1/21	1/1/22
$15	1/1/22	1/1/23

Indexed annually for inflation (national CPI) beginning 1 January after small businesses are at $15.(Office of the Governor of the State of California, 2016)
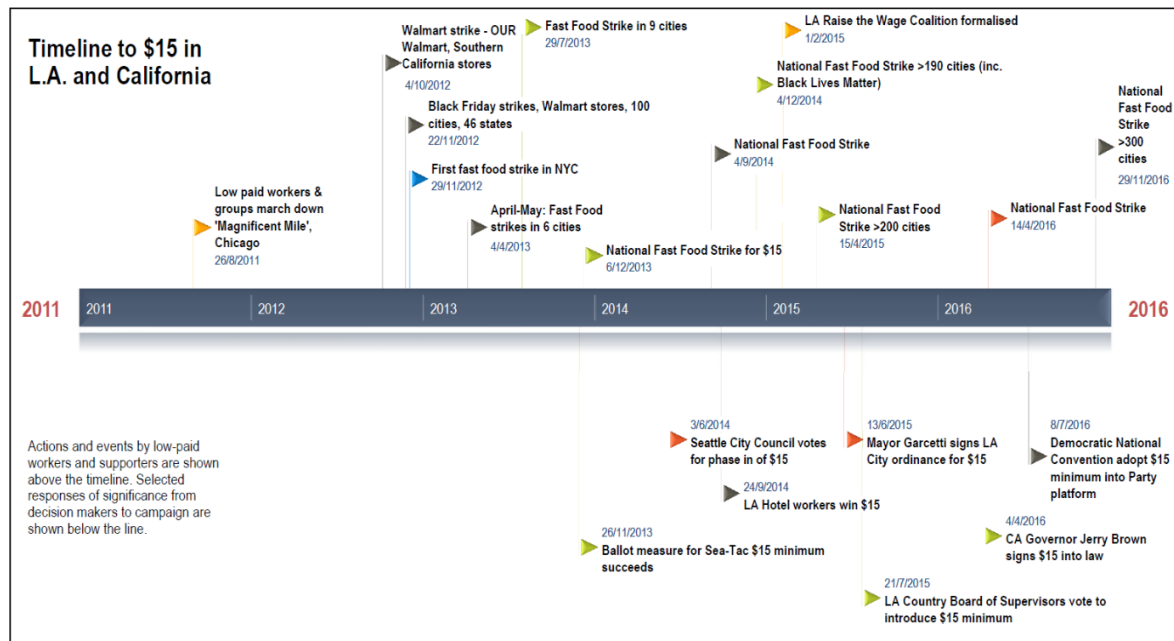

Figure 2: Timeline to $15 in L.A. and California

Employer counter-mobilisation

Counter-mobilisation and repression is described by Tilly (1978) and Kelly (1998) in response to worker mobilisations. Employer groups were active and vocal in opposing these increases to $15 for minimum wage workers – consistent with their long-held position. One of the most significant, the National Restaurant Association or 'the other NRA' as it is known, is a huge organisation, pursuing the objectives of the major chains and has 'fought minimum-wage legislation at every level of government for decades' (Finnegan 2014). But unions responded in kind:

> The restaurants really took a very hard stance so ROC [the Restaurant Opportunities Centre, a worker centre)] did a really good job of putting forward why tipped workers should also be earning a minimum wage. Then [the employers] came out through the chamber of commerce, but this is where the labour movement really did do a good job: the labour movement worked with employers that it represents under contract and said: 'what we're doing is bringing up your competition' (interview, Rigo Valdez 2016).

What was interesting for Rachel Torres of UNITE HERE was that 'A lot of the hotels that came out in opposition saying 'you're going to kill our business' - they all paid the $15 on day one'

and took the credit for it (interview, Rachel Torres 2016). Similarly David Rolf, President of SEIU Local 775 in Seattle described how in the lead up the Seattle ballot on the proposition to raise the wage to $15 a retail employer threatened to replace employees with automated kiosks, but within weeks of the measure coming into effect hung a large sign outside his property 'Now hiring at $15 an hour' (Rolf 2016, pp. 113, 120).

By 31 January 2017 however, 23 states had introduced pre-emptive minimum wage laws, which prevent local legislatures – the cities and counties, from passing their own minimum wage laws (National Employment Law Project 2017). The use of pre-emption laws had long been a tactic of the powerful corporate lobby group the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

Aftermath

Hicks believes that in the absence of the campaign in L.A., there would have been some increase to the minimum wage, but 'as a result of the collective action that came together around the issue we were able to go to fifteen faster than anybody else. We were able to get a huge wage enforcement policy. We were able to [get] paid sick days really as an add-on which workers didn't have' (interview 2016).

Reflecting on the people who stood to benefit he stressed: 'They're not young, they're not uneducated and they're not lazy. They're working multiple jobs, 40 per cent of them have some level of college education and the average age is 33. Half of them are heads of their household with families and kids and are struggling to get by' (interview 2016). They were also some of the hardest hit by the most recent economic downtown, following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008.

Kent Wong, Director of the UCLA Labor Centre reflected on the campaigns significance: 'Millions and millions of people that are beneficiaries of the Raise the Wage campaign who don't even know the L.A. labour movement, are beneficiaries of this victory. It's a reflection of the tremendous disparity in rich and poor here in Los Angeles. We have some of the wealthiest corporations and individuals in the world. You have communities in Bel Air and Beverly Hills, multi-million dollar estates every single one. And you have 40 per cent of the workers making less than $15 an hour in a very expensive city' (interview 2016).

Los Angeles (L.A.) is also a city that has come to be regarded as a bastion of progressivism and now a bulwark against corporate depredations and the agenda of the Trump White House.

Wins like these contribute to history, memory and therefore the plausibility of future victory. It is not only the participants who learn and recognise this but the targets of their collective action, as Elizabeth Strater of the SEIU United Service Workers West (the 'janitors' local') reflected on their influence with politicians: 'We don't have the resources some unions do but we have boots on the ground. Those boots are wearing purple T-shirts. They remember' (interview, Elizabeth Strater 2016).

Although one can't overstate the importance of 'more dollars in people's pockets,' the legacy of the campaign is the lessons learned by all involved:

> It really made a lot of folks realise that we don't have to just sit around and wait for law makers to do the right thing. That we can come together and put together a campaign and ultimately be successful (interview, Rusty Hicks 2016).

Conclusion

If movement solidarity and building on gains had characterised the L.A. union movement for the two or three decades up until the Trump presidency, collective defiance and resistance are defining the next.

During the research visit to L.A., President Trump had nominated the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Hardy's, a minimum wage paying, non-union fast food giant, as Secretary of Labor. As Hicks said at the time, 'you can't give a bigger middle finger to the Fight for $15 campaign, to fast food workers, to people who work for a living in this country, than the nominee as Labor Secretary' (interview,2016). Lack of support from Republicans caused his nomination to be withdrawn, following protests and lobbying by union activists and the Fight for $15 over his labour rights record and personal controversy (Raju & Merica 2017). For unionists in California, however, the nomination did not bode well for the Trump Presidency's approach to industrial relations:

> There's going to be a lot of work to do over the next four years. We expect, certainly here in Los Angeles with the strength of the labour movement, the size of the immigrant community to be attacked and it will be attacked pretty viciously. (…) You're likely to see a whole series of anti-labour right-to-work-for-less type measures on the labour front. On the immigration front I think you'll see an uptake in workplace raids (…). You'll see extreme vetting and you'll see the demonisation of a whole community. So it's a scary time for nearly a million people here in the County of Los Angeles who don't have proper documents. They're probably as much citizens as anybody else except for a piece of paper. They pay taxes. They work hard, they take care of their kids and so it's going to be on us to protect them (interview 2016).

These comments proved to be prescient. A few days after a '*March and rally to defend California*' prior to Trump taking office, Hicks echoed the materials calling on supporters to 'stand together' and 'resist any effort to tear apart the cultural fabric that has made our state great' (Leaflet 2), starkly summarised the position of progressives in California:

> You'll see a lot of resistance out of California and you'll see a lot of resistance out of Los Angeles. There are two types of people in this country. You're either a resister or a collaborator. One of the two. There's no real middle ground (interview, Rusty Hicks 2016).

More fundamentally, the interconnectedness of economic and race issues as outlined earlier means that the L.A. labour movement has the opportunity to achieve crucial things – to find common interests and identity, when Latino and Black workers mirror their common identity as low-wage workers, or exercise political power. Bearing in mind Tilly's formula – where organisation is the product of sense of 'category' or interest, combined with the existence and extent of networks – elements of the L.A union movement illustrate this in good measure. That issues of race and immigration have played out differently in L.A. in terms of political outcome, is more than can be explained by demographics alone. Kent Wong gave his impressions of why:

> I think it's mainly because of the Labor Federation to be honest. The work of unions here have successfully organised immigrant workers. Have fought for economic justice. It takes on fights and issues that do not only represent our members' interests alone. So it has really taken on the fight for immigrant rights; for racial justice; for a minimum

wage that benefits a lot of low wage workers who are not currently in unions (interview, Kent Wong 2016).

Despite Rosenblum's reservations about the narrow scope of minimum wage campaigning and the *Fight for $15* in his account of the campaign in Seattle, the practice of L.A.'s union movement, workers centres and its progressive community organisations are very close to what he prescribes for a the renewal of U.S. unions – 'aim higher, reach wider, build deeper' (Rosenblum 2017). This has only come after a '20 year to 25 year process of the transformation of the Los Angeles labour movement' (interview, Kent Wong 2016).

L.A. labour and its community allies now use their coalition model intuitively and routinely to progress their agenda. It is in this sense that it has developed into what can be regarded as a new repertoire to advance working-class interests. A $15 minimum wage was not the only achievement for progressives in the state over this period; there were a multitude of campaigns. The sense that L.A. and California was a progressive stronghold was a common theme encountered during the research, and evoked a sense of pride in many of the interview subjects.

Not only did we pass the minimum wage earlier this year, but in last month's election we elected super majorities for the Democratic Party in both the senate and the assembly. We enacted policies to secure this millionaires tax, which is a very progressive taxation initiative that was passed by the California state voters last month. We passed criminal justice reform, we legalised marijuana, we embraced bilingual education policies that had been previously undermined by laws passed decades ago. Here in Los Angeles we passed bonds to support affordable housing to address homelessness (interview, Kent Wong 2016).

The L.A. labour movement and those they worked with in coalition used what has developed into a new repertoire consistent with that described by social movement theorists. Their linked identity is as workers, as immigrant workers, and through disadvantage. This identity as a category and as a network are factors present in L.A. and is consistent with Tilly's concept of organisation as the product of a sense of category (identity/interest) and networks, which in turn has enabled mobilisation to exercise power and achieve a breakthrough. This now established capacity, ready for future mobilisations, can be regarded as a model for social movements in other cities to learn from and adopt.

Author Bio

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Jean Tong, Strategic Campaign Coordinator, UFCW Local 770, 13 December 2016, L.A.

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Elizabeth Strater, Communications Coordinator, SEIU USWW, 16 December 2016, L.A.

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Rachel Torres, Senior Research Analyst and Community Organiser, UNITE HERE Local 11, 21 December 2016, L.A.

Scarlett DeLeon, Lead Organiser, KIWA, 21 December 2016, L.A.,

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'Jessica', fast food worker, age: early 20s

'Dolores', fast food worker, age: late 30s

'Fred', fast food worker, age: early 20s

'Helen', fast food worker, age: early 20s

'Larry', fast food worker, age: early 20s

All workers interviewed were Black or Latino workers and lived and worked in Los Angeles County. All interviews were conducted by the author.

Documents

Name in text	Description
Leaflet 1.	Office of Wage Standards (2016), *Raise the Wage L.A.,*
Leaflet 2	*March and Rally to Defend California*, advertising rally on 18 December, 2016.

Leaflet 3	McJobs cost us all! – Join the Fight for $15 on May 25th
Leaflet 4	It's Your Legally Protected Right to Organize a Union! – Raise Up for 15 Southern Workers Organizing Committee, North Carolina
Document 1	Fast Food New Worker Rap for 4/14 strike (Dated 29/3/16)
Document 2	Fight for $15 L.A. Contact Sheet
Document 3	Fight for $15 L.A. Strike Plan
Document 4	Fight for $15 Canvasser Debrief Sheet
Document 5	Pick Up Schedule (for organisers in minibuses to pick up strikers)
Document 6	Fight for $15 t-shirt order
Document 7	Hotel registration (for strikers)
Document 8	April 14th National Day of Action running sheet
Document 9	Fight for $15 Strike Rap (script for canvassers starting conversations with fast food workers). Chicago.
Document 11	SWOC Activist tracker
Document 12	SWOC worksite chart
Document 13	Leader chart
Document 14	Fight for $15 Store meeting plan – April 7th – April 10th
Document 15	Raise Up! Atlanta Chant sheet for 4/14
Document 16	Adam Hall (2016), *Fight for $15 and a Union – Report*, Report on secondment to Fight for $15 campaign

Post-Industrial Industrial *Gemeinschaft*: Northern Brexit and the Future Possible

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Abstract

The high vote for Brexit in England's former industrial areas is often, reflecting historic class-based stereotypes, presented as a result of the incapacity of the working class to act in its own interests. Based on ethnographic research in a former milling town and a former mining town in northern England, this article articulates a logic for Brexit that cross-cuts ideological divisions within the working class. We highlight the affective afterlives of industry and, drawing on the classical sociology of Ferdinand Tönnies, argue that places such as these are characterised by a post-industrial industrial *gemeinschaft* whose centrepiece is industrial work, and which is reinforced in the very absence of that industrial work. In turn, we argue, the popularity of Brexit relates significantly to that political project's potential, whether real or illusory, to offer a future of work, and industrial work in particular.

Keywords

Affect, Brexit, British working class, class-based stereotypes, futures, *gemeinschaft,* milling, mining, post-industrialism, Red wall, work

Introduction

In the 2016 United Kingdom (UK) European Union (EU) membership referendum the UK electorate decided narrowly to leave the EU. Voting for Brexit, as departure came to be called, was comparatively high in England's post-industrial areas and, thereby amongst their predominantly working-class electorates. Furthermore, in an historically unprecedented event, and in what came to be known as the Right's penetrating of the 'Red Wall' several such electorates voted in 2019 to elect a Conservative government controlled, by and large by pro-Leave (the EU) forces. These events reflect, in part, a well-documented growing neo-nationalist sentiment amongst the post-industrial working class (Kalb 2011).

However, in the heat of the referendum, the Brexit vote had an explicitly class antagonistic dimension. Working-class informants in our field sites, the town of Lyng Valley[1] in West Yorkshire and the town of Ashington in Northumberland, articulated an uncomfortable awareness of the stigmatising of their Brexit sentiments in class-based terms. They reflected, for example, ideas about working-class racism and xenophobia. Such stigmatisation was often

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[1] 'Lyng Valley' is a pseudonym used due to the small size of settlements in the area and identifiability of their residents.

countered with reference to an alternative and apparently deeper-seated logic for the working-class Brexit vote. Brexit was, significantly, about the issue of work, and the possibility of industrial work in particular.

Based on anthropological fieldwork in now post-milling Lyng Valley (where Goodwin-Hawkins has researched since 2011) and now post-mining Ashington (where Dawson has researched periodically since 1985), this article seeks to articulate this logic. Drawing significantly on affect theory and on the seminal work of Ferdinand Tönnies, whose concern with feelings and sentiments in many ways prefigures the affect theorists, we posit the idea of 'post-industrial industrial *gemeinschaft'*. In essence, we demonstrate how affective and other traces of industry outlive industry itself. In turn, Lyng Valley and Ashington, and other places of their ilk, incorporate groups of people based on mutual bonds and *feelings* of togetherness that were engendered by industry and industrial work and that are reinforced rather than dissipated by the contemporary absences of industry and industrial work.

Furthermore, and following Tönnies, we go on to argue that the mutual bonds and feelings that are the essence of *gemeinschaft* can only be sustained if their very sustenance is felt to be a specific goal of the group. Crucially, we argue, Brexit was a crucial moment in which those bonds between, and feelings amongst, the post-industrial working class were celebrated and experienced as actualised in a goal-orientated political project. Brexit was conceptualised, rightly or wrongly, as promising work and the possibility of an industrial future. To adopt the discourse of the affect theorists upon whose work this article partly rests, Brexit was seen to present a 'future possible' in which reality might be able to realign with people's 'affective urges' (Berlant 2007: 278-9) that were, of course, borne of the kinds of industry that Brexit seemed to promise a return to.

Industry and the making of men and women: sociality, culture and affect

The story of the industrial revolution is now well rehearsed. Developments in mechanised fibre spinning and textile weaving initially drove Britain's industrialisation. The tip from early motive technologies powered by water to engines fuelled by coal intensified the extractive industries. In turn, growing production, especially in the hitherto marginal North of England, swelled surrounding settlements, with the rise of significant manufacturing conurbations often associated with a single dominant industry (such as Manchester and textiles, or Sheffield and steel).

These emerging industrial centres were filled with a new kind of labouring population – the working class. And, 'industrial revolution' came then to be conceptualised as a social, as much as productive process (Williams 1983). Capturing and directing this social process in interested ways became important. Notably, for example, the experience of industrial work was twined with an emerging national consciousness (Gellner 1964). Likewise, it was twinned with the interests of capital. As head of employer relations at Ford, the Reverend Samuel Marquis remarked, albeit many years later, 'the impression has somehow got around that Henry Ford is in the automobile business…cars…are a by-product of his real business, which is the *making of men*' (as cited in Grandin, 2009: 34). Also, of course, it was twinned with reactive forms of political consciousness (Thompson 1968) as, to use Marx's terminology, workers transitioned unevenly from a *klasse an sich* to a *klasse fur sich*.

The social impacts of industry were pervasive, myriad and importantly nuanced according to particular forms of production. Notably, a kind of industrial determinism engendered forms of local identity and personhood (Edwards 2012, Muehlebach 2017) by which, for example, the people of Stoke-on-Trent described themselves as 'people of the clay' (Hart 1987) and those in South Yorkshire felt that 'coal is our life' (Dennis, Henriques & Slaughter 1956).

The often very different ways in which production was organised – including specific forms of production process, occupational hierarchy, system of occupational mobility and, above all, division of labour – was pivotal in this respect. In Lyng Valley, the textile industry encompassed both weaving and the manufacture of ready-made clothing in 'sewing shops'. Occupational hierarchies within and between the weaving sheds and sewing shops were carefully reckoned: weavers were at the bottom, and 'sewers' the next step up, themselves graded between 'section workers', who sewed just part of a garment (like a pocket or a cuff), and the more skilled 'makers through', who could complete an entire garment. Work was thus individuated and remunerated on a piece rate basis. Typists, who were always women, were a step up again, while engineering and electrical provided more prestigious forms of male employment. Though a worker might regularly change employer, it was rare to change occupation, and certainly not to cross hierarchical boundaries; a weaver, for example, would not re-train as a secretary, nor a sewer decamp to the weaving sheds. Indeed, young people came to be pointed towards their future places in the industry through a secondary school streaming system which explicitly separated the 'lower class' (future weavers) from the 'middle' (future secretaries or engineers) from the 'upper' (future managers and professionals).

As in most mining areas, in Ashington, mining was largely a domain of male employment, with the work underground carried out by small masculine teams. Each team had a stable membership, representing all the specialist roles needed for extractive work at the coal face. Roles were usually assigned on a new recruit's first entry to employment, based on his education, connections, and sometimes even inheritance, and, as in the textile industry, mobility between occupations was rare. In workaday practice, each team was assigned to a particular part of the mine, the men working at close quarters together, and in potentially dangerous conditions that demanded cooperation. When work was scarce, teams competed for access to the mine in the 'caval' lottery, meaning that team members also experienced times of plenty and times of hardship together – conditions which extended to their families. Indeed, despite the male dominance in employment, mining shaped women's lives almost as closely as it did men's. When the British coal industry was nationalised in 1946, the collective bargaining power of the National Union of Mineworkers brought significant wage rises that effectively ended economic pluriactivity in Ashington; men moved out of additional employment into full-time mine work, and women left the waged economy for full-time domestic labour.

These different forms of production echoed through into forms of sociality and culture that were, apparently secondarily removed from the workplace. For example, as we have demonstrated elsewhere, the individualised and collective forms of production in milling and mining respectively resulted in broader cultures of individualism and solidarism that frame even attitudes towards care (Goodwin-Hawkins and Dawson 2018) and dying (Dawson 2018a; Dawson and Goodwin-Hawkins 2018). In the case of milling there was a greater emphasis on individual responsibility, and in mining the provision of mutual aid. Later in the article we go on to show how this contrast has manifested ideologically too.

Culturally, production affected, amongst other things, language. The dialect spoken in Ashington is often referred to as 'The Pitmatic'. This reflects the way in which terminology deriving from the mines provides a reservoir of descriptive terms for use in everyday life. For example, to emotionally wound is often described as to 'hedgehog'. Reflecting the prickly animal of the same name, a hedgehog is the bundle of wires that forms when a steel winding cable frays, such that it can rip one's body (and heart) apart when travelling at speed. More remarkably, the deafening sound of the mills engendered the practice of 'mee-mawing', a form of exaggerated speech and facial movement that facilitated easier lip-reading. Indeed, informants in Lyng Valley claim to be able to spot former weavers by the way they talk. And, lip reading endures as a skill, with the effects of industrial noise leaving many former weavers with hearing difficulties that have worsened with age.

Aware of these kinds of slippages that take place between production and culture, Antonio Gramsci (1997: 302, our emphasis) remarked that industry could be described as 'a specific mode of living and of *thinking and feeling life*.' Famously, E.P Thomson took Gramsci's insight forward, exploring the relationship between industry and feelings of temporality (1967). He documented how, for example, the clocks and bells of the factory were instruments that marked an insidious shift in daily life from the rhythms of seasonal agriculture to the measured time discipline of industry. Such affects, as they tend to be called these days, can be more positive in nature too. As, for example, Andrea Muehlebach (2017: 98) observes, the massing of workers on factory shop floors and in densely crowded towns created the conditions for collectively held values and feelings of communality.

Industrial afterlives

If the impacts of industrial production sedimented within sociality, culture and affect we are bound to ask to what extent was this sedimentation disrupted by post-industrialism?

Britain's de-industrialisation had earlier roots, especially in the textile industry, but was largely assured in the years between the 1973 oil crisis and the end of the Miners' Strike in 1985, against a political shift from Keynesianism to the neoliberal forms of state economic management notoriously associated with Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government. At that point rapid privatisation and blunt economics hastened industry from its Northern heartlands as cheaper offshore labour costs and the increasing mobility of capital enabled production to be relocated abroad. Consequently, labouring lives were transformed, with a lucky few in Lyng Valley and Ashington relocating to the service sector and, in the case of Ashington, to its small light industrial sector too. More faced unemployment. And, like many other places in the north, Lyng Valley and Ashington also began to empty as laid-off workers left in search of opportunities elsewhere.

All too often, and especially within our own discipline of anthropology, post-industrialisation is represented as entailing the 'loss' of community (Degnan 2012; Charles and Davies 2015; Pahl 2015). This is hardly surprising. The communities in question were, after all, produced in significant ways by industrialisation in the first place. And, more often than not, our informants themselves tell us that community has been lost (Dawson 2010). Camilla Lewis develops an interesting critique of this commonplace position (2016). Based on research in post-industrial Manchester (not far from Lyng Valley) she observes an oxymoronic quality within senses of community lost. On one hand working-class long-term residents complain incessantly about the loss of social ties in a formerly labouring neighbourhood now increasingly occupied by a

new generation and new incomers. However, whilst taking residents' complaints seriously, yet not at face value, Lewis asserts that complaining to each other about the lack of community vis-à-vis the past constitutes, is in fact the work of making community in the present.

The above anthropological orthodoxy and its critique both share, in fact a perspective, that loss of industry entails loss of community, albeit in Lewis' case to be replaced by another kind of community based upon senses of the very absence of a particular type of community itself. However, both fail to account for the especially affective presences of industry even in post-industrial times. These presences, or afterlives as they might more aptly be called continue to permeate everyday life from the most overt levels of society through to the intimacies of bodily experience. Notably, for example, while milling and mining only exist in the past tense, both Lyng Valley and Ashington continue to identify as single-industry towns: 'trouseropolis', and 'the biggest mining village in the world' respectively. And at another end of the scale, like in other former industrial contexts, lung diseases are commonplace and evident in the shortness of breath, wheezing and hacking coughs of so many, especially older local people. Doctors can diagnose diseases such as pneumoconiosis or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Yet, there is no way of knowing with certainty whether their cause was smoking, a practice that has been comparatively common amongst industrial working-class people, or the industrial smoke and particulate that formerly fogged places like Lyng Valley and Ashington. Even when people do not know whether it is the case, their experiences are felt and understood as outcomes of past industry's continued lingering presences. Furthermore, we observe the affective presences of industry in post-industrial times are at play in the framing of social lives. We demonstrate the point by ethnographic vignette.

Stan the Man

When 82-year old chorister Stan Cowton stood for one last time to sing Vera Lynn's wartime classic 'We'll meet again' at the Ellington Miners' Welfare Darby and Joan Club on the outskirts of Ashington his labouring life was behind him, and his wife and most of his mining 'marras' already dead. The song, sung in the sparrow-like warble that was all that remained of Stan's still legendary ability to 'raise the rafters', was to mark Stan's farewell from the club. After a serious heart attack had left him with a long convalescence and chronic difficulties with breathlessness, mobility and continence, the social services staff who organised the club activities had decided that he could not come back. The club, they insisted, was for the 'active elderly' only, and Stan's care requirements were now beyond their responsibility – and remuneration.

What the social services staff had not reckoned on was how the other club-goers would react to news of Stan's exclusion. His convalescence had already left a conspicuous space at the dominoes table – a space soon spun into talk in reminiscences of Stan's physical feats of labour at Ellington Colliery where he worked as a 'stone man', an especially tough and revered occupation that involved cutting through rock to get to the coal that ordinary hewers would then mine. These labouring legends of 'Stan the Man' were linked to reports of how he was getting on at home; the widows of some of his old marras regularly visited him with bottles of sugary Lucozade 'to build up his strength', and returned to the club with stories of how he was still tending his famously prize-winning leeks. After Stan had returned to the club to a hero's welcome – and requests for a song – his fellow club-goers were not about to let him go again. They were dedicated to helping him 'get out and about' despite his infirmities, and such was their opposition to the organisers' decree that they organised an on-stage performance – to simultaneously delight Stan and snub the organisers – in which a troupe of older women danced

the can-can, every kick of their legs revealing the strategically and showily placed incontinence pads that bulged beneath their skirts. It was as if they were saying to the organisers, 'screw you…physiological ageing does not make us lesser persons.' When the discomforted organisers again complained that they could not manage Stan's care, club-goer Irene summed up the sentiment in the room with her incredulous reply: 'What are you talking about? It's us who do all the caring.'

We linger on Stan's story here to illustrate the afterlives of labour after labour – animate legacies that exceed the memorial and the material. While Stan was lionised for labouring deeds done decades before his quiet retirement to the dominoes table, the mining past became more-than-memorial in expressions of solidarity when he faced exclusion from the club for a body that no longer 'worked'. The loyal bonds Stan had shared underground with his marras reappeared in the care and can-cans orchestrated by their wives, and in the shared insistence that Stan actively belonged in the colliery community – even in his inability to labour, even in the absence of the colliery itself.

Since such forms became culturally embedded and socially reproduced, they did not necessarily wither alongside industry; the closure of the collieries did not end miners' solidarism any more than weavers' embodied habit of speaking exaggeratedly, 'like *this*,' was switched off with the last of the power looms. These ways of being and knowing have lingered in the lives that went on after the mills and mines had closed.

The post-industrial industrial *gemeinschaft*

The matter of the continued affective presences of industry in post-industrial times has become a focus of an especially influential genre of scholarship, the affective turn. And, by and large, it portrays a dystopic future of growing senses of hopelessness in places like Lyng Valley and Ashington.

'I want to tell a story,' writes the cultural theorist Lauren Berlant (2007: 278-9):

> about post-Fordist affect as a scene of constant bargaining with normalcy in the face of conditions that can barely support even the memory of the fantasy [of industrial life] … [in which] all sorts of normative emotions stand in for affective urges for a better social world that leak beyond what the conventional forms deliver and stand in for.

Berlant's theorisation of 'post-Fordist affect' has been particularly influential in describing a post-industrial present in which the seeming certainties of 'thinking and feeling life' might be seen to have dissipated, along with the stable working-class employment they once affixed to. For Andrea Muehlebach and Nitzan Shoshan (2012: 337), for example, 'precariousness has undone the experiential grounds … [and] certainties' of an era not only predicated on industrial employment but on the promised futurity that came with it. In Shoshan's (2012) own ethnographic account of an East Berlin neighbourhood, the presence of (in this case, state-supported) work has given way to long, listless days in a bottle-strewn public square, where young unemployed men show off new trainers and trade third Reich memorabilia. For Shoshan, a 'future perfect' (2012: 44) predicated on industrial employment has transformed into a 'past conditional', in which present-day lack of opportunity is expressed as a longing for what 'would have been'.

For sure, we see resonances with the image that Shosan paints. In Lyng Valley, the boarded-up townscape of industry's initial departure has been largely replaced by the neatened results of a municipal slum-clearance programme and the more recent arrival of boutiques and coffee shops. Ashington too has been affected by similar aesthetic transformations, though less of the type intended to boost a tourist economy. There are nevertheless in both places ubiquitous marks of the precarious lives that are falling through cracks in the towns' regenerated façades: young men and women standing idle and bored on street corners; the seats in the Lyng Valley park where young people used to gather during the day to swig cans of beer, but which have now been replaced by a less hospitable rose bed; parklands littered with hyperdermic needles for that most time-disappearing of narcotics, heroin – a commonplace local nickname for Ashington nowadays is 'Ashganistan'; the euphemistic hints at overdose and suicide in local newspaper reports of lives ended all too young – 'tragic family,' 'remembering our Karen,' 'young dad'; and so on.

This apparent condition of hopelessness is a central topic of conversation, especially amongst Lyng Valley and Ashington's predominantly (because of outmigration) older residents. Unsurprisingly, in these contexts which came into existence because of industrial labour their focus is almost always the matter of work. Views are often ideologically polarised. We offer examples, one each from Lyng Valley and Ashington.

Some views reflect a neoliberal emphases on the normalcy of de-industrialization, economic restructuring that has led to greater labour flexibility and precarity, retreat of the state from welfare provision and, in turn, a greater emphasis on self-reliance. The attitudes of former Lyng Valley textile worker Lottie McGinty are typical. She is certainly not naïve to the absence of the 'real and imagined securities' (Muehlebach & Shoshan 2012: 337) of the industrial order: she lived, after all, in intimate proximity to the dismantling of Lyng Valley's textile industry. She watched mills close and friends and family be laid off, some of them leaving the area as the supposed solidities of 'so much work' vanished; she and her husband Clogger themselves circulated through multiple employers as mill work dried up, while Lottie's brother became one of the well-known bricoleurs in the grey economy that grew up amid the decline. Yet, her views appear to be unusually harsh. Responding to reports of rising homelessness in Northern cities, Lottie mustered little sympathy:

> Well, I just don't understand it, all this lot sat out there on the streets like that. Shocking! You never saw the like of it when I was younger, I tell you. Tents and all, they've got out there … Our Nella went to [larger regional town] shopping the other day, and there was one of them sat begging outside the bank. He'd got a dog, and he was asking folk for money for food for the dog. What does he want having a dog if he's not able to feed it? … Our Lee's partner, Tracey, now, she's got some strong opinions about this. She'll tell you. She says there's work enough out there for the taking. She's working on doing the training for the forklifts and the diggers, and that, see. Work enough for the taking. But this lot don't seem to want to do the work for themselves … they want someone else to come along and fix it all up for them … As I say, when we got a house, we'd to work for it … No, I've no sympathy for them.

Other views reflect an historic 'labourism' commonplace in places such as these. It emphasises the continued possibility of industry, enabled principally by nationalisation and Keynesian economic management such that people ought to be guaranteed work. Furthermore, it emphasises the necessity of adequate welfare, at least for those who are unable to work. In short, and in contrast to ideas of self-reliance, the emphasis is, at least where necessary, on

state-reliance. The attitudes of George Brown, a 76-year old retired miner from Ashington, are typical:

> When I walk past the food bank it makes my heart sink. I think 'there but for the grace of God'. I was lucky enough to see myself through to retirement before the pits closed. But these young'ns, they're reduced to charity and have had all their dignity taken away. It makes them a different kind of person. I don't recognise them. They're like foreigners in my own town. That's what no work and poverty does. It's not right. They grew-up expecting to work in the pits, and that was taken away from them. That's when the government needs to step in, to help them, to look after them, to give them work, to give them a sense of purpose. But it doesn't anymore. These poor young'ns are made to be nothing but beggars nowadays. It makes my heart sink.

Our choice of examples reflecting self-reliance in Lyng Valley and state-reliance in Ashington is not coincidental. As we have argued elsewhere these are, in some respects, locally typical post-industrial afterlives of social ideologies forged in the individualised *versus* collective forms of production characteristic of milling and mining respectively (Dawson & Goodwin-Hawkins 2018). Furthermore, they may be reflected in voting habits. Since 2010 Calder Valley (the General Electoral constituency in which Lyng Valley is a part) has consistently returned Members of Parliament from the Conservative Party, the British political party most closely associated with the idea of self-reliance. In the same period Wansbeck (the General Electoral constituency in which Ashington is a part) has consistently returned Members of Parliament from the Labour Party, the British political party most associated with ideas of state-reliance, welfarism and the like.

Thus far, we have demonstrated how industry maintains affective presences in these post-industrial times. However, we have been careful to temper that by recognising that different forms of production generate often very different social, cultural and, indeed, political forms. These include ideological polarisation concerning work, as described above. However, fixating on such ideological polarisation would miss what these accounts share, a persistent and overriding concern with work. Whether unemployment is seen as an outcome of individual or structural failing, its consequences are seen as the same. It corrodes selfhood, rendering the unemployed as indolent, beggars, reduced in dignity, unrecognisable, a different kind of person - 'foreigners'.

In one of Sociology's seminal works, Ferdinand Tönnies distinguished between two types of social groupings (2002 [1912]). G*esellschaft*, which is commonly translated as 'society', refers to groups that are sustained by the instrumental pursuit of aims and goals. Contrastingly, *gemeinschaft*, which is commonly translated as 'community', refers to groupings based on mutual bonds and *feelings* of togetherness. The affective presences of industry manifested in post-industrial times produces, we would argue, *gemeinschaft*, or to be more specific post-industrial industrial *gemeinschaft*. And, this is, we would contend further, reinforced by the very absence of industry. As evidenced by an overriding and 'shared' concern with work, it might also be characterised as a post-industrial labour labouring *gemeinschaft* that, likewise, strengthens in the very absence of labour.

Brexit – a future possible

For Tönnies the mutual bonds that are the essence of *gemeinschaft* can only be sustained if their very sustenance is felt to be a specific goal of the group. Moments of such goal-orientation

are just that, momentary. Crucially, we go on to argue here that Brexit was one such crucial moment, when senses of a post-industrial industrial *gemeinschaft* came to the fore, and when Brexit itself appeared to be a political project that offered the possibility of *gemeinschaft* in general, a hope for the survival of embattled post-industrial communities. Adopting the language of the affect theorists, Brexit promised transformation from the experiences of the past conditional to, if not quite a future perfect (Shoshan 2012: 44) then at least a 'future possible'.

'Brexit', as we all surely now know, refers to the moment when the UK's population voted in a referendum in 2016 to exit the European Union (EU). Brexit constitutes arguably the most significant political transformation in post-World War II Britain. Importantly, the post-industrial working class was a key agent in the Brexit vote, and its vote represented a crystallisation of that class' developing attachment to neo-nationalism in general through the 2000s (Kalb 2011). Ashington and Lyng Valley are illustrative.

In England neo-nationalism's most marked early manifestation was certainly the rise of The United Kingdom Independence Party (Ukip), a political party whose core policy was withdrawal of the UK from the EU. Ukip's support rose dramatically from 390 thousand votes (1.2% of the electorate that voted) at the first General Election it contested in 2001 through to 3.8 million (12.6%) in 2015. In 2015 the Ukip vote in Calder Valley was 11.1% and, in considerable excess of the average national Ukip vote it was fully 18.2% in Wansbeck. The difference between Calder Valley and Wansbeck may, at least in part, be put down to the fact that the Conservative Party, which has been the leading political party in Calder Valley throughout the 2000s, was more receptive to Ukip's core agenda. Notably, the Conservatives campaigned in the 2015 General Election on the promise of a referendum on EU membership. In the event the Conservative Party won the 2015 General Election and delivered the referendum in 2016. The national result in the referendum was 'Leave' 51.9% and 'Remain' 48.1%. Echoing a pattern in other parts of post-industrial Britain, in Northumberland (the European electoral region encompassing Ashington) the Brexit vote was 54.1% and in Calderdale (the European electoral region encompassing Lyng Valley) it was 55.7%.

Perceived largely as a one issue party whose purpose had been fulfilled by Brexit, the vote for Ukip collapsed in the 2017 General Election to a mere 3.5% of the voting electorate nationally. Responding to a general trend and, opportunistically to Ukip's electoral vulnerability, the UK's mainstream political parties accommodated increasingly, to a greater degree in the case of the Conservative Party (Dawson 2017) and lesser degree in the case of the Labour Party (Leddy-Own 2014), to neo-nationalist sentiment. However, in general the rise of neo-nationalism and the Brexit vote in particular left both parties fractured for a time, between remainers, leavers, 'deal' and 'no deal' leavers, and a multiplicity of deal leavers who, nonetheless, differed on the specific conditions under which the UK should leave the EU. The fracture was marked in the Conservative Party, with the majority of party members rallying, sometimes very reluctantly, around a new 'Hard Brexit'[2] leadership that came to power in 2019 shortly before the exit agreement from the EU was concluded, but a significant minority supporting either 'Soft Brexit'[3] or Remain also. The fracture was even more marked in the Labour Party, with the majority of party members supporting Remain, but, and crucially for our purposes, a significant minority of Members of Parliament from largely northern post-industrial contexts responding to local preferences and standing askance from the mainstream by supporting Brexit in

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[2] A form of Brexit in which Britain remains closely aligned with the EU.

[3] A form of Brexit that rejects close alignment with the EU.

whatever form. Not coincidentally for example, the Member of Parliament for Wansbeck, where Ashington is located is, arguably the leading light in this movement.

Political Scientist Michael Kenny observes perceptively that the sentiments underlying Brexit, 'emerged in far more varied forms than is typically imagined' (2016: 1). We argue that in post-industrial contexts such as Ashington and Lyng Valley the most significant sentiment underlying Brexit is the aforementioned concern with work. Beyond these contexts themselves this tends to be recognised only obliquely, especially in a commonplace narrative that sees Brexit as a response to globalisation (e.g. Diamond 2018). However, before developing our thesis on the relationship between Brexit and work, it is important to assess critically how people in post-industrial communities, especially their majority working-classes, are typically imagined to typically imagine the logics of Brexit. For it is against that background that the views of people on Brexit in places like Ashington and Lyng Valley are constructed.

As a key agent of Brexit, the post-industrial working class came to be a focus of significant scapegoating for the unexpected Brexit result in the years that followed it. The process is illustrated graphically by the banner (which came to be infamous) carried by an obviously middle-class protester at a 'Remain – keep Britain in Europe' rally. It read, '*HELP! We're trapped on an island that's been taken by MAD PEOPLE*!' Though largely inchoate in statements such as these, scapegoating of the post-industrial working class in relation to Brexit resonates with historic and stigmatising tropes deployed by the middle classes (McKenzie 2013). We consider three such tropes to be of particular salience in relation to Brexit.

Firstly, the post-industrial working-class, and its 'Brexiters' (Brexit supporters) in particular, is commonly stereotyped as racist and xenophobic. The early Twenty-First Century brought significant changes to the immigration profile of many of the UK's post-industrial contexts. Of greatest impact were the National Dispersal Program that re-settled forced migrants in mostly post-industrial areas (Dawson 2002), and the large influx of immigrants wrought by EU expansion in 2004. For example, between 2004-8 roughly 1.5 million people arrived from the new member states (UK Border Agency 2008). At first blush these circumstances may appear to be solid grounds for the emergence of racism. Indeed, the anthropological record documents significant instances of racist hostility (e.g. Evans 2006; Grill 2012). However, its greater part documents practices of immigrant accommodation (e.g. Rhodes 2012; Watt 2006). Notably, studies document how working class people in many post-industrial contexts incorporate immigrants within their communities (Edwards 2000; Fortier 2007; Watt 2006; Rhodes 2012; Tyler 2015), and, as a result how new working class cosmopolitanisms have emerged (Werbner 2006; Wise & Velayutham 2009).

Secondly, the post-industrial working class, and its Brexiters in particular, is commonly stereotyped as being characterised by a resurgent Englishness in the sense of growing sentiment for English culture and tradition (e.g. Eichhorn 2018). There are grounds for this, especially in the much observed 'English indigeneity' (Evans 2012) that emerged in response to immigration and labourist multiculturalism (see below). The idea of English indigeneity has been deployed tactically by far-right groups such as the English Defence League (EDL) who ingeniously turn post-colonial politics on its head (Kuper 2003) and re-represent immigration and multiculturalism as forms of ethnic cleansing that presage genocide of the 'native' English. Ukip was, however, more successful in terms of garnering support for an anti-immigration agenda by casting it less in terms of the overtly racist (and paranoid) rhetoric of fringe groups such as the EDL, and more in terms of concerns about the unrestrained free-movement of people wrought by an increasingly 'borderless' Europe. Nonetheless, like the EDL, for Ukip,

'Englishness is an important pivot around which key elements of the party's appeal revolve' (Hayton 2016: 400).

Having said all this, as several observers have pointed out (e.g. Kenny 2016), resurgent Englishness is a much-exaggerated phenomenon based on a series of inappropriate assumptions. For example, Englishness is not an inevitable dialectical outcome of either the presence of a greater number of non-English people or resurgent Welsh and, particularly Scottish nationalisms. Likewise, Ukip's and the Vote Leave campaign's widespread use of symbols of English culture and tradition should not be confused, as it so often is, with an attachment to said culture and tradition by the ordinary people who supported them (Kenny 2016). To illustrate, way back in 1996 flying that most emblematic symbol of Englishness, the flag of St. George became commonplace in the Northeast. The practice was propelled amongst other things[4] by the success of the England football team in the European football championships of that year. Crucially, the team's success was based largely on the extraordinary performance of Paul Gascoigne, a player from Tyne & Wear[5], which is considered locally in places like Ashington to be England's 'cradle' of football. At the time one football-crazy Ashington informant of Dawson's explained the St. George flag flying above his pigeon 'cree' thus: 'That's all about Geordie pride bonny lad,' i.e. not England. Twenty-two years later the England team of 2018 surpassed the exploits of their 1996 counterparts, this time making it to the World Cup semi-finals, and again largely on the back of outstanding performances by Tyne & Wear born men – goalkeeper Jordan Pickford and captain Jordan Henderson. This time, in the midst of the Brexit crisis the same informant was even more careful to leave no room for misunderstanding. Speaking of his now tattered St. George flag he stated: 'I am all for Brexit. But that […pointing at the flag] has got nowt to do with it. England's for them fucking Cockneys[6]. My flag's all about Geordie pride bonny lad.' It would seem that regional (and especially their material) manifestations of Englishness can, and often are, oxymoronically anti-English in certain respects.

Thirdly, the post-industrial working class, and its Brexiters in particular, is commonly stereotyped as being characterised as hanging on to misplaced senses of entitlement, both in terms of livelihood and polity. Key symbols of this are, respectively, the welfarism and corporatism (in which unions were partners with government and industry in policy-making and power more generally) of the post-World War II era, an era in which Labour – the party of the working-class - was viewed widely as the 'natural party of government'. The most apocryphal and commonplace illustration of this alleged sense of political entitlement is the 'demarcation dispute', where, it is claimed, for example, it took three men to bring light – one to erect the ladder, one to fit the bulb, and one to flick the switch – and three unions to ensure that no one worker usurped another's role. In fact, and as many of our working class informants testify, those days are widely viewed as having long gone, if even they existed. They are acutely aware of livelihood disenfranchisement wrought by the roll back of the welfare state and new and precarious neoliberal employment practices, and the representation of many of 'their own' as contemporary folk devils (Cohen 1972) - 'welfare scroungers' and the like. Likewise, they are acutely aware of their political disenfranchisement (see also Bottero 2009; Rhodes 2011; Rhodes 2012; Edwards et al. 2012; Evans 2012; Smith 2012). That process was instigated and cultivated through nineteen years of neoliberal Conservative government following the election

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[4] Such as 'Cool Britannia', a period of increased pride in the UK, and especially English culture that was inspired largely by pop culture and the success of bands such as Blur and Oasis.

[5] A metropolitan county in the north east of England around the mouths of the rivers Tyne and Wear.

[6] A term generally used to refer to people from London's East End, though commonly used by many northern people to refer pejoratively to all people from southern England.

of the Thatcher administration in 1979. Its effects included, crucially the weakening of unionism, the symbolic centrepiece of which was the defeat of the National Union of Mineworkers in its year-long strike of 1984-85. However, arguably, the most significant moment in working-class political disenfranchisement was, paradoxically, the Labour Party victory of 1997. The party rebranded itself as 'New Labour'. 'New' referred, in part to the party's 'Third Way' politics. In essence, and in what turned out to be a successful attempt to capture the electoral centre-ground, the Third Way's core injunction was prosperity through merit rather than class entitlement. Simultaneously, and in the context of a country that was becoming increasingly ethnically diverse through immigration, New Labour also very explicitly embraced multiculturalism. In short, New Labour abandoned 'Old Labour's' historic partisanship for the, predominantly white, industrial working class.

The veracity of each of these tropes – of working class racism, Englishness and entitlement – is clearly questionable. Nonetheless, we observe, in the Brexit milieu they were re-animated and undergirded by another historic and, in its case, master trope – of what has been described elsewhere as 'povertyism' (e.g. Shildrick et al 2012), whereby the working-class is presented as lacking the requisite knowledge to be able to act in its own interest. In terms of this master trope the working class vote for Brexit was, as one middle class resident of Lyng Valley put it, a 'wrong vote based on wrong knowing'.

On matters of immigration, the views of Lyng Valley informant Jos Blackshaw are typical. Jos was born and raised in Lyng Valley, but spent his working life in a Northern city, climbing the corporate ladder. A recent conversation with a former schoolfriend, who had stayed on in the area, turned to Brexit. Jos had voted to remain; his friend revealed that she had voted to leave. Jos scathingly recounted:

> Half her problem is that she just doesn't like to see brown faces. That's the immigration they're on about, this lot who say they want curbs on immigration. Well, it only shows how little they know about the EU, because that's not the immigration coming out is going to stop. … She said to me, oh, see, you know about these things because of your education. Please! She wants to educate herself, and I told her that. It's complete – excuse me – *cluelessness*, and all this mithering[7] about some lost golden age that never actually happened … it's people like that who've landed us now in a right mess.

Jos characterises a racist working class that voted to leave because, ignorantly and counter-instrumentally (at least in terms of the stereotype of working class racism) its members thought that would prevent the immigration of black people when, in fact, the main effect would be to halt the immigration of, largely white Europeans. On matters of entitlement and disenfranchisement the views of former Ashington school headmaster John Wise are illustrative and typical too. John devotes much of life in retirement to the 'good work' of dispensing nourishment to the poor from one of the town's several food banks. His bewilderment at the Brexit sympathies of many of his clients knows no boundaries:

> Half the folk around here need caring for. They cannot fend for themselves,
> and they cannot even think straight. Half of them are still saying, 'It'll be
> alright when Brexit happens'. They can't see that it'll be so much worse.
> See […pointing to his copy of The Guardian], even according to the modest
> estimates of the Civil Service over fifteen years GDP will contract by at least

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[7] Fussing or moaning.

> 3.9%. In the case of a no deal Brexit it'll be 9.3% (HM Government 2018).
> 9.3%! Do you hear that? Do they know what that means? It's devastation. And,
> as it says here, the poorer you are the greater the negative effect (Ipsos MORI 2016).

And, John went on:

> What they don't see is that with Brexit they're swapping Europe for Trump. Give me
> Europe any day of the week, but this lot need[s] it even more than the likes of me.
> Without the protections of the EU they can look forward to the end of welfare, the free
> market running riot and the end of all the economic benefits that being in Europe gives
> them. For goodness sake, many of them don't even see the irony. There's a great big
> plaque on the door of the place where they collect their free lunches. It says, 'provided
> by European Union funds'. Really. They're cutting their noses to spite their faces. God
> bless the misguided.

During the referendum the most effective campaigning slogan was undoubtedly the Brexiteers' (campaigners for Brexit) 'Taking Back Control'. It seemed to speak to issues of sovereignty, of re-controlling the borders in order to halt immigration and the demise of Englishness, and replacing increasingly Europeanised institutions in order to reverse processes of disenfranchisement. Reflecting the master trope of ignorance and inability to act in one's own interest, views such as those articulated above present, instead working-class Brexiters as a people who, as John Wise went on to put it succinctly, 'aren't taking back control. They're giving it away.'

The trope of ignorance and inability to act in one's own interest – of 'cluelessness', of being 'misguided', and of needing 'caring for' – articulated by many middle class people was commonplace too within Remain-supporting media and several political parties, especially The Liberal Democratic Party. In continuing to campaign for Remain it gave scant respect for the Brexit majority and, indeed, dismissed it with confrontational slogans: most infamously 'Bollocks to Brexit'. And, perhaps it paid the price for this when it failed miserably in the General Election of 2019, when even its own leader was not re-elected. The sense of entitlement to do this, and, indeed, the trope of the working class' ignorance and inability to act in its own interest generally may, we would argue, come from a deep English tradition of upper and middle class paternalism (Thompson 1978). Importantly however, contemporary paternalism in the context of Brexit may be counterproductive. As E. P. Thompson observed long ago, paternalism serves to heighten class tensions and polarise classes in relation to issues that they may otherwise agree upon, were it not for the offensive and patronising articulation of that paternalism (1978). Perhaps this is one reason why, in the face of damning assessments of its likely impacts, support for Brexit amongst working class people remained remarkably resolute (YouGov 2019). Furthermore, contemporary paternalism in the context of Brexit is certainly hypocritical. As Gary Younge points out, voting against one's apparent self-interest, as large sections of the liberal middle classes frequently do by selecting (usually out of good conscience) high taxing governments that will erode their incomes more than others, is not solely the preserve of the working class (2019). Given this, and in the classic anthropological tradition (Evans-Pritchard 1976 [1937]) our task ought to be, then not to patronise and critique but, instead to uncover the logics operated by members of the post-industrial working class in voting for Brexit in the context of their knowing that in many ways it may cut against many of their interests. In other words, our task ought to be to understand why, as one man from Crewe – the now run down centre for maintenance of Britain's locomotives (that most iconic form of transport in the industrial era) – described Brexit, 'it is terrible, but I still want it' (Pidd 2019).

In her study of a former coal-mining town in South Yorkshire Catherine Thorleiffson highlights as both typical and key in terms of explaining support for Brexit the comments of an informant (2016). He states, 'people don't realize that in our community, mining was *all* they (sic) ever known and done' (2016: 560). Thorleiffson sees in such statements an expression of helplessness and, thereby, Brexit as a protest vote. In contrast, we see the expression of a kind of hope, specifically that Brexit may afford a future of *work,* the very thing that brought the formerly industrial places where these people live into being and, thus, the very thing that, as mining and milling people imply and, as we state, continues to define who they are today. Such hope may be misguided, but it is certainly not, *à la* the povertyist trope based on a lack of knowing. Indeed, commonly articulated work-related logics for Brexit are often complex and, dare we say it in the face of the povertyist trope, remarkably sophisticated. These logics also often confound other key stereotypes of the Brexit voting post-industrial working class. By way of illustration we offer two here.

Firstly, in the context of matters of disenfranchisement the meaningfulness of the Brexit maxim 'Taking Back Control' was, we observe, rarely a nostalgia for lost welfare or corporatism. Rather, it was an expression of hope that Brexit might presage an escape from EU adherence to international conventions – such as the Kyoto Protocols – and the free trade Eurozone that appear to stand in the way of the reinvigoration of, especially extractive, industries and, hence work.

Secondly, in the context of immigration the meaningfulness of the Brexit maxim 'Taking Back Control' was, we observe, rarely an expression of racism. Access to an international labour force that EU membership affords is, quite reasonably seen as having militated against local people's ability to find work now. Furthermore, and congruent with the logics of 'Austerity'[8], it is seen as undergirding cut-backs in training, retraining and the development of local human capital more generally, such that the inability of many local people to find work now will continue into the future. As one informant explained to Dawson his apparently paradoxical support for the immigration controls promised by Brexit whilst bestowing the virtues of his Polish neighbours: 'there's nothing hard to understand about it. It's just a case of hating immigration and loving immigrants (2018b: 7).'

Conclusion

This comparative ethnography of post-industrial northern England began by outlining the impacts, historically of industry on sociality, culture and affect, and how these differ according to particular kinds of industry. In particular, we highlighted individualism in milling and solidarism in mining. Then, we took issue with a common assumption, especially within anthropological literature: that de-industrialisation disrupted industrial socialities, cultures and affects to such an extent that the communities upon which they were founded are now 'lost'.

In contrast, we illustrate ethnographically the continuity of industry's presences, especially at the level of affect, and how these affective presences, or 'industrial afterlives' continue to frame social action and community. Drawing on the seminal work of Ferdinand Tönnies, we describe

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[8] The reduction of government budget deficits through spending cuts and/or tax increases.

this as 'post-industrial industrial *gemeinschaft*', a grouping of people based on mutual bonds and *feelings* of togetherness that, in this case were engendered by industry and are reinforced rather than dissipated by the very absence of industry. The core of those bonds in towns like Lyng Valley and Ashington, which came into being because of industry is, inevitably work. Indeed, we demonstrate, concern about work transcends even deep political schisms between attachment to neoliberal-like and labourist ideologies that have emerged, in part from the contrasting individuated and collectivised forms of production and work in these contexts.

In the tone set by influential cultural theorist Lauren Berlant (2007), contemporary work on post-industrial affect tends to theorise de-industrialisation alongside industry's continued affective presences generating such social groups in ways that are, however characterised by senses and experiences of hopelessness. Where once Marxian theorists spoke of the mutuality of the oppressed (Dawson 1998), affect theorists tend to depict a mutuality of the post-industrial depressed. This elides with some of our observations, but not all of them! And, it is in this sense too that we see particular value in the notion *gemeinschaft*. As we have stated, for Tönnies the mutual bonds and feelings that are the essence of *gemeinschaft* can only be sustained if their very sustenance is felt to be a specific goal of the group.

Moments of such goal-orientation are just that, momentary. We have argued that Brexit was one such crucial moment. Its central slogan 'Taking Back Control' was, to adopt the anthropological parlance, multivocal (Cohen 1985). Yes, for some working class people no doubt, it spoke of Brexit addressing their racist sentiments, English patriotism and senses of entitlement. However, we demonstrate, through reference to both ethnographic and secondary material, these dispositions do not apply to many other working class people in England's northern post-industrial hinterlands. They are, more often than not manifestations of deep-seated middle class stereotypes about the working class that came to the surface in the political cauldron of Brexit. For the members of the post-industrial working class to whom we refer Brexit brought another kind of hope – for , if not quite a 'future perfect' (Shoshan 2012: 337) then, at least, a future possible in which reality might be able to realign with people's 'affective urges' (Berlant 2007: 278-9) that were borne of industry. In short, in Brexit the post-industrial working class saw, above all, a glimmer of hope for a world of work and, hence a return to senses of normality and their reason for being.

Author Bios

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Differential Opportunity for Men from Low-Income Backgrounds across Pennsylvania

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Abstract

This study examines the place-based differences in opportunity experienced by men from low-income backgrounds across U.S. and Pennsylvania counties. Our quantitative findings suggest that U.S. and Pennsylvania counties are very unequal in terms of how men raised in low-income families fare in adulthood on measures of upward mobility, household income, college graduation, incarceration, and marriage. A variety of county-level measures of concentrated disadvantage were associated with these outcomes, including county household income, poverty rate, degree of racial segregation, college graduation rate, single parenthood rate, social capital rate, and job growth rate. Additionally, anonymous qualitative data from phone interviews with county commissioners from some of the Pennsylvania counties that struggled the most in our analysis helped to confirm our findings with valuable on-the-ground perspectives. We discuss these findings and their implications for equality of opportunity in the U.S. and the state of Pennsylvania.

Keywords

Concentrated disadvantage, low income, mobility, opportunity, Pennsylvania, residential contexts

Introduction

The United States is incredibly unequal. The top 10 percent of Americans owns almost three-quarters (73%) of all wealth and earns nearly half (47%) of all income (WID 2020). The top one percent earns 40 percent more in a single week than the bottom fifth takes home in a year (Stiglitz 2013, p. 5). Among 36 OECD countries, the U.S. ranks very poorly on a number of measures, including overall poverty (36th), child poverty (33rd), economic inequality (33rd), overall social spending (21st), and family benefits public spending (35th) (OECD 2020).

This inequality is leaving 'the American social fabric, and the country's economic sustainability, fraying at the edges' (Stiglitz 2013, p. 2). Men without a college degree have become increasingly economically insecure since the 1970s (Mishel et. al. 2012; Putnam 2015). The wealth gap between those with and without a college education has increased significantly over the past few decades—wealth has increased for the college educated, and declined somewhat for those with a high school degree or less. Americans are increasingly marrying people with similar economic and educational characteristics (Putnam 2015). The most affluent American women outlive the poorest by a decade, while the richest American men outlive the

poorest by 15 years. In fact, the life expectancies of the poorest men in the U.S. are comparable to those of men in Sudan and Pakistan (Chetty et. al. 2016b).

The intergenerational earnings elasticity (IGE)[1] in the U.S. is at the top end among OECD countries (Mishel et. al. 2012)—it has recently been estimated to be as high as 0.60 or higher (Mazumder 2015)—which suggests very unequal opportunities for American children. Only 48 percent of children born in the bottom income decile are meeting key benchmarks in early childhood, compared to 78 percent born in the top decile, a 30 percentage point gap—a gap that *worsens* by early adulthood (38% versus 74%, or a 36 percentage point gap) (Sawhill et. al. 2012, p. 7). Seventy-percent of American children born in the bottom family income quintile will stay in the bottom two quintiles as adults, while only four percent will rise to the top quintile (Pew Charitable Trusts 2012, p. 6). This is akin to a hypothetical low-income kindergarten cohort of 25 students seeing 17 or 18 of their classmates still stuck near the bottom many years later at their high school reunion, with only one classmate rising to the top. And the achievement gap between high- and low-income American children born in 2001 is 30-40 percent larger than it was just 25 years earlier (Reardon 2011).

Substantial gaps exist between the social classes in a number of other areas as well, including happiness, college graduation, health and health insurance coverage, church attendance, civic engagement, social capital, trust, incarceration, marriage and divorce, single parenthood, age of first birth, parenting skills, and even family dinners (Mishel et. al. 2012; Putnam 2015; Rabuy and Kopf 2015).

Racial and gender inequalities abound as well. On average, African American households earn around 60 percent of the income of White households, and own only about ten percent of the wealth (Pew Research Center 2016; Ingraham 2019; McIntosh et. al. 2020). Less than half (43%) of African Americans own their own homes, compared to almost three quarters (72%) of Whites. Only 35 percent of African American adults are married, compared to 66 percent of Whites, and a slight majority of African American children live in a single-parent household, compared to only 19 percent of Whites (Pew Research Center 2016). While most middle-class White children either remain in the middle class or rise as adults, a majority of middle-class Black children (56%) will be *downwardly mobile* (Reeves 2013). And African Americans are vastly overrepresented in U.S. prisons and are treated unequally at every stage of the criminal justice process (Alexander 2010; Bonilla-Silva 2014; Reiman and Leighton 2017).

The U.S. ranks 29th out of 35 OECD countries with available data on female representation in politics (OECD 2020). In 2019, the *Fortune 500* set a record for the proportion of its companies headed by female CEOs—at only seven percent (Zillman 2019). Some studies suggest that even in married dual-earner couples with children, women still do at least 50 percent more housework and childcare a week than their husbands (Yavorsky et. al. 2015, p. 670)—contributing to the motherhood penalty (also called the child penalty) women face when they become mothers, forcing them to take their foot off of the career pedal somewhat as they are disproportionately responsible for balancing work and family. Women face many obstacles in

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[1] Here is an explanation of the IGE from Lawrence Mishel and his colleagues: "Economists measure the extent of intergenerational mobility by calculating the correlation between income or earnings of parents and that of their children once they grow up and earn their own income—this is known as intergenerational elasticity, or IGE. . . The higher the IGE, the greater the influence of one's birth circumstances on later life position" (Mishel et. al. 2012, p. 150). IGE values range from 0 to 1. A value of 1 would suggest extreme rigidity—children earning basically the same exact incomes as their parents. A value of 0 would suggest virtually no relationship between the earnings of parents and children.

the workplace, from the glass ceiling to discrimination to sexual harassment and more (Moss-Racusin et. al. 2012; Langer 2017; Huang et. al. 2019). And despite significant progress in recent decades, the gender pay gap nevertheless persists, with full-time female workers earning between 77-85 percent of what their male counterparts earn, depending upon the analysis (Blau and Kahn 2017; Graf et. al. 2017; Gould 2019).

In addition to these aforementioned inequalities, Americans are increasingly experiencing inequality of place. As Sampson (2019) notes, 'income segregation has deepened the neighbourhood divide in cities across the country' (p. 6). Data from across the U.S. suggest that American neighborhoods are becoming more segregated by income. Bischoff and Reardon (2014) found that the proportion of families living in poor or affluent neighborhoods rose significantly over the last 40 years, while the proportion of families living in middle-income neighborhoods declined significantly. Research suggests that even when Americans leave their neighborhoods throughout the week, those from advantaged and disadvantaged neighborhoods are largely visiting non-overlapping areas (Sampson 2019). As Putnam (2015) notes, this growing social class segregation is showing up in the opportunities available to American children:

> growing class segregation across neighborhoods, schools, marriages (and probably also civic associations, workplaces, and friendship circles) means that rich Americans and poor Americans are living, learning, and raising children in increasingly separate and unequal worlds, removing the stepping-stones to upward mobility (p. 41).

A significant amount of evidence suggests that inequality of place is highly racialized in the U.S., with most African American children being raised in areas of concentrated disadvantage, a rarity for White children—an unconscionable 78 percent of Black children grow up in highly-disadvantaged neighborhoods, compared to only five percent of White children (Sharkey 2009, p. 10). As Coates (2014) explains, in the U.S., 'the concentration of poverty has been paired with a concentration of melanin.' Or as Sampson (2019) notes, 'The spatial isolation of African Americans produces exposure to concentrated, cumulative, and compounded disadvantage, constituting a powerful form of racial disparity' (p. 8). A majority of Black families (67%) who start out in poor neighborhoods remain there in the next generation, compared to a minority (40%) of White families. Similarly, a minority of Black families (39%) who start out in affluent neighborhoods remain there in the next generation, compared to a majority (63%) of White families (Sharkey 2013, p. 38). And around half of Black families live in poor neighborhoods over consecutive generations, compared to only seven percent of White families (Sharkey 2013, p. 39).

Our own state of Pennsylvania[2] mirrors the country's inequalities in many ways. The Gini coefficient in PA, for instance, has been reported to be as high as 0.47, based on American Community Survey data (Kolmar 2018). Much of the state is also racially segregated—UCLA researchers, for instance, demonstrated that PA scores below average (and in some cases well below average) on a variety of measures of non-White students' exposure to White students (Orfield et. al. 2014).

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[2] Lawrence Eppard teaches at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania, where Troy Okum received his bachelor's degree and where Lucas Everidge is currently an undergraduate student. Okum and Everidge are also originally from the state of Pennsylvania.

In this article, we explore some of the negative consequences of widespread inequality of place in the U.S. We mostly focus on our own state of Pennsylvania, and the place-based differences in life outcomes of men who came from similarly low-income backgrounds, but grew up in different counties with different residential contexts, and how this offered them differential opportunities to succeed as adults.

Literature Review

The Importance of Residential Contexts

Research suggests that place-based characteristics of neighborhoods and communities (henceforth 'residential contexts')[3] influence the type and quantity of risks and opportunities that residents are confronted with. These contexts are particularly influential in the life chances of children raised there. Important characteristics include institutions, social organization and norms, collective efficacy, socioeconomic profile, predominant family structures, peer networks, environmental burdens, labor markets, and marriage markets. As Sampson (2019) notes, 'neighbourhood contexts are important determinants of the quantity and quality of human behaviour in their own right' (p. 8). And as Putnam (2015) explains, 'researchers have steadily piled up evidence of how important social context, social institutions, and social networks—in short, our communities—remain for our well-being and our kids' opportunities' (p. 206). Children raised in disadvantaged residential contexts tend to have worse life outcomes compared to their more-advantaged counterparts on a variety of measures, including cognitive skills, academic performance, educational attainment, adult economic performance, social mobility, substance abuse, sexual behavior, teen pregnancy, mental and physical health, aggression and violence, deviance and criminal involvement, and victimization (Bronzaft and McCarthy 1975; Wilson 1987; Ransom and Pope 1992; Peeples and Loeber 1994; Wilson 1996; Evans and Maxwell 1997; Sampson et. al. 1999; Sampson et. al. 2002; Stansfield et. al. 2005; Brady et. al. 2008; Pebley and Sastry 2008; Sharkey 2009; Schwartz 2010; Sharkey 2010; Sharkey and Sampson 2010; Stoddard et. al. 2011; Wodtke et. al. 2011; Sampson 2012; Sharkey 2013; Chetty 2014; Chetty et. al. 2014; Sharkey and Faber 2014; Chetty et. al. 2015; Hamner et. al. 2015; Putnam 2015; Sharkey and Sampson 2015; Wolfers 2015; Rojas-Gaona et. al. 2016; Sampson and Winter 2016; Sampson 2019).

As but one example of the profound impact that residential contexts can have on children's outcomes, Wodtke and his colleagues (2011) found that living in disadvantaged neighborhoods over the course of one's childhood can significantly reduce the probability of high school graduation—growing up in the most disadvantaged quintile of neighborhoods instead of the most advantaged, for instance, reduced the probability of graduation from 96 to 76 percent for Black children in the study. The researchers noted that:

> Our results indicate that sustained exposure to disadvantaged neighborhoods—characterized by high poverty, unemployment, and welfare receipt; many female-headed households; and few well-educated adults—throughout the entire childhood life course has a devastating impact on the chances of graduating from high school (Wodtke et. al. 2011, p. 731).

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[3] This wording comes from Sharkey and Faber 2014.

It is not just the characteristics of residential contexts which matter, but also at what point in children's lives they live there, how long they live there, which characteristics children are exposed to, and each individual child's degree of vulnerability to particular place-based characteristics (Sharkey and Faber 2014). Sharkey (2013), for instance, found that children performed best on tests of cognitive skills when neither they nor any of their parents were raised in a high-poverty neighborhood (these students scored well above average). Scores dropped significantly if the child or one of their parents (but not both the child and any of their parents) was raised in a high-poverty neighborhood, and then dropped considerably more if a child and at least one of their parents were raised in a high-poverty neighborhood (the last group was well below average) (Sharkey 2013, p. 119). Even after adjusting for a variety of factors, Sharkey found that the sizable remaining gaps represented the equivalent of missing three or four years of schooling.

Neighborhood and community institutions not only provide services, but also play an important role in socialization and skill development. These institutions include schools, childcare providers, healthcare providers, police, churches, social service providers, parks, and civic associations (Pebley and Sastry 2008; Sharkey and Faber 2014; Putnam 2015). Schools have received particular attention in the discourse of opportunity in the U.S. There are a variety of school-related factors that are important to consider. One is of course teacher effectiveness. Research suggests that the teachers found in high-performing low-poverty American schools, for instance, are often more experienced and effective than those found at low-performing high-poverty schools (Putnam 2015, p. 172-173).

Another school-related factor of particular importance is the composition of the student population. These populations are incredibly unequal across American schools—Putnam (2015, p. 170), for instance, demonstrates that suspensions are two and a half times more common and classroom problems are four times more common at high-poverty schools compared to low-poverty schools. Researchers examining the impact of student populations have focused on the way in which the expectations, aspirations, norms, behaviors, pressure, family resources, and parental involvement of one's peers rubs off on them. In some studies, students' test scores correlate more strongly with their classmates' backgrounds than with their own (Putnam 2015, p. 165). And Chetty and his colleagues (2014, Online Appendix Table VIII) found that test score percentiles (correlation = 0.59) and high school dropout rates (correlation = -0.57) of students were some of the strongest correlates of intergenerational mobility across American commuting zones.

Inequalities in our home state of Pennsylvania are illustrative. When comparing one disadvantaged high school in Philadelphia with an advantaged one only a few miles away in the suburbs, data reveal substantial gaps in English proficiency (9% compared to 95%), math proficiency (10% to 88%), science proficiency (4% to 92%), regular attendance (48% to 91%), post-secondary education transition (26% to 86%), percent gifted (0% to 12%), special education (35% to 14%), economic disadvantage (76% to 12%), and racial segregation (92% non-White to 32%). Additionally, there is a $14,755 gap in per-pupil expenditures (Future Ready PA Index 2020). Unfortunately, such gaps between schools within driving distance of each other are not hard to find across Pennsylvania, and indeed across the entire country.

There are far too many studies of school inequality to summarize here, but a few are illustrative. Reardon (2016) found a 0.78 correlation between school district socioeconomic status and average academic achievement across the U.S., with 'students in many of the most advantaged school districts [scoring] more than four grade levels above those of students in the most

disadvantaged districts' (p. 7). Schwartz (2010) analyzed the longitudinal school performance of 850 students living in public housing in the same county but who had been randomly assigned to housing in different neighborhoods and therefore randomly assigned to different schools (preventing self-selection). She found that the children who attended the school district's most-advantaged schools performed far better in math and reading than their counterparts assigned to the district's least-advantaged schools—by the end of elementary school, for instance, the initial math achievement gap between public housing children and their more-advantaged peers in the most-advantaged schools was cut in half.

Social organization refers to the trust, social cohesion, shared expectations, normative environment, social support, adult role models and mentors, social capital, degree of social control, and level of isolation found in different residential contexts. These characteristics contribute to residents' happiness and well-being, educational and economic outcomes, access to resources and services, stress and mental health, criminal behavior and violence, and substance abuse (Wilson 1987, 1996; Sampson et. al. 1999; Sampson et. al. 2002; Pebley and Sastry 2008; Putnam 2015). Underscoring the impact of community adult role models on children's development, Sampson (2019) notes that, 'Seemingly banal acts such as the collective supervision of children and adult mentorship add up to make a difference' (p. 12).

Putnam (2015) provides informative examples of how neighborhoods with lower-income and less-educated neighbors offer less social capital, mentoring, and trust to children residing there. In *Our Kids* (2015, p. 209) he demonstrated substantial gaps between high school educated and college educated parents in social ties with college professors (21% compared to 71%), lawyers (50% to 82%), and CEOs (22% to 44%), as but a few examples.[4] He notes that 64 percent of high-SES children have non-family mentors, compared to less than 40 percent of low-SES children (Putnam 2015, p. 215). He also explains that residents in affluent neighborhoods are more than twice as likely to trust their neighbors as residents in poor neighborhoods (Putnam 2015, p. 219).

Local labor and marriage markets can constrain residents' chances of success—providing them low-quantity and/or low-quality employment and marriage prospects—or they can enable residents' success by providing them with high-quantity and/or high-quality prospects. Neighborhoods and communities with gainfully-employed and happily-married people are not only healthier for adults, but also for children (Pebley and Sastry 2008).

There are a variety of notable studies on inequalities in environmental burdens across American residential contexts. Ransom and Pope (1992), for instance, found an association between air pollution and school absenteeism. Other studies have found that children who are exposed to excessive noise from highway traffic, airplanes, and trains tend to have worse reading skills and memory (Bronzaft and McCarthy 1975; Evans and Maxwell 1997; Stansfeld et. al. 2005). In one of these studies (Bronzaft and McCarthy 1975), data from a school in New York City revealed that students in some of the classrooms closest to noise from a nearby elevated train were 3-4 months behind their peers on the quieter side of school. Summarizing research he conducted with Winter (2016), Sampson (2019) explains the connection they found between the racial composition of Chicago neighborhoods and exposure to lead:

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[4] Precise data provided to us through direct personal correspondence with Robert Putnam.

Drawing on comprehensive data from over one million blood tests administered to Chicago children from 1995 to 2013 and matched to over 2,300 geographic block groups, we found that black and Hispanic neighbourhoods exhibited extraordinarily high rates of lead toxicity compared with white neighbourhoods, in some cases with prevalence rates topping 90% of the child population (p. 14).

Residential Contexts and Life Chances

Although residential contexts impact a wide range of life chances, some particularly important outcomes that we want to focus on are college graduation, marriage, economic performance, upward mobility, and violence.

A recent re-analysis (Chetty et. al. 2015) of data from the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) experiment—a 1990s federal government experiment which gave a number of American families who were living in public housing a voucher to move to better neighborhoods in order to see if it improved their lives—found that neighborhoods matter a great deal for children's life chances. This new analysis showed significant gains in children's rates of college graduation, likelihood of marriage, economic performance, and the quality of their eventual adult neighborhood of residence. Children whose parents moved them to low-poverty areas when they were young (prior to age 13), compared to children their age in the control group who did not move, were more likely to graduate college, live in better neighborhoods as adults, and have much better economic outcomes later in life. These children ended up earning around a third (31%) more than their control-group counterparts, and their overall additional earnings totaled close to $100,000 (Wolfers 2015). Female children who were moved to low-poverty neighborhoods were more likely to marry in adulthood and less likely to become single parents. The duration of exposure to a better neighborhood mattered in how much of a positive impact children enjoyed. Additionally, the social and economic gains from these moves likely offset the costs of the vouchers (Chetty et. al. 2015; Wolfers 2015). As Wolfers (2015) summarizes, this new analysis:

> suggests that the next generation—the grandchildren of the winners of this lottery—are more likely to be raised by two parents, to enjoy higher family incomes and to spend their entire childhood in better neighborhoods. That is, the gains from this policy experiment are likely to persist over several generations.

Like Chetty's work, a number of other studies have also shown that moving children out of disadvantaged and dangerous residential contexts and into more advantaged and less dangerous ones improves their life chances in a variety of important ways (Sharkey and Faber 2014).

Perhaps one of the more notable studies of the impact of residential contexts on children's life chances was a 2014 paper by Chetty and his colleagues. In this paper, the authors calculated the variables most strongly associated with differences in upward mobility across American commuting zones. The variation was significant—children were nearly three times more likely to rise from the bottom to the top quintile in San Jose, CA, for instance, compared to Charlotte, NC (Chetty et. al. 2014, Table III). Some of the strongest correlates of upward mobility across American commuting zones were fraction of children with single mothers (-0.76), social capital (0.64), test score percentile (0.59), income inequality (-0.58), fraction Black residents (-0.58), high school dropout rate (-0.57), fraction married (0.57), and fraction religious (0.52) (Chetty et. al. 2014, Online Appendix Table VIII). Chetty and his colleagues found that a community's

single parenthood rate was not only strongly correlated with upward mobility for all children (-0.76), but also for children *who had married parents themselves* (-0.66) (2014, Online Appendix Figure XII). Summarizing this work, Chetty (2014) explained:

> we find a strong negative correlation between standard measures of racial and income segregation and upward mobility. . . These findings lead us to identify segregation as the first of five major factors that are strongly correlated with mobility. The second factor we explore is inequality. [Commuting zones] with larger Gini coefficients have less upward mobility, consistent with the 'Great Gatsby curve'. . . Third, proxies for the quality of the K-12 school system are also correlated with mobility. . . Fourth, social capital indices—which are proxies for the strength of social networks and community involvement in an area—are very strongly correlated with mobility. . . Finally, the strongest predictors of upward mobility are measures of family structure such as the fraction of single parents in the area (p. 5-6).

Residential Contexts and Violence

The risk one will commit or be a victim of acts of aggression and/or violence is also impacted in important ways by residential contexts, as 'concentrated disadvantage remains a strong predictor of violent crime' (Sampson 2019, p. 13). There are a number of notable studies, of which the following are but a small sample.

Peeples and Loeber (1994) found that young African American males were more frequently and more seriously delinquent than their White counterparts, until the researchers controlled for neighborhood characteristics (including significant differences in neighborhood poverty, welfare receipt, single parenthood, and unemployment), at which point the delinquent behaviors of these groups proved to be very similar. Commenting on this phenomenon,[5] Sampson (2019) notes that, 'racial disparities in violent crime rates [are] attributable in large part to the persistent structural disadvantages disproportionately concentrated in African American communities' (p. 12), and 'race is not a direct cause of violence, but is rather a marker for the cluster of social and material disadvantages that both follow from and constitute racial status in America' (p. 13).

Hamner and her colleagues (2015) found a positive association between exposure to community violence and both reactive and proactive aggression among adolescents. Stoddard and her colleagues (2011) found that children who experienced hopelessness—which was impacted by neighborhood characteristics—were more likely to commit violence with a weapon when they grew older. Brady and her colleagues (2008) found an association between exposure to community violence during middle adolescence and serious violent behavior during late adolescence.

In *Stuck in Place*, Sharkey (2013) mapped homicides across Chicago, finding a 'strikingly visible' (p. 30) association between neighborhood poverty, racial segregation, and homicide:

> the concentration of violence goes hand in hand with the concentration of poverty. There is a remarkable spatial clustering of homicides in and around neighborhoods with high levels of poverty. . . there are entire sections of this violent city where the most

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[5] Sampson is not commenting on this specific study but this phenomenon more generally.

extreme form of violence, a local homicide, is an unknown occurrence. There are other neighborhoods where homicides are a common feature of life. . . these maps provide perhaps the most vivid portrait of what living in areas of concentrated poverty can mean in America's cities (p. 30).

Sharkey and Sampson (2010) demonstrated that moving youth far from their disadvantaged neighborhoods was associated with a decrease in violent behavior. And studies have demonstrated a link between exposure to violence and children's cognitive development and health (Sharkey 2010; Sampson 2012; Sharkey and Sampson 2015; Sampson 2019).

Methods

This study was designed to further explore the impact of place on the chances of success in the U.S., focusing specifically on differential opportunity across the state of Pennsylvania. We focused on low-income men due to the important manner in which they illustrate differential opportunity in the U.S. Rising from a low-income background to the top 20 percent is a difficult feat, given the many disadvantages associated with being raised in a low-income household. By focusing on men who have similar disadvantages at the household level, we can see how these disadvantages play out very differently in different geographic locations—how men in some areas are much more likely to rise than men in others—thus homing in on the impact of place.

All quantitative data come from the publicly-accessible Opportunity Atlas database housed at Opportunity Insights (2020), which we downloaded and analyzed using SPSS statistical software. This database of anonymous federal tax return data and U.S. Census Bureau data allows researchers to examine the relationship between community of origin (and characteristics of these communities, such as family structure,[6] racial segregation,[7] household income, poverty rate, fraction college graduates, job growth rate, and social capital[8]) and adult outcomes (such as upward mobility,[9] household income, incarceration rate, marriage rate, and college graduation rate) for over 20 million Americans. Data is available by demographic subgroup, allowing researchers to explore where individuals born between 1978-1983 with similar characteristics and backgrounds (such as race, gender, and parental income) ended up in their mid-thirties on a variety of outcomes, and how this is related to the different residential contexts of their childhoods.

For this study, we focused on the outcomes of men who were raised in low-income households (25th percentile). First, we ranked all 67 counties in Pennsylvania from best to worst on outcomes for men from low-income backgrounds on measures of upward mobility, household income, incarceration, marriage, and college graduation. Then we averaged county ranks across these five measures, creating one overall opportunity ranking. Finally, we calculated the county-level variables most strongly associated (bivariate correlations and multiple regression analyses) with opportunity both across U.S. counties[10] and across Pennsylvania counties specifically.

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[6] Fraction single parents.

[7] This racial segregation measure is not optimal and is rather crude, but is all we had available. This variable is simply "fraction non-White."

[8] For a detailed explanation of this index variable, see Chetty et. al. 2014.

[9] Rising from a low-income background to the top 20% in household income.

[10] 3,141 counties plus Washington, D.C. in database, although not all counties have complete data.

Additionally, anonymous[11] qualitative data come from phone interviews we conducted with five county commissioners from some of the Pennsylvania counties that struggled the most in our analysis (all of these commissioners serve counties that scored in the ten lowest-opportunity counties in our analysis). All interviews were conducted in March 2020. These commissioners were asked to reflect on their county's opportunity score and the challenges that their constituents face. Interview data were qualitatively coded in order to discern important patterns and themes, using coding techniques similar to those articulated by Charmaz (2006).

Results

Correlates of Men's Outcomes across the United States

County-level measures of college graduation rates, degree of racial segregation, job growth rates, median household income, poverty rates, single parenthood rates, and social capital were all associated with opportunity for men from low-income backgrounds (see Table 1). Marriage was most strongly correlated with county racial segregation (-0.63, $p < .001$), county single parenthood (-0.59, $p < .001$) (see Figure 1), county poverty (-0.37, $p < .001$), and county social capital (0.35, $p < .001$). Upward mobility was most strongly correlated with county single parenthood (-0.45, $p < .001$), county poverty (-0.45, $p < .001$), and county household income (0.37, $p < .001$). Incarceration was most strongly correlated with county racial segregation (0.44, $p < .001$), county single parenthood (0.42, $p < .001$), and county poverty (0.30, $p < .001$). College graduation was most strongly correlated with county college graduation (0.44, $p < .001$) and county median household income (0.32, $p < .001$). And household income was most strongly correlated with county single parenthood (-0.56, $p < .001$), county poverty (-0.52, $p < .001$) (see Figure 2), and county racial segregation (-0.41, $p < .001$).

Multiple Regression Models Predicting Outcomes across the United States

We ran separate multiple regression models predicting our five outcomes for men from low-income backgrounds across the U.S. The following county-level independent variables were included in all models: poverty rate, median household income, college graduation rate, single parenthood rate, degree of racial segregation, job growth rate, and social capital.

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[11] All identifying information has been changed or removed to the extent possible.

Table 1. Correlations between Origin County Characteristics and Low-Income Men's Adult Outcomes across the United States.

	Low-Income Men's Adult Outcomes				
	College	Incarceration	Income	Marriage	Mobility
Origin County Characteristics					
College grads	0.44***	0.01	0.12***	-0.08***	0.22***
Income	0.32***	-0.07***	0.27***	0.01	0.37***
Job growth	0.15***	0.03	0.14***	0.00	0.24***
Non-White	-0.10***	0.44***	-0.41***	-0.63***	-0.22***
Poverty	-0.26***	0.30***	-0.52***	-0.37***	-0.45***
Single parents	-0.24***	0.42***	-0.56***	-0.59***	-0.45***
Social capital	0.09***	-0.22***	0.27***	0.35***	0.13***

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

The outcome of marriage was most strongly predicted by county single parenthood (Beta = -0.466, $p < .001$), followed by county racial segregation (Beta = -0.366, $p < .001$), county median household income (Beta = -0.364, $p < .001$), and county poverty (Beta = -0.195, $p < .001$). The model r square was 0.571 ($p < .001$) (see Appendix Table 2).

The outcome of household income was most strongly predicted by county poverty (Beta = -0.432, $p < .001$), followed by county single parenthood (Beta = -0.364, $p < .001$) and county median household income (Beta = -0.245, $p < .001$). The model r square was 0.388 ($p < .001$) (see Appendix Table 3).

The outcome of upward mobility was most strongly predicted by county poverty (Beta = -0.282, $p < .001$), followed by county single parenthood (Beta = -0.268, $p < .001$) and county social capital (Beta = -0.106, $p < .001$). The model r square was 0.268 ($p < .001$) (see Appendix Table 4).

The outcome of incarceration was most strongly predicted by county single parenthood (Beta = 0.305, $p < .001$), followed by county racial segregation (Beta = 0.276, $p < .001$), county median household income (Beta = 0.129, $p < .001$), and county poverty (Beta = 0.120, $p < .001$). The model r square was 0.260 ($p < .001$) (see Appendix Table 5).

The outcome of college graduation was most strongly predicted by county college graduation (Beta = 0.494, $p < .001$), followed by county median household income (Beta = -0.200, $p < .001$), county poverty (Beta = -0.151, $p < .001$), and county single parenthood (Beta = -0.129, $p < .001$). The model r square was 0.220 ($p < .001$) (see Appendix Table 6).

Figure 1. Association between County Single Parenthood and Low-Income Men's Marriage Rates across United States.
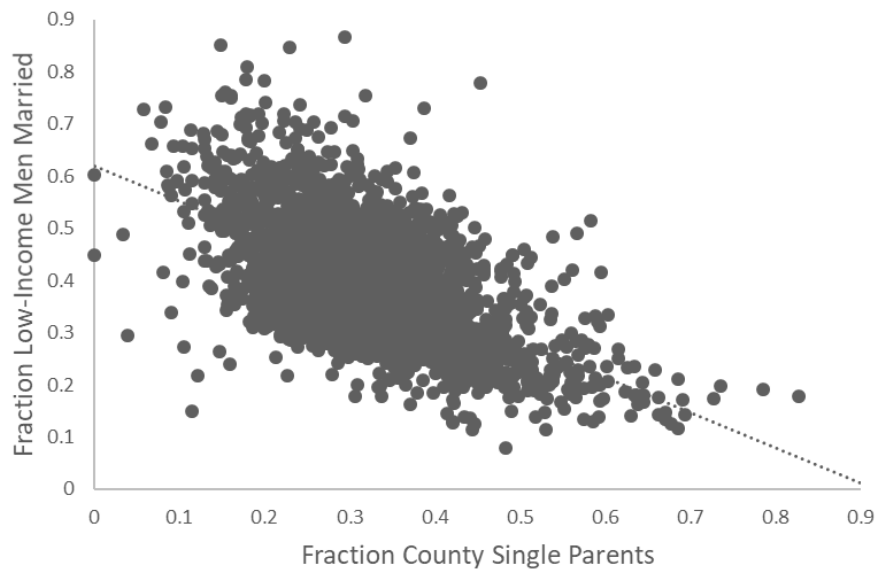
Note: r = -0.59***.

Figure 2. Association between County Poverty and Low-Income Men's Household Income across United States.
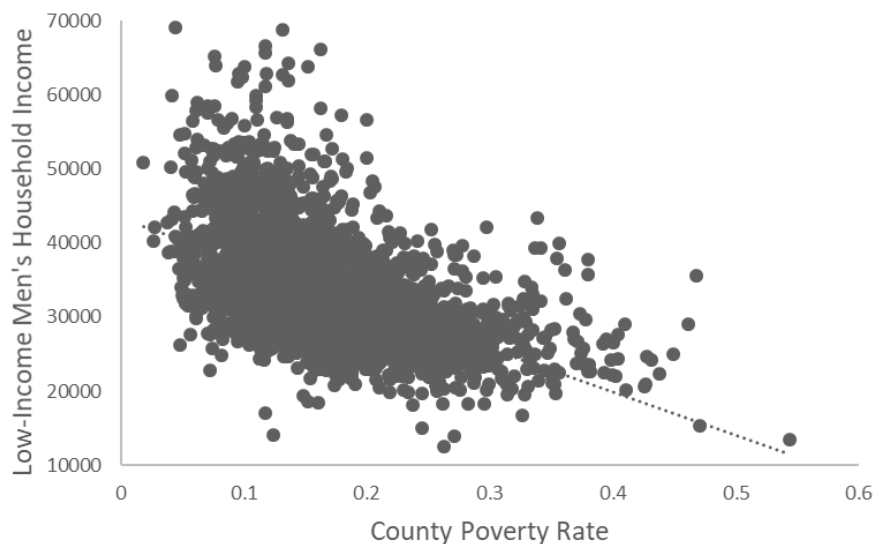
Note: r = -0.52***.

Differential Opportunity across Pennsylvania Counties

Tables 2-6 show all 67 Pennsylvania counties ranked by outcomes for men from low-income backgrounds on measures of upward mobility, incarceration, marriage, median household income, and college graduation. We ranked all Pennsylvania counties from best to worst on all five of these outcomes and then averaged these ranks as an overall measure of opportunity for low-income men. Based on our analyses, men from low-income backgrounds had the best

opportunity in Indiana County, Tioga County, Clarion County, Wyoming County, Susquehanna County, and Westmoreland County (see Table 7).

We then ran a multiple regression model predicting counties' overall opportunity index rank (model r square = 0.372, p < .001) (see Appendix Table 1). The three statistically-significant independent variables were county single parenthood (Beta = 0.450, p < .01), county racial segregation (Beta = 0.415, p < .05), and county social capital (Beta = 0.357, p < .05). As an example of the size of these effects, the regression coefficient for single parenthood in this model represented a 6.7 rank drop in opportunity for every five percent increase in the county single parenthood rate.

When we ran multiple regression models predicting each individual outcome in PA, none of the county variables besides the aforementioned (single parenthood, racial segregation, and social capital) were statistically significant, except in one important instance. College graduation rates for men from low-income backgrounds were not predicted[12] by any variable except county college graduation (Beta = 0.714, p < .01). This association represents a 2.7 percent increase in college graduation rates for men from low-income backgrounds for every 5 percent increase in a county's college graduation rate in PA. This model explained 50 percent of the variance in college graduation rates for men from low-income backgrounds in PA (model p < .001).

On the Ground: Reflections from Pennsylvania County Commissioners

We conducted phone interviews with five Pennsylvania county commissioners who serve counties that scored in the ten lowest-opportunity counties in our analysis. We asked these commissioners to reflect on their county's opportunity score and tell us the specific types of challenges that their county constituents face. Interview data were analyzed using qualitative coding techniques (similar to Charmaz 2006) in order to discern important patterns and themes. Issues that were particularly important for these commissioners were limited affordable housing, limited healthcare access, educational problems, crime and drugs, limited healthy food options, community isolation, shortages of well-paying jobs, widespread single-parenthood, and blight.[13]

Commissioners expressed considerable concern about how isolated their communities were from important institutions and quality employment, as these quotes illustrate:

> The connection between transportation and jobs, quality jobs. If they don't want to be a housekeeper or something like that up here, then we have to make sure they have the appropriate transportation. If a manufacturer were to come in and not be along a public transport route, then that causes a problem (Commissioner #4).

> In our county there is a lack of employment. More people leave our county than in any other county in the state to find work, I think it's over 80%. They drive every day. They have to leave the county to get work. We're trying to look at more and more businesses to come in, do whatever we can (Commissioner #5).

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[12] No other variable was statistically significant below .05.

[13] All identifying information has been changed or removed to the extent possible.

> Where they live, it's not really where the jobs are. Most of them can't afford vehicles, so they need public transportation. Our public transit system is actually financially struggling at a time when we need them to expand, they're actually looking at cutting back on routes. We may need them to merge with another city. I've been a proponent for a while that we really need to have a regional public transit system (Commissioner #4).

This isolation constrained residents' access to a variety of institutions, with medical services being of particular concern to commissioners. One noted that, 'Access to healthcare for low-income families is difficult in our county. To get to a hospital one way is 45 minutes, another is 30 minutes' (Commissioner #1). Another commented that, 'Access to mental health services in our county is pretty limited. We do have a facility, but it's only open a couple days a week' (Commissioner #2).

In addition to medical services, a common concern was access to quality grocery stores to provide healthy eating options to residents. Commissioners expressed a strong desire to bring in larger and higher-quality grocery stores to provide better alternatives to the unhealthier options currently available:

> I would say the availability of a healthy diet [is challenging]. We have only a very small grocery store, so options for healthy eating are very limited in the county unless you're willing to travel. We have these big dollar stores popping up everywhere, where it's easy to buy junk food (Commissioner #1).

These counties struggled with the challenge of keeping low-income families together, and the wide-ranging impacts single parenthood can have on families and on the community. One commissioner noted that, 'In our social services, that's one of the things we see, single parenthood. We really try to get a connection between the mothers and fathers. And I don't know if there is a magical way to make that happen' (Commissioner #4). This commissioner went on to note some of the community work that had made a difference in the past:

> A number of years back we had a church leader here who really made [single parenthood] one of his top priorities. There were a fair number of men who were fathers multiple times over, they were not living in the family of any one of those children. He really made it an issue to try to reach out and try to get them to take ownership of fatherhood and become more involved. I think it did have some impact. Unfortunately, he's no longer here and I don't see that as a real initiative that any one of the churches has taken over.

One commissioner's story about a youth league in which he/she coaches was particularly illuminating:

> Single parenthood is definitely a problem here. I myself happen to coach a youth [sports team] through the church. Out of 20 kids, only four have intact families. For some, parents are in jail. Some of them don't know their fathers. For some, both parents have passed away and the grandparents are raising them. Four kids had parents die, either suicides or drug overdoses. The rest are single parent families, and I'd say half of those have some pretty big family conflicts. The parents will get into arguments in the parking lot when they're picking them up. We have to take the kids home because their rides don't show. The women seem

more responsible, the men still want to run around. I don't know how you fix the family dynamic, but that is definitely a big factor, probably the largest. We have some really great church-based organizations. Without them, I'd hate to see what it would be like, they are the biggest support. One church here operates a food pantry, a low-income daycare, they have adult education classes almost every night, youth group activities. They have a lot of different programs to get the kids there, get them involved, have them in a good environment. One of my best friends coaches in a different county, and they don't have near the problems. Both parents are there, the mother or the father helps out every practice, they're there early (Commissioner #5).

This commissioner went on with an instructive story from this coaching experience:

There's a young lady I coached. She was in seventh grade, didn't know her left from her right. I realized that after a while. So it's like you're doing more than just coaching them, it is a lot of life skills, you know? So I told her how you put your hand out and it makes an 'L.' A little bit later one of the other kids said, 'Hey, you can't have high boots when we [compete].' And she said, 'Oh, these are the only shoes I have.' I went to the shoe store and bought her sneakers and had one of the mothers give them to her so she wasn't taking gifts from an older [adult]. You run into things like that all the time. That girl moved away. Nobody knows where the family went really, we don't know what happened. These kids, they're falling through the cracks, they're in a danger zone. I think a lot of adults have gotten to the point where they've just given up, and the kids pay the price. We're fighting hard.

There were significant educational inequalities across these communities. As one commissioner explained, 'We have some very good education in some parts of our county, and other areas struggle' (Commissioner #4). Some school districts were failing, with few options seemingly available to them:

One of our school districts is financially in trouble and has been taken over by the state. Another has a tax base that is just really eroded. They're actually in turmoil because [one part of the community] voted to leave the district to join another district. If that goes through, the district will probably collapse because the tax base will be gone. They're not going to be able to survive and they're going to need to join another school district. And they're probably not wanting to do that because the closest one for them is one of the top struggling school districts in the state (Commissioner #4).

This commissioner commented on her/his county's efforts to fight some of this inequality by creating more vocational education programs:

College isn't for everybody. I really think if they could develop a skill we'd be better off. We just recently helped three different trade unions develop an educational center so that they can start to train folks. Just last week I had a meeting with our county vocational education school trying to determine their needs and see if we can't help them and help to address more of the needs of our community. Ten years ago I think there was a huge push back on pushing trade schools over college. But at the national level, the talk of the need for trade

schools is starting to make it a little more acceptable and we're trying to highlight that so that people understand that it is a very viable option. And sometimes, frankly, it is a better financial future than going to college. I do think I'm starting to see the tide change with that.

Crime and substance abuse proliferated in the low-income communities of the commissioners we spoke with. One commissioner observed that, 'Low-income families tend to be pocketed in certain areas, and they tend to be the crime areas' (Commissioner #4). She/he noted that substance abuse was also common in these communities:

Drugs is a huge problem, and it's really hard to get a handle on it. There's also some human trafficking going on. Opioids were real big here. And because of the crackdown on opioids, we're seeing an increase in heroin and crack. In some of our more rural areas we're seeing meth. And I don't want to downplay alcohol, there's a real alcohol issue. And even with the opioids, some of the folks who were hooked on opioids, once they got weaned off, some will be doing heroin and others are drinking in place of the opioid. I don't want to downplay alcohol, it is every bit of a problem as the drugs are.

Blight was another common theme in our conversations. Commissioners expressed the need to make their communities more desirable for businesses and more livable for their residents, as these quotes demonstrate:

In our county, we have very limited space. We have a lot of blight, a lot of properties knocked down. We have very few storefronts or available business location opportunities. Our opportunity zones are limited to inside the borough which further limits anybody trying to get anything started where there may be some land. We are really tight as far as growth goes for our community (Commissioner #3).

We've found the less vacant properties we can have in a neighborhood or in a block, the less we have of some of these issues. When you see blighted and vacant buildings in a neighborhood, that's just a red flag for problems. And one of the things we've tried to do is to work with municipalities to use funds to go in and try to demo the property and they put up a new property so that it becomes attractive when somebody gets in there (Commissioner #4).

Discussion

Our U.S. results align with the existing literature which suggests that areas of concentrated disadvantage are detrimental to equality of opportunity. The strongest correlations came from racial segregation (-0.63), single-parenthood (-0.59), poverty (-0.52), and college graduation (0.44), but sizeable correlations existed for income (0.37) and social capital (0.35) as well. Our results align with previous research which suggests that in communities dealing with the issues of racial segregation, high single-parenthood rates, concentrated poverty, low educational attainment, and low social capital, it will be more difficult for children from disadvantaged backgrounds to climb the social ladder. It is not just a matter of household disadvantage, as even different men raised in similarly low-income households have very different opportunities available to them depending upon where those households are located.

Our specific concern in this paper is our state of Pennsylvania, and here we see similar patterns. Our data confirm that pronounced opportunity gaps exist between counties in Pennsylvania. Compared to low-income men who grew up in high-opportunity Indiana County, for instance, those who grew up in low-opportunity Dauphin County came out behind on measures of household income ($11,981 gap), marriage (18.9 percentage point gap), incarceration (10 percentage point gap), college graduation (9.4 percentage point gap), and upward mobility (8.3 percentage point gap) (see Tables 2-7). Our analysis suggests that single parenthood, racial segregation, social capital, and college graduation are the best predictors of opportunity across Pennsylvania counties.

If we care about equality of opportunity, as Americans consistently claim on surveys, such inequalities cannot stand unaddressed. People cannot be truly free if they do not possess agency, or the ability to freely choose the life that they desire for themselves, and to be able to think and act autonomously in pursuit of that desired life. Agency requires that people have their abilities developed, they have access to important social and economic resources, and they have access to opportunity pathways (Eppard et. al. 2020). Evidence from this study suggests that all of these components of agency are compromised by growing up in disadvantaged areas of the U.S., as well as particularly-disadvantaged counties in Pennsylvania.

Our results suggest that residential contexts can be said to act as a form of structural violence, which refers to:

> 'the avoidable limitations society places on groups of people that constrain them from achieving the quality of life that would have otherwise been possible. These limitations could be political, economic, religious, cultural, or legal in nature and usually originate in institutions that have authority over particular subjects. Because of its embedding within social structures, people tend to overlook them as ordinary difficulties that they encounter in the course of life. . . Structural violence directly illustrates a power system wherein social structures or institutions cause harm to people in a way that results in maldevelopment or deprivation' (Lee 2016, p. 110).

And of course, like many factors which impact a person's path through life, one does not choose the community he/she will grow up in:

> 'We do not choose to exist. We do not choose the environment we will grow up in. We do not choose to be born Hindu, Christian or Muslim, into a war-zone or peaceful middle-class suburb, into starvation or luxury. We do not choose our parents, nor whether they'll be happy or miserable, knowledgeable or ignorant, healthy or sickly, attentive or neglectful. The knowledge we possess, the beliefs we hold, the tastes we develop, the traditions we adopt, the opportunities we enjoy, the work we do—the very lives we lead. . . This is the lottery of birth' (Martinez 2016, p. 3).

Granting equality of opportunity to all Americans will require that we continue to pay attention to the impact of place, ensuring that some areas of the country are not experiencing critical deficiencies in opportunity while others are enjoying abundance.

Table 2. Fraction of Men from Low-Income Backgrounds who Rise to Top 20% in Household Income in Pennsylvania by County.

County	Fraction in top 20% (%)	County	Fraction in top 20% (%)
U.S. County Median	8.8		
Montgomery County	17.9	Clinton County	10.0
Pike County	17.8	Crawford County	9.9
Bucks County	17.1	Clearfield County	9.8
Indiana County	15.7	Carbon County	9.7
Delaware County	15.6	Elk County	9.7
Greene County	14.8	Somerset County	9.7
Clarion County	14.7	Union County	9.6
Washington County	14.3	Bradford County	9.5
Chester County	14.0	Warren County	9.4
Butler County	13.9	Columbia County	9.4
Montour County	13.5	McKean County	9.3
Westmoreland County	13.5	Lancaster County	9.3
Susquehanna County	13.4	Sullivan County	9.2
Wyoming County	13.2	Adams County	9.0
Cambria County	13.2	Lycoming County	8.8
Monroe County	12.9	Mercer County	8.8
Lackawanna County	12.5	Lebanon County	8.8
Tioga County	12.4	York County	8.8
Jefferson County	12.1	Huntingdon County	8.6
Potter County	12.0	Perry County	8.5
Wayne County	11.9	Franklin County	8.4
Allegheny County	11.7	Venango County	8.2
Luzerne County	11.6	Bedford County	8.0
Northampton County	11.5	Blair County	8.0
Armstrong County	11.4	Juniata County	7.9
Lehigh County	11.3	Fulton County	7.8
Beaver County	11.2	Philadelphia County	7.7
Fayette County	11.1	Mifflin County	7.7
Schuylkill County	10.8	Erie County	7.6
Centre County	10.8	Dauphin County	7.4
Berks County	10.8	Cameron County	6.5
Cumberland County	10.7	Snyder County	5.0
Lawrence County	10.6	Forest County	3.8
Northumberland County	10.4		

Table 3. Fraction of Men from Low-Income Backgrounds Incarcerated in Pennsylvania by County.

County	Fraction incarcerated (%)	County	Fraction incarcerated (%)
U.S. County Median	3.7		
Fulton County	1.3	Lackawanna County	3.4
Sullivan County	1.4	Huntingdon County	3.5
Tioga County	1.6	Warren County	3.5
Wayne County	1.7	Blair County	3.6
Indiana County	1.7	Lawrence County	3.7
Clarion County	1.8	Clinton County	3.8
Wyoming County	2.0	McKean County	3.8
Greene County	2.1	Northampton County	3.8
Westmoreland County	2.3	Perry County	3.9
Somerset County	2.3	Snyder County	3.9
Armstrong County	2.4	Bucks County	3.9
Susquehanna County	2.4	Butler County	3.9
Washington County	2.5	Monroe County	4.1
Juniata County	2.5	Montour County	4.1
Cambria County	2.6	Venango County	4.2
Columbia County	2.6	Fayette County	4.3
Forest County	2.6	Clearfield County	4.4
Potter County	2.7	Erie County	4.5
Crawford County	2.7	Jefferson County	4.6
Mifflin County	2.7	Montgomery County	4.7
Bedford County	2.8	Lancaster County	4.8
Bradford County	2.8	Elk County	4.8
Luzerne County	2.9	Cameron County	5.2
Mercer County	2.9	Berks County	5.3
Union County	3.0	Lycoming County	5.3
Beaver County	3.0	Lehigh County	5.3
Northumberland County	3.0	Allegheny County	5.4
Carbon County	3.2	Lebanon County	5.6
Franklin County	3.2	Delaware County	6.0
Centre County	3.2	Chester County	6.2
Cumberland County	3.3	York County	6.7
Adams County	3.3	Philadelphia County	8.9
Pike County	3.4	Dauphin County	11.7
Schuylkill County	3.4		

Table 4. Fraction of Men from Low-Income Backgrounds Who are Married in Pennsylvania by County.

County	Fraction married (%)	County	Fraction married (%)
U.S. County Median	40.0		
Potter County	53.5	Warren County	41.7
Union County	53.0	Columbia County	41.7
Tioga County	51.5	Westmoreland County	41.7
Snyder County	51.5	Northumberland County	41.6
Mifflin County	50.5	Carbon County	41.3
Juniata County	49.0	Lebanon County	41.1
Clarion County	48.3	Mercer County	40.8
Wyoming County	47.9	Fayette County	40.5
Bedford County	47.3	Perry County	40.4
Indiana County	47.2	Pike County	40.2
Huntingdon County	47.2	Washington County	39.8
Susquehanna County	47.1	Lawrence County	39.5
Crawford County	47.1	Blair County	39.0
Jefferson County	47.0	Lycoming County	38.7
Somerset County	47.0	Sullivan County	38.1
Centre County	45.4	Elk County	38.0
Franklin County	44.8	Lackawanna County	37.3
Fulton County	44.7	Beaver County	36.9
Lancaster County	44.6	Schuylkill County	36.1
Bradford County	43.9	Erie County	36.0
Clearfield County	43.7	Bucks County	35.9
Greene County	43.6	York County	35.6
Venango County	43.6	Luzerne County	35.2
Adams County	43.4	Montgomery County	35.1
Forest County	43.4	Berks County	33.7
Cambria County	43.2	Monroe County	33.6
Clinton County	43.0	Northampton County	33.5
McKean County	43.0	Lehigh County	32.9
Cumberland County	42.6	Chester County	32.8
Armstrong County	42.5	Allegheny County	31.0
Wayne County	42.3	Delaware County	28.4
Butler County	42.3	Dauphin County	28.3
Cameron County	42.0	Philadelphia County	20.1
Montour County	41.9		

Table 5. Fraction of Men from Low-Income Backgrounds Who Graduated College in Pennsylvania by County.

County	Fraction college grad (%)	County	Fraction college grad (%)
U.S. County Median	12.7		
Montgomery County	29.6	Sullivan County	14.9
Pike County	28.0	Schuylkill County	14.5
Monroe County	27.6	Clearfield County	13.8
Delaware County	26.4	Wayne County	13.4
Allegheny County	25.0	Union County	13.3
Bucks County	24.4	Venango County	13.2
Lackawanna County	24.4	Lancaster County	13.0
Westmoreland County	23.4	Wyoming County	12.6
Chester County	22.8	Bradford County	12.5
Indiana County	21.5	Berks County	12.4
Luzerne County	20.2	Dauphin County	12.1
Cambria County	20.1	Lebanon County	12.0
Lawrence County	19.5	Lycoming County	11.9
Washington County	19.2	Huntingdon County	11.5
Lehigh County	18.8	York County	11.3
Philadelphia County	18.4	Crawford County	10.9
Centre County	18.1	McKean County	10.8
Northampton County	17.8	Somerset County	10.7
Carbon County	17.7	Armstrong County	10.4
Beaver County	17.4	Greene County	10.3
Northumberland County	17.1	Potter County	9.9
Elk County	16.8	Warren County	9.7
Butler County	16.7	Franklin County	9.5
Tioga County	16.7	Clinton County	8.2
Blair County	16.6	Bedford County	8.2
Jefferson County	16.6	Snyder County	7.4
Columbia County	16.6	Fulton County	6.7
Cumberland County	16.0	Adams County	6.5
Mercer County	15.8	Mifflin County	6.0
Fayette County	15.7	Juniata County	4.5
Clarion County	15.4	Perry County	2.6
Susquehanna County	15.0	Forest County	0.9
Montour County	14.9	Cameron County	0.0
Erie County	14.9		

Table 6. Household Income of Men from Low-Income Backgrounds in Pennsylvania by County.

County	Household income ($)	County	Household income ($)
U.S. County Median	32,349		
Sullivan County	42,572	Schuylkill County	34,953
Clarion County	40,181	Lebanon County	34,953
Indiana County	39,917	Snyder County	34,835
Tioga County	39,575	Fulton County	34,812
Potter County	39,509	Fayette County	34,665
Pike County	38,602	Somerset County	34,648
Greene County	38,591	McKean County	34,638
Jefferson County	38,439	Clinton County	34,440
Wyoming County	38,401	Franklin County	34,362
Union County	38,380	Luzerne County	34,332
Wayne County	38,153	Beaver County	34,315
Susquehanna County	37,563	Bedford County	34,267
Armstrong County	37,066	Lawrence County	34,260
Butler County	37,061	Chester County	34,177
Westmoreland County	36,991	Lehigh County	33,815
Juniata County	36,940	Northampton County	33,501
Montgomery County	36,838	Monroe County	33,485
Bucks County	36,805	Mifflin County	33,277
Washington County	36,728	Mercer County	33,132
Adams County	36,454	Lycoming County	33,119
Huntingdon County	36,186	Berks County	33,062
Cambria County	36,144	Delaware County	32,787
Bradford County	36,110	Perry County	32,711
Clearfield County	35,865	York County	32,538
Northumberland County	35,818	Warren County	32,278
Centre County	35,666	Venango County	32,189
Cumberland County	35,588	Allegheny County	32,096
Lancaster County	35,335	Blair County	31,869
Lackawanna County	35,325	Forest County	31,800
Columbia County	35,251	Cameron County	31,452
Crawford County	35,249	Erie County	31,289
Carbon County	35,054	Dauphin County	27,936
Montour County	34,991	Philadelphia County	25,038
Elk County	34,966		

Table 7. Pennsylvania Counties Ranked by Opportunities for Men from Low-Income Backgrounds.

County	Rank	County	Rank
Indiana County	1	Monroe County	35
Tioga County	2	Fulton County	36
Clarion County	3	Lawrence County	36
Wyoming County	4	Adams County	38
Susquehanna County	5	Schuylkill County	39
Westmoreland County	5	Fayette County	40
Pike County	7	Lancaster County	40
Cambria County	8	Bedford County	42
Greene County	9	Chester County	43
Potter County	10	Delaware County	43
Washington County	10	Northampton County	45
Wayne County	12	Mercer County	46
Union County	13	Elk County	47
Centre County	14	Franklin County	47
Jefferson County	15	Clinton County	49
Butler County	16	Mifflin County	49
Bucks County	17	McKean County	51
Montgomery County	18	Snyder County	52
Armstrong County	19	Lehigh County	53
Sullivan County	20	Allegheny County	54
Lackawanna County	21	Venango County	55
Northumberland County	22	Blair County	56
Cumberland County	23	Warren County	56
Crawford County	24	Lebanon County	58
Bradford County	25	Forest County	59
Columbia County	26	Berks County	60
Somerset County	27	Lycoming County	61
Carbon County	28	Perry County	62
Luzerne County	29	Erie County	63
Juniata County	30	Philadelphia County	64
Montour County	30	York County	65
Huntingdon County	32	Cameron County	66
Beaver County	33	Dauphin County	67
Clearfield County	33		

Note: Opportunity rank based on average PA county rank for men from low-income backgrounds on five outcomes: upward mobility, incarceration, marriage, college graduation, and household income.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1. Multiple Regression Model Predicting County Opportunity Index Rank in Pennsylvania.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-250.207	97.972		-2.554	.013
	Job growth rate	170.374	421.150	.058	.405	.687
	Median household income	.001	.001	.466	1.312	.195
	Poverty rate	36.407	117.241	.066	.311	.757
	Fraction college graduates	-96.075	56.835	-.412	-1.690	.096
	Fraction non-White	81.538	33.418	.415	2.440	.018
	Fraction single parents	134.408	45.846	.450	2.932	.005
	Social capital	2.462	.990	.357	2.487	.016

Note: model r square = 0.372, p < .001.

Appendix Table 2. Multiple Regression Model Predicting Marriage across U.S.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.858	.026		33.068	.000
	Job growth rate	.350	.096	.049	3.647	.000
	Median household income	.000	.000	-.364	-14.164	.000
	Poverty rate	-.319	.038	-.195	-8.495	.000
	Fraction college graduates	-.051	.020	-.044	-2.536	.011
	Fraction non-White	-.198	.009	-.366	-21.297	.000
	Fraction single parents	-.536	.019	-.466	-28.610	.000
	Social capital	.000	.000	-.026	-1.744	.081

Note: model r square = 0.571, p < .001.

Appendix Table 3. Multiple Regression Model Predicting Income across U.S.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	61628.844	2163.370		28.487	.000
	Job growth rate	27238.871	8001.788	.054	3.404	.001
	Median household income	-.137	.017	-.245	-8.003	.000
	Poverty rate	-49363.48	3131.550	-.432	-15.763	.000
	Fraction college graduates	793.433	1687.809	.010	.470	.638
	Fraction non-White	-2562.478	773.797	-.068	-3.312	.001
	Fraction single parents	-29278.09	1563.044	-.364	-18.731	.000
	Social capital	-40.566	21.593	-.034	-1.879	.060

Note: model r square = 0.388, p < .001.

Appendix Table 4. Multiple Regression Model Predicting Mobility across U.S.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.267	.018		15.034	.000
	Job growth rate	.338	.066	.090	5.158	.000
	Median household income	.000	.000	.012	.356	.722
	Poverty rate	-.241	.026	-.282	-9.393	.000
	Fraction college graduates	.007	.014	.011	.489	.625
	Fraction non-White	-.007	.006	-.025	-1.112	.266
	Fraction single parents	-.161	.013	-.268	-12.580	.000
	Social capital	-.001	.000	-.106	-5.388	.000

Note: model r square = 0.268, p < .001.

Appendix Table 5. Multiple Regression Model Predicting Incarceration across U.S.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.031	.007		-4.312	.000
	Job growth rate	.061	.027	.040	2.273	.023
	Median household income	.000	.000	.129	3.823	.000
	Poverty rate	.042	.011	.120	3.963	.000
	Fraction college graduates	.008	.006	.033	1.438	.151
	Fraction non-White	.032	.003	.276	12.234	.000
	Fraction single parents	.075	.005	.305	14.236	.000
	Social capital	.000	.000	.069	3.490	.000

Note: model r square = 0.260, p < .001.

Appendix Table 6. Multiple Regression Model Predicting College Graduation across U.S.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.221	.027		8.223	.000
	Job growth rate	-.004	.100	-.001	-.043	.966
	Median household income	.000	.000	-.200	-5.307	.000
	Poverty rate	-.177	.039	-.151	-4.579	.000
	Fraction college graduates	.399	.020	.494	19.927	.000
	Fraction non-White	-.002	.009	-.004	-.176	.860
	Fraction single parents	-.109	.020	-.129	-5.555	.000
	Social capital	-.001	.000	-.046	-2.192	.028

Note: model r square = 0.220, p < .001.

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Mentoring for Faculty from Working-Class Backgrounds

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Abstract

Faculty mentoring across gender, race, and culture is facilitated by formal mentoring programs. Mentoring across the cultural differences associated with social class, however, represents a largely unaddressed gap in the provision of formal faculty mentoring. Based on a pre-program needs survey, we designed and delivered a pilot program that served working-class faculty with mentoring on career self-efficacy. Assessment showed that working-class faculty mentees made gains in this important construct. Our concluding discussion reflects upon the role of mentoring in the experience of working-class faculty.

Keywords

Faculty mentoring, working-class faculty, career self-efficacy

Introduction

Faculty mentoring and cultural differences

> Mentoring is a process for the <u>informal</u> transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails <u>informal</u> communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time … (Bozeman & Feeney 2007, p. 731) (emphasis added)

The term 'informal,' which appears in each independent clause of this widely-cited definition of mentoring, provides a starting point for a discussion of the relationship between the provision of faculty mentoring and cultural differences among faculty. Informal faculty mentoring occurs as senior professors get to know their junior colleagues and gradually become their mentors. A governing aspect of social psychology, however, intervenes to limit informal mentoring. Broadly, similarities between people tend to predict interest and interpersonal attraction and positive relationships (Youyou et al. 2017), and this principle transfers to the context of mentoring. In a comprehensive guide to faculty mentoring, Johnson refers to this tendency for faculty mentors to select mentees who remind them of themselves as 'cloning' (2016, pp. 221-222). Age, appearance, ethnicity, gender, personality, race, sexual orientation, and social class are among the many interpersonal intersections that signal the affinity conducive to informal mentoring. For example, faculty cultures dominated by white males tend to leave female and minority faculty out of the informal mentoring loop (Acker 2008; Ceci et

al. 2014; Davis, Reynolds & Jones 2011; Kerlin 1995; Sadao 2003; Siefert & Umbach 2008; Stout, Staiger & Jennings 2007). Similarly, in middle- and upper-class academia, observers have remarked that faculty from working-class backgrounds often miss out on informal mentoring (Arner 2014; Beech 2006; Borkowski 2004; Bourdieu 1988, pp. 92-94; Fay & Tocarczyk 1993; Grimes & Morris 1997; Kennelly et al. 1999; Lang 1987; Springer 2012; Vander Putten 2015). We define working-class faculty to include those who grew up in blue-collar families and/or neighborhoods as well as those who were the first in their immediate families to earn a college degree. As roughly one-fourth to one-third of U.S. professors share these backgrounds[1], this informal oversight is significant and represents an area for improvement in faculty mentoring.

Formal mentoring counterbalances cloning by creating structured mentoring opportunities. Formal mentoring programs first became commonplace in the U.S. as the white-collar workforce was diversified in the 1970s and 1980s and informal practices predictably failed to provide mentoring for women and minorities. Corporate firms instituted formal mentoring programs to avoid workplace discrimination and reap the rewards of diversity (Gunn 1995, p. 64; Haynes & Petrosko 2009). Since that time, faculty developers have made the case for formalized faculty mentoring for women and minority professors (Boice 1993; Kennelly, Misra & Karides 1999; Marbley 2007; Turner & Gonzalez 2015; Zellers, Howard & Barcic 2008). Government and universities have responded with initiatives like the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE: Organizational Change for Gender Equity in STEM Academic Professions program 'to increase the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers, thereby contributing to the development of a more diverse science and engineering workforce' (National Science Foundation n.d.). ADVANCE especially encourages programming that benefits women from underrepresented minority groups. More than 100 colleges and universities have received ADVANCE funding and almost every grant involves a formal mentoring program (National Science Foundation n.d.).

Evidence that academic institutions independently share this important concern with providing mentoring for women and minorities comes from our review of the faculty mentoring literature. We expanded upon Fountain and Newcomer's (2016) literature review and sifted through reports on 52 faculty mentoring programs published between 1989 and 2018. Sixteen of the programs (31%) were designated exclusively for women and/or minority faculty (12 for women regardless of race and ethnicity, three for minority women, and one for minorities regardless of gender). None of the programs in our review, however, were intended to serve working-class faculty specifically. Therefore, our literature review appears to support the claims of working-class faculty that their specific mentoring needs tend to go unaddressed.

Social class and cultural differences

First-generation status and blue-collar origins can contribute to cultural differences between working-class faculty and their middle- and upper-class colleagues. Many working-class faculty auto-ethnographers describe these differences in terms of cultural capital (Arner 2014; Muzzati & Samarco 2006a; Ryan & Sackrey 1996; Warnock 2016). Cultural capital is

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[1] In the early 1970s, approximately one-fourth of professors came from blue-collar backgrounds (Ladd & Lipset, 1975). As of 2016, this estimate was considered to have remained generally accurate (Arner, 2016, p. 63). In 2000, one-third of the faculty at U.S. research institutions were first-generation (Seifert & Umbach, 2008, p. 363). Based on this figure and recent data on the proportion of first-generation college graduates among new Ph.D. recipients, we estimate that a little less than one-third of today's faculty are first-generation. (National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2019).

generated by performing and personifying a culture's essential priorities, values and tastes. Cultural capital is redeemed as social capital, the power to profit from in-group social relations. For example, returns on social capital include opportunities and resources channeled through social networks and the psychosocial reward of belonging (Bourdieu 1988; Lin 1999). While cultural capital can be employed to better understand any group of people that share a worldview, Pierre Bourdieu, the social theorist most widely cited for conceptualizing cultural capital, demonstrated its relevance to faculty culture by using the professoriate to illustrate cultural capital in his book, *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu 1988).

The prestige-value system theory demonstrates how prestige comprises a highly prioritized category of cultural capital in academia. The theory posits that prestige-maximization supplements and often supplants income-maximization in individual decision-making regarding higher education destinations (Caplow & McGee 2001; Morrison et al. 2011). For example, many affluent, college-educated parents go to great lengths to help their children gain admittance to prestigious universities and then pay ever-steepening tuition rates for them to attend (Delbanco 2012, pp. 102-124; Tough 2019). Upon graduation, the aspiring faculty among these students compete for admission to the most prestigious graduate departments. Once accepted, they seek to enlist their department's leading faculty members as mentors. When they finally enter the academic job market, departmental prestige influences where they apply. Their evaluators on faculty hiring committees weigh the prestige of candidates' degrees and mentors heavily in their hiring decisions (Arner 2014; Arner 2016). Since this competition for prestigious associations confers recruiting and fundraising advantages upon highly ranked departments, these elite programs can select top performers and provide them ample support (Headworth & Freese 2016). In this system, therefore, prestige accrues value, recreating and regulating the status hierarchy that defines American colleges and universities.

Working-class faculty are relatively unlikely to have accumulated the currencies of cultural capital valued in the academy during their student careers (Foiles-Sifuentes 2017; Pascarella et al. 2004). Unaware of the impending importance of academic prestige, working-class faculty often chose their undergraduate campuses and graduate schools according to more immediate concerns like affordability and proximity to family (Beech 2006; Engle & Tinto 2008; Hinz 2016; Kauzlarich 2006). Similarly, outsiders to the world of higher education have not been trained to network and do not feel entitled to demand personal attention from authority figures like professors (Lareau 2003). Instead, coming from the working class, these faculty are socialized to prize humility and eschew self-promotion (Lubrano 2004; Rothe 2006; Wilson 2006). Thusly inclined to hang back in the classroom and thoroughly disinclined to hang out in faculty offices (Lang 2016, p. 102; Nelson 2015), future working-class faculty unknowingly fail to build the mentoring networks that are foundational to faculty careers.

Cultural capital also includes culturally specific values and tastes. Huxford claims that higher education is 'that most upper-middle class of social institutions' (2006, p. 207), a position supported by our estimate that two-thirds to three-fourths of professors come from the middle and upper classes. In response to a workplace culture dominated by middle- and upper-class styles of speech, dress, food, and entertainment, working-class faculty auto-ethnography expresses the outsiders' perspective (Brook & Michell 2012; Warnock 2016). This tradition began with the 1984 publication of Ryan and Sackrey's *Strangers in paradise: academics from the working class.* Echoed in subsequent titles, their anguish of otherness remains relevant: *Women in the academy: laborers in the knowledge factory* (Fay & Tokarcyzk 1993), *This fine place so far from home: voices of academics from the working class* (Dews & Law 1995), *Those winter Sundays: female academics and their working-class parents* (Welsch 2005),

Reflections from the wrong side of the tracks: class, identity, and the working class experience in academe (Muzzati & Samarco 2006a), *Resilience: queer professors from the working class* (Oldfield & Johnson 2008), *Special issue on working class academics: still unbroken* (Siegel 2014), *Working in class: recognizing how social class shapes our academic work* (Hurst & Nenga 2016), and *Academic poverty special issue* (Chapple et al. 2017). Consequently, many working-class faculty report suppressing their cultural identity at work (Baker 2006; Cannon 2006; Huxford 2006; Langston 1993; Rothe 2006).

LeCourt and Fedukovich, however, warn against the impression created by their fellow working-class faculty auto-ethnographers that they must unhappily perform middle-class culture to sustain an academic career (Fedukovich 2009; LeCourt 2006). Indeed, they charge that this dilemma is not only false but rests on a harmful view of social class. That is, envisioning social class as a stair-stepped progression of fixed positions legitimizes existing power relationships. Ironically, the very existence of working-class faculty gives life to the meritocratic myth that normalizes class-based disadvantage (Muzzati & Samarco 2006b, p. 71). 'This definition of social mobility forms the cornerstone of tried-and-trite American Dream politics: even daughters of heavy machinery mechanics can achieve 'higher' social status' (Fedukovich 2009, p. 141). While Fedukovich and LeCourt recognize that the academy reflects class divisions, they stress that our workplace is also the site for creating class identity (Fedukovich 2009; LeCourt 2006). They emphasize our agency to reform faculty class relations instead of the expectation to conform to alienating class roles. In this spirit, we will consider the potential of mentoring for working-class faculty.

Case study

Program goals

The only mentoring program that we know of that includes an emphasis on mentoring working-class faculty is one that we organized at Indiana University – Purdue University Columbus (IUPUC), a school of Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). IUPUC is a commuter campus serving 1,400 students from Columbus and surrounding communities in south-central Indiana. IUPUC employs 64 full-time faculty members and offers 14 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business, education, engineering, humanities, nursing, science, and social science disciplines.

In 2014, IUPUI initiated a grant competition among its 17 schools to develop proposals for pilot programs designed to meet the unique mentoring needs of faculty in each school. We received funding for a pilot program for mentoring pre-promotion faculty from under-represented groups on career self-efficacy[2]. We defined under-represented faculty to include women, racial and ethnic minorities, and working-class faculty. In turn, we identified first-generation college graduates as working-class faculty. Our focus on under-represented faculty reflected their relatively strong representation at IUPUC and our assessment of their mentoring needs. For example, in 2014-15, first-generation college graduates were 48% of IUPUC faculty, a proportion one-and-a-half times greater than their approximately one-third share of the U.S. faculty at that time. Women comprised 58% of IUPUC faculty, one-and-a-quarter times greater than their 47% share of the U.S. faculty (McFarland et al. 2017). Minorities were

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[2] The faculty mentoring program was supported with a grant from the IUPUI Mentoring Academy. The research resulting from program assessment involved the use of human subjects and was reviewed and approved by the Indiana University IRB (#1507298098).

24% of IUPUC faculty, equivalent to their 23% share of the U.S. faculty (McFarland et al. 2017).

The pilot program's emphasis on pre-promotion underrepresented faculty was also in response to their desire for mentoring. During the 2014-15 academic year, we surveyed full-time IUPUC faculty regarding mentoring satisfaction and needs. Dissatisfaction with mentorship among under-represented faculty is indicated by results from three survey questions about the adequacy and amount of mentorship. We used the three questions to create a satisfaction variable scored from 3 (strong dissatisfaction) to 15 (strong satisfaction) with a midpoint value of 9 (neutral). Under-represented faculty averaged 7.8 and 63 percent scored below the midpoint value of 9. In contrast, white male continuing-generation faculty averaged 11.3 and none scored below 9.

In this survey, we also asked about 13 mentoring needs ranging from those specific to an academic career - research, teaching, service, and tenure/promotion - to general concerns including work-life balance and time management (Bland et al. 2009). Respondents rated mentoring on the three career-specific issues of research, teaching, and tenure and promotion as much more important than any of the other 10 items. Thus, faculty at IUPUC, particularly under-represented faculty, sought guidance in areas directly related to career success. These findings led to our focusing mentoring efforts on career self-efficacy. The concept of general self-efficacy is based in Bandura's social cognitive theory,

> Self-efficacy depends on the individual's belief that he or she can cause an intended event to occur and can organize and carry out the course of behavior necessary to deal with various situations (Rodin 1990, p. 2).

Career self-efficacy is a well-established construct that refers to the ways in which general self-efficacy applies to career development (Hackett & Betz 1981). For example, career self-efficacy addresses the role of self-efficacy in vocational choice and career decision making. By the 1990s, interest in career self-efficacy led to the development of social cognitive career theory. Social cognitive career theory contextualizes career self-efficacy to better understand opportunities and obstacles to career development (Gainor 2006).

Like their counterparts in other career fields, professors' general self-efficacy influences their choices, efforts, resilience, and anxiety levels. Indeed, general self-efficacy is a stronger predictor of faculty success than knowledge, skills, and prior accomplishments (Zeldin & Pajares 2000). Accordingly, several faculty mentoring programs identify augmenting general self-efficacy as a programmatic goal (Berrett, Nisbett & Lowe 2016; Feldman et al. 2010; Garman, Wingard & Reznik 2001; Varkey et al. 2012; Wingard, Garman & Reznik 2004; Zeldin & Pajares 2000). We were not able, however, to locate a published account of a faculty mentoring program that intentionally sought to bolster career self-efficacy. Therefore, this report contributes to the faculty development literature not only by focusing on the mentoring needs of working-class faculty but also by identifying career self-efficacy as a goal for faculty mentoring programs.

Program delivery

Our pilot program consisted of a preparation phase in spring and summer 2015 and program implementation over the course of the 2015-16 academic year. Towards the end of the spring 2015 semester we invited eligible faculty to apply to be mentees. Since we had determined that

a cohort of ten mentees would be appropriate given the size of the IUPUC faculty and the amount of available resources and we received ten applications from prospective mentees, all ten applicants were accepted. The ten mentees included nine from working-class backgrounds. Eight were first-generation college graduates, and one was raised in an urban working-class neighborhood. The nine working-class mentees included five white females, one minority female, two white males, and one minority male. The continuing-generation mentee from a middle-class background was a minority male.

We asked veteran faculty who had demonstrated excellence in teaching, service, or research to consider applying to serve as mentors. In recognition of their service, mentors were awarded $250 in faculty development funds. Mentor training took place in summer, 2015 and consisted of self-study and group sessions. For self-study, mentors were given two 'how-to' books, Zachary's all-purpose *The mentor's guide* (2nd Ed.) (2012) and the first edition of Johnson's *On being a mentor: a guide for higher education faculty* (2006). In reference to our program's specific emphases, mentors received Muzzatti and Samarco's (2006) edited volume, *Reflections from the wrong side of the tracks*, for background on, as the book's subtitle puts it, 'class, identity, and the working class experience in academe.' We also gave mentors *Overwhelmed: coping with life's ups and downs* (Schlossberg 2008) which speaks to the self-efficacy challenges involved in a variety of life transitions such as launching an academic career. In the summer of 2015 we held mentor training sessions. Training drew upon the readings to address mentors' motivations, expectations, and responsibilities. Project leaders and mentors discussed roles and relationship boundaries, goals and accountability, and evaluating progress and results. In the concluding session, mentors built skills through the review of case studies and role-playing.

Matching mentors and mentees poses a long-recognized challenge for faculty mentoring programs (Boice & Turner 1989). Our commitment to finding matches for all participants produced two dilemmas. First, as the participants represented academic disciplines spread across four academic units, most mentees could not be matched with a mentor in their field. Second, mentors and mentees were matched based on their prioritized interest in mentoring on teaching, research, service, and university culture instead of being encouraged to pair off on their own. This decision heeded Johnson's warning that when mentors recruit mentees, they tend to pick 'clones' and those who do not fit mentors' profiles may be rejected (Johnson 2006, pp. 170-171). Two matches were made, however, based on faculty members petitioning to work together. Thus, the matching process was also informed by research indicating that mentee and mentor input to selection criteria produces better matches (Nick et al. 2012).

The pilot program was launched with a retreat that brought mentors and mentees together. Our goals for the retreat included reinforcing the overarching program goal of increasing career self-efficacy and creating a shared sense of purpose and identity. We also focused on the elements of mentoring relationships. Mentors and mentees had the opportunity to chat informally at the retreat and to continue their conversations at a subsequent social event. During the 2015-16 academic year, mentoring pairs met separately each month and all participants were convened for regular program meetings to build relationships and provide informal feedback.

Statistical program assessment

Program assessment included measurement of mentees' gains in career self-efficacy and longitudinal tracking of protégés' careers. Well-established measures of general self-efficacy

and factors influencing career transitions were distributed to faculty at the start of the pilot program. Together, these instruments assess changes in career self-efficacy. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) (Schwarzer & Jerusalem 1995) is a ten-item measure of one's belief in their ability to cope with a wide variety of life stressors and problems. Responses are measured using a four-point Likert scale resulting in a range of scores between 10 and 40 with higher scores indicating greater general self-efficacy. Internal consistency of the GSE has been reported with Chronbach's alphas between .75 and .91 with a test-retest reliability of $r = .55$ to $r = .75$ (Scholz et al. 2002). There is also evidence of convergent validity with several other measures of mood and personality (Schwarzer 2014). For this study, the baseline GSE measure produced $\alpha = .85$ and a mean score of 33.78 ($SD = 4.265$). Test-retest reliability for the GSE was $r = .80$, $p < .05$ over a nine-month interval. The sample size was quite small (n = 7 mentees who completed both measures), constraining the usefulness of traditional statistical techniques. Using effect sizes and qualitative findings from focus groups helped to frame findings. First, mentees experienced an overall increase in GSE ($t(6) = 1.67$, *ns*, $d = 0.48$). The effect size suggests a moderate impact on trait-level self-efficacy, and evidence from focus groups supports this finding. Several mentees expressed feeling more confident.

Schlossberg's '4 S' model provides a framework for successfully navigating life transitions such as beginning a new faculty appointment and forms a useful scaffold for mentoring activities (Schlossberg 2008). This systemic model includes:
* *Situational* variables that capture external factors (e.g., concurrent stressors) which influence the individual's acquisition of a new role;
* *Social Supports* which are important for emotional coping and rational coaching and are typically disrupted by the transition from one role to the next;
* *Strategies* for coping with stress that are vital in making successful transitions; and,
* *Self* variables which include one's outlook on the transition into the new role which will vary, in-part, upon individual self-efficacy.

The Transition Guide & Questionnaire Modified (TGQ-M) (Schlossberg 2008) is a reliable measure of Schlossberg's '4 S' model. This 56-item measure is responded to using a five-point Likert scale. Higher scores are assumed to represent greater coping resources for managing transitions. For this study, internal consistencies (Chronbach's α) of the initial administration of the four subscales of *Situation, Social Supports, Strategies,* and *Self* variables were .86, .72, .91, and .81 respectively which are similar to past findings (McAtee & Benshoff, 2006). Test-retest reliability of the four scales were $r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$; $r = 0.90$, $p < 0.001$; $r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$; and $r = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$ respectively over a nine-month interval. Baseline GSE scores were moderately to strongly correlated with the TGQ-M *Situation, Self,* and *Strategies* scales ($r = 0.79$, $p < 0.05$; $r = 0.87$, $p < 0.01$; and $r = 0.86$, $p < 0.01$ respectively) but not the *Social Supports* scale ($r = 0.66$, *ns*).

We examined if the mentees experienced a change in the '4 S's' from the beginning to the end of the program by comparing pre-test and post-test scores on *Self* variables (positive outlook on the transition); *Strategies* (coping techniques vital to making successful transitions); *Social Supports* (people that mentees can rely on to aid with the transition); and *Situation* variables (concurrent stressors to the central transition). Taken individually, mentees reported higher levels of *Self* variables at the end of the program ($t(6) = 1.16$, *ns*, $d = 0.26$). They reported having more *Strategies* available to them after the program ($t(6) = 1.88$, *ns*, $d = 0.38$), further supported during the focus groups in that many expressed feeling like they had a clearer plan to earn promotion. Mentees reported having more *Social Supports* at the end of the program ($t(6) = 1.93$, *ns*, $d = 0.37$) and echoed this sentiment during focus groups when they discussed

the value of having a mentor and utilizing different people and offices around campus. Notably, given our small sample size, significance tests were inconclusive since a minimum sample size of n = 30 is recommended. However, in examining the effect sizes using Cohen's d, these indicate robust moderate effects of our program on participants in positive ways. Finally, aspects of the *Situation* were not altered during the program ($t(6) = 0.62$, *ns*, $d = 0.18$). In hindsight, this makes sense; our program was designed to provide the tools to better address the situation, but we did not actually intend to remove external stressors, or send participants through promotion this year. Among the '4 S's', *Social Supports* emerged as equally if not more highly valued than *Strategies* for success. In other words, this finding reflects on the relative importance of culture and strategy to organizational effectiveness.

Qualitative program assessment

Qualitative program assessment comes from two sources: participant focus groups convened upon the conclusion of the pilot program in spring 2016 and mentees' post-pilot program career trajectories between spring 2016 and spring 2020. Focus group feedback reconsidered the traditional dyadic mentoring model employed in the pilot program. Dyadic mentoring consists of a single mentor imparting accumulated wisdom or expertise to a mentee. In their focus group, several mentees pointed out that since their initial goals changed or became more focused as the year progressed, their mentors were not able to meet their needs as well as they had hoped. The focus group discussion converged on the idea of establishing a pool of mentors offering guidance on a range of skills. Their conversation echoed the discourse among faculty developers that a network of mentors delivering a diverse range of knowledge and skills is likely to prove more valuable than relying upon a single mentor (Beane-Katner 2014; de Janasz & Sullivan 2004; Rockquemore 2010; Rockquemore 2013; Rockquemore 2016).

Mentees also suggested incorporating peer mentoring into the program. Peer mentoring programs bring mentees together to learn from and support each other in a confidential, self-directed environment. For individuals, peer mentoring builds trusting long-term relationships that instill belonging and increase career satisfaction. For institutions, peer mentoring may help identify challenges and facilitate change (Angelique, Kyle & Taylor 2002; Thomas, Bystydzienski & Desai 2015). Relevant to our program's emphasis on sensitivity to cultural differences among faculty, peer mentoring has been shown to be very valuable for under-represented and historically marginalized faculty including women and minorities (Davis, Reynolds & Jones 2011; Driscoll et al. 2009; Files et al. 2008; Mayer et al. 2014; Schmidt & Faber 2016; Varkey et al. 2012; Yun, Baldi & Sorcinelli 2016).

Informed by focus group feedback on the pilot program and the scholarly discourse on faculty mentoring, we redesigned the pilot program. The redesigned program, which has been in effect since fall 2016, has two elements. First, we provide networked mentoring through our 'mentor bureau' in which mentors offer guidance in their areas of expertise and mentees choose multiple mentors on topics of mutual interest. Second, program leaders arrange mentee-only peer mentoring meetings in which mentees set their own agenda and conduct mutually supportive, confidential conversations[3].

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[3] Our program redesign is consistent with developments in faculty mentoring. While dyadic mentoring is the standard model, its dominance is diminishing. Our review of reports published between 1989 and 2018 on faculty mentoring programs indicates that most programs follow the dyadic mentoring model. Among the 48 reports we examined that specified a mentoring model, 26 (54%) relied on dyads. Six additional programs (13%) combined dyadic mentoring with peer mentoring. Of the remaining 16 programs, 10 (21%) were based on peer mentoring and 6 (13%) on communities of practice. While 73% (11 of 15) of the programs reported

Mentees' post-pilot program career trajectories between spring 2016 and spring 2020 comprise an additional source of program assessment. In 2016, five of the nine working-class mentees were probationary tenure-track assistant professors, three were non-tenure track clinical assistant professors and one was a visiting lecturer. Of the tenure-trackers, two were in the third year and three were in the first year of their appointments. One of the third-year assistant professors has since been tenured and promoted to associate professor and now serves as a mentor in IUPUC's permanent faculty mentoring program. The other four tenure track mentees are no longer on our campus. Three of these four were first-year faculty in nursing, a discipline experiencing a pronounced faculty retention crisis due to the national shortage of nurses (Rosseter, 2019). Two of the three assistant professors of nursing left IUPUC to take tenure-track positions at other universities and the other is in private practice. The remaining tenure track mentee left academia to embark on a career in a profession related to his discipline. While this mentee did not achieve his original goals for his academic career, he demonstrated a remarkable degree of career self-efficacy by developing a parallel career plan, applying his academic expertise to develop the skills required in his new field, and securing a desirable position.

One of the clinical faculty co-authored a research article with her program mentor, became a tenure-track assistant professor, and will apply for promotion and tenure in the coming year. Another clinical faculty member was promoted to the directorship of a graduate program and has successfully raised funds to build a new clinic. The third clinical faculty member has retired. Since the expiration of her visiting lectureship, the final working-class mentee finished her doctoral degree and is now a tenure-track assistant professor at another institution. The lone middle-class mentee was an assistant professor during the pilot program who has since earned tenure and promotion to associate professor. Statistical measurement of immediate gains in career-self efficacy and subsequent career accomplishments indicate that working-class mentees augmented their career self-efficacy through their participation in the mentoring program.

Discussion

Mentoring matters for working-class faculty. For example, four-fifths of the working-class sociologists that Grimes and Morris surveyed had mentors who made a critically important difference in their academic careers (1997, p. 108). Working-class faculty auto-ethnographers support their finding with accounts of perceptive professors who saw their potential, became their mentor, and convinced them that they could become a professor themselves (Beech 2006; Cannon 2006; Kauzlarich 2006; Selman-Killingbeck 2006). We hope that our work will encourage further attention to the mentoring needs of working-class faculty and thereby lessen their feelings of marginalization in higher education.

Our mentoring needs survey identified the goal of increasing career self-efficacy for working-class faculty. A survey of the working-class faculty literature may have independently arrived at this objective. That is, anxiety over career self-efficacy is among the most consistent themes in working-class faculty auto-ethnography. Author after author describes the difficulty in transitioning from the working-class experience into an academic career. We invite program planners to train mentors and mentees on strategies for augmenting career self-efficacy.

upon between 1989 and 2008 depended solely upon dyadic mentoring, only 45% (15 of 33) of the programs reported upon since 2009 used dyads.

A larger goal for mentoring programs is to support the overall experience of working-class faculty. First, we must be mindful that mentoring does no harm (Johnson 2016, pp. 121-134). For example, the faculty mentoring literature documents the biases that may seep into mentoring. Women and minority faculty report that sexism and racism often compromise counsel from white men (Cowin et al. 2011/2012; Driscoll et al. 2009; Maclean 2016; Moss, Teshima & Leszcz 2008; Schramm 2000; Turner & Gonzalez 2015). Similarly, working-class faculty are wary of patronizing middle-class mentors who view mentoring as a 'master-apprentice' relationship (Fish 1993, p. 181). Mentoring that encourages working-class faculty to assimilate into elite culture is problematic. This path leads to the pitfall of viewing social classes as fixed, hierarchically arranged positions. Implying that working-class faculty suffer a cultural deficit not only demeans the experience and values of most of the population but also, if internalized by working-class mentees, alienates them from their own identity. We urge mentors and protégés to consider LeCourt's application of Pierre Bourdieu's and Judith Butler's philosophical positions to faculty life. Simply, LeCourt reminds us that social class is a process of becoming, not being (2006, p. 38). Therefore, working-class faculty gain an enviably enlightened vantage point from their journeys back and forth across class divides (Lubrano 2004). Working-class faculty should be encouraged to add to, not abandon, their working-class identity in ways that are personally rewarding.

Celebrating working-class identity is also institutionally enriching. For example, the realization that working-class faculty are invaluable role models and mentors for first-generation undergraduates finds support from the media, higher education policy analysts, and working-class faculty auto-ethnographers and finds expression in initiatives at universities around the country (Cannon 2006; Flaherty 2017; Grimes & Morris 1997; Kniffin 2007; Lee & Maynard 2017; Nelson 2015; Oldfield 2010; Schademan & Thompson 2016; Springer 2012; Stephens et al. 2015; Young 2016). We invite formal mentoring programs to appreciate and promote the unique and essential contributions of working-class faculty to the future of higher education.

Acknowledgement

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Class, Crime, and Cannibalism in *The String of Pearls*; or, The Demon Barber as Bourgeois Bogeyman

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Abstract

Although the tale of Sweeney Todd is one with significant cultural resonance, little has been written about the text itself, *The String of Pearls*. This article argues that the text engages with anxieties about class conflict through a narrative that enacts exaggerated versions of various interactions. In the nineteenth century, critics objected to the cheap fiction pejoratively known as penny dreadfuls, asserting that the genre's exciting tales of bloodshed, villainy, and mayhem would seduce readers to lives of debauchery and crime, but I argue that this concern about cheap fiction was not for the preservation of the souls of the poor and working classes but rather for the preservation of the middle classes' own corporeal bodies and the system that privileged and protected them. While there is no question that the narrative enacts extreme manifestations of problems facing the urban poor—among them, contaminated or even poisonous foodstuffs and the perils of urban anonymity—it also features an intractable and rapacious lower class and a subversion of the master-servant dynamic on which the comforts of the middle class were constructed, and so, in addition to adventure, detection, and young love, *The String of Pearls* offers a dark revenge fantasy of class-based violence that the middle-class critics of the penny dreadful were perhaps justified in fearing. tl;dr: Eat the Rich!

Keywords

In 1874, James Greenwood, a social journalist in the tradition of Henry Mayhew and Jacob Riis, wrote that '[t]here is a *plague* that is striking . . . into English soil—chiefly metropolitan . . . tempting the ignorant and unwary, and breeding death and misery unspeakable,' a plague the 'baleful influence' of which he argues is ignored because it is 'confined to the vulgar ground it is indigenous to . . . [and is] easy to avoid' (1874, p. 158). The subject of his concern, however, was not poverty, exploitative capitalist practices, alcoholism, or any of the actual diseases that could flourish in overcrowded poor and working-class communities. His target was, instead, 'the plague of poisonous literature' (p. 158) that the proliferation of cheap print publications had generated, and his overwrought polemic, 'A Short Way to Newgate,' quotes and paraphrases from a selection of penny dreadfuls, cataloging for his middle-class readers in minute detail and through a profusion of mixed metaphors the dangers of such entertainment to the poor and working classes to whom they were marketed.

Middle-class moral panics have long been a commonplace phenomenon. John Springhall, writing about the penny dreadful, begins by noting that ''Respectability' was a virtue much

sought after by a large majority of Victorians, if we exclude those at the highest and lowest levels of the social hierarchy' (2001, p. 160); that is, what is popularly identified as 'Victorian' morality was almost exclusively the objective of the middle class. Deeply invested in maintaining the status quo from which they derive their power, the middle class have historically taken upon themselves the role of arbiters of morality and good taste, policing the sources of entertainment for the poor and working classes in the interest of control for as long as the notions of 'high' and 'low' culture have existed. In the nineteenth century, critics objected to the cheap fiction pejoratively known as penny bloods or penny dreadfuls, [1] with journalist Eliza Meteyard railing in 1847 against 'a most polluted source of evil, viz., that heap of abomination and trash falsely denominated 'cheap literature'' (cited in Haywood 2004, p. 165), asserting that the genre's exciting tales of bloodshed, villainy, and mayhem would seduce readers to lives of debauchery and crime. I would argue, however, that their concern about cheap fiction was not for preservation of the souls of the poor and working classes but rather for the preservation of their own corporeal bodies and the system that privileged and protected them; it was concern for their own safety, wrapped in a mantle of concern for the exploited, which motivated the discourse against cheap, sensational fiction. After all, if readers were to turn to the life of crime that penny dreadfuls 'glamorized,' whom would these criminals target?

Additionally, because penny dreadfuls are set in the world occupied by their poor and working-class audiences and represent exaggerated manifestations of this audience's anxieties and the injustices that perpetuate them, these narratives may offer more than escapist fantasy—they may offer, if not a path to escape from a life of exploitation, the very real impetus to do so. The general premise that reading penny fiction will lead to a life of crime is clearly fallacious, denying as it does the poor and working classes the moral or intellectual capacity to distinguish between fiction and real life or to make decisions about right and wrong. However, when one considers that the life of crime portrayed in so many penny dreadfuls has the same objectives, on a personal level, as a revolution—improved circumstances and a shift in the balance of power—the middle-class panic about the impact of penny dreadfuls perhaps becomes more understandable: in the context of the mid-nineteenth century sociopolitical environment, when

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[1] Most sources suggest that the name 'penny blood' was applied earlier in the nineteenth century than 'penny dreadful,' although the *OED* does not support this. I will bow to convention and the mellifluous and use 'penny dreadful' in describing *The String of Pearls*, the publication of which falls roughly on the border between the two terms.

For more on the middle-class frenzy over the cheap, popular fiction of the nineteenth century, see for example Curt Herr's introductory essay to his edition of *Varney the Vampire* (Zittaw Press, 2007) and Springhall's work, including 'The Mysteries of Midnight: Low-Life London 'Penny Dreadfuls' as Unrespectable Reading from the 1860s,' cited in this essay; ''A Life Story for the People'? Edwin J. Brett and the London 'Low-Life' Penny Dreadfuls of the 1860s,' *Victorian Studies*, 33.2, 1990, pp. 223-246; and *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (St. Martin's Press, 1999). See also Edward Jacobs, 'Devaluing the Popular: London Street Culture, 'Industrial Literacy,' and the Emergence of Mass Culture in Victorian England,' *Victorian Urban Settings: Essays on the Nineteenth-Century City and Its Contexts*, ed. by Debra Mancoff and D.J. Trela (Garland Publishing, 1996), pp. 89-113, and Mark Bennett, 'Generic Gothic and Unsettling Genre: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and the Penny Blood,' *Gothic Studies*, 13.1, 2011, pp. 38-54. All of these arguments owe much to Richard Altick, whose *Victorian Studies in Scarlet: Murders and Manners in the Age of Victoria* (Norton, 1970) examines the Victorian zest for bloodshed, and to Patrick Dunae, whose article 'Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth-Century Boys' Literature and Crime' (*Victorian Studies*, 22.2, 1979, pp. 133-150) firmly grounds the outrage not in morality but in fear. For more on this fear, see Ian Haywood's *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics, and the People, 1790-1860*, also cited in this essay, specifically Chapters 6-9 and their consideration of the 1840s; Iain McCalman's *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Cambridge UP, 1988) examines the sociopolitical underground from which the radical politics of the 1840s sprang.

the fiction of an inversion of power is consumed, the oppressed might find their revolutionary appetites whetted, whether on a personal/domestic or on a broader, public scale.

The 1840s and Popular Literature

The anonymously authored narrative *The String of Pearls: A Romance*, popularly known as *Sweeney Todd*,[2] is a frequently graphic assault on both good taste and the status quo. *The String of Pearls* isn't a very good book, but its story has endured even as the original text has fallen almost entirely out of circulation: rewritten more than once and, most famously, set to music, the original tale was published serially during the period known as the Hungry 40s, when widespread industrialization and attendant overcrowded urbanization, coupled with agrarian blight, contributed to conditions that culminated in the revolutions of 1848 throughout Europe. Where there was no revolution, there were shilling weeklies, no less radical than more assertively political publications even as they foregrounded sensational fiction and romances rather than current events; Ian Haywood considers these publications of the 1840s in the final section of *The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics, and the People, 1790-1860*, writing that what he facetiously calls '[t]he displaced, secular, amoral working class . . . was being provided with a boundless supply of (literally) cheap thrills' (2004, p. 139) before moving on to 'historicize radical and popular texts by relating them to the ongoing public debate about 'cheap' literature, and to the continuing campaign for radical political reform' (p. 141).

Arguing that 'the literary history of the 1840s needs rewriting from the bottom up' to acknowledge the role of fiction published in cheap, popular periodicals in the growing consciousness of the oppressed poor and working classes (p. 141), Haywood says that 'Chartism produced the first, genuinely working-class fiction by assimilating both popular and polite narrative forms and modifying their corresponding social and moral values' (p. 145) but that, for the most part, radical authors and publishers 'were unwilling, unable or reluctant to preach an openly insurrectionist message' (p. 149), leading to 'the pragmatic imbrication of the radical press and popular fiction' (p. 161) exemplified in the careers of two publishers whose careers he considers in detail, George W. M. Reynolds and Edward Lloyd.[3] It was in Lloyd's *The People's Periodical and Family Library*—a politically moderate shilling weekly marketed to the increasingly literate poor and working classes and 'yok[ing] together radical tradition and the important new cultural terrain of family reading' (p. 168)—that *The String of Pearls* was originally serialized in 1846-1847.

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[2] I am using the 2007 Oxford University Press edition of the original serial publication, edited by Robert Mack and published under the title of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. I will identify this text as *The String of Pearls* to differentiate it from the Stephen Sondheim musical of the same name; all citations are to this edition.

The authorship of the original periodical serial is still a subject of debate, but it seems most likely that it was some sort of collaboration between prolific hack writers James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest, who both wrote for Lloyd, with additional contributions throughout its series of publications by other authors in Lloyd's employ; Mack favors attributing primary authorship to Rymer in his introduction to the above-named edition but is less absolute in *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd* wherein he discusses in more detail the question of authorship (2007, pp. 145-148). Other textual scholars develop compelling counterarguments. Rosalind Crone and Sally Powell, for example, both attribute the novel to Prest. Luckily, it doesn't actually matter.

The serial was adapted for the stage by George Dibdin Pitt, expanded for subsequent serial publication under Lloyd, published in novel form, and stolen for American publication. I have not yet developed the strength of character, nor would it fit within the scope of this essay, to do a full analysis of the changes between editions.

[3] See Haywood, Chapter 7, 'Fathers of the cheap press or 'able speculators'? Edward Lloyd and George W. M. Reynolds,' pp. 162-191.

The String of Pearls is the story of a money-hungry barber who robs and murders his wealthy customers and cleans up after his crimes by sending the bodies to his neighbor to bake into meat pies, which she sells to a wide range of customers, an ideal representation of Haywood's 'proletarianisation of literary production . . . matched by radical shifts in the class relations of the characters' (p. 163). There is also a love story, some domestic comedy, an asylum subplot, and a dash of imperialist adventure, but at its core, *The String of Pearls* is an exploration of very real anxieties about the rapidly growing urban industrial city of the mid-nineteenth century. This narrative of a murderous barber and an unscrupulous pie shop owner is very different from the romanticized version that dominates contemporary popular culture: it is an over-the-top conspiracy plot influenced by the gothic and Newgate novels that preceded it, but the tale also embodies the upheavals of the Hungry 40s, the decade of *The Communist Manifesto*, Chartism, the Great Famine in Ireland, and legislative changes to long-standing systems of oppression.[4] There is no question that the narrative enacts extreme manifestations of problems facing the urban poor—among them, contaminated or even poisonous foodstuffs and the perils of urban anonymity—but the anxieties of the poor and working classes are not the only ones with which the novel engages; the main characters represent a working class that subverts the master-servant dynamic on which the comforts of the middle class were constructed. The narrative does not merely draw upon experiences with which its readers could relate to develop its plot; by providing a fantastic vision of a class war and by condemning whole-cloth, through its narrative emphasis on a specific population who consumed human flesh, those who exploit the poor and working classes, *The String of Pearls* becomes a novel about large-scale class conflicts—the threat of which loomed large in the imaginations of the middle class in the 1840s—albeit one in which the messages are frequently as garbled as the narrative. In addition to adventure, detection, and young love, *The String of Pearls* offers a dark revenge fantasy of class-based violence, ''popular leisure' [that] still retain[ed] radical political affiliations' (Haywood 2004, p. 164).

Sweeney Todd and the Scholars

Although the story of Sweeney Todd is widely known, little critical attention has been paid to *The String of Pearls* outside the realm of surveys of cheap fiction. The most significant contributions are those from Robert Mack, whose *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd*, a book-length study of the contexts of the novel that considers the place of Sweeney Todd in histories of cannibalism, urbanization, crime, popular fiction, and urban legends, was published in 2007, the same year that Oxford University Press published his annotated edition of the novel as a tie-in to the movie that it does not resemble. Mack's study of the novel is an invaluable complement to any scholarly consideration of *The String of Pearls*, but as his subtitle, *The Life and Times of an Urban Legend,* suggests, he is more interested in the origins of the characters within urban legend and how that character has changed in the last two centuries rather than within the sociopolitical upheavals of the time; this is not to say that Mack and I do not consider some of the same points in similar ways, but he sees the novel as a part of the legend of Sweeney Todd, a legend that continued to develop from the earliest stage

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[4] The opening pages of *The String of Pearls* place the events of the novel in 1785, '[b]efore Fleet-street had reached its present importance, and when George the Third was young, and the two figures who used to strike the chimes at old St Dunstan's church were in all their glory' (p. 3); although Sue Zemka notes that the statues and clock had been moved to Regent's Park and the original St. Dunstan's torn down by the 1840s in *Time and the Moment in Victorian Literature and Society* (Cambridge UP, 2012, p. 93), this reference places the novel more firmly in place than it does in time, as George III was 47 in 1785:this detail serves to emphasize that the novel is about the period in which it was written rather than about an imagined past.

adaptations through to Stephen Sondheim's musical and Tim Burton's movie to become a completely different figure, one driven by revenge rather than greed and looking more like Johnny Depp than Shockheaded Peter.

Kristen Guest writes about the sociopolitical significance of cannibalism in the first of these adaptations, the 1847 melodrama loosely based on the serial, saying that the play and its source, unlike the earlier 'moral fables' of murderous barbers and questionable pies, interrogates 'an existing political hierarchy' instead of reinforcing it (2001, p. 114), which she connects to the ambivalence exhibited by a middle class desiring to both demonize and assimilate the lower classes. All of the consumers, she argues, are 'inadvertent cannibal[s],' 'victim[s] of a vicious system of consumerism that knowingly sets out to deceive,' that is, a 'treacherous shopkeeper' and his 'capitalistic greed' (p. 118). Thus, cannibalism in *The String of Pearls* is an act committed not by one class against another but by a heterogeneous customer base against itself.[5]

Rosalind Crone traces the evolution of the cannibalistic mass murderer from the rural Sawney Beane to the urban Sweeney Todd (both of whom she identifies, while acknowledging the anachronism, as serial killers), arguing that the shift reflects both the declining social status of audiences for these tales and the move from pre-industrial to early Victorian industrial capitalism, a theme which she says 'was nothing new' in cheap fiction (2010, p. 70). However, her focus is on the literal 'murder machines,' Todd's custom-designed chair—a *de rigueur* prop in any stage production of the story—that pitches his victims into a cellar where he slits the throats of those whose necks don't break and, by extension, Mrs. Lovett's elaborate pie-baking mechanisms that allow one baker, a prisoner in her basement, to bake dozens of pies at once and deliver them to her shop upstairs. Crone considers almost exclusively the combined threats to the poor and working classes of urban anonymity and the various machines, literal and figurative, of industrial capitalism, arguing that Sweeney Todd is a product of his time, a mass murderer whose crimes 'formed a frightening parallel with the condition of the faceless, poor, urban mass' (p. 74).

Crone's argument builds on Sally Powell's article on the disposal of and commodification of corpses in mid-nineteenth century London, which draws on Sweeney Todd as well as on resurrection men in fact and fiction to develop her argument about corpse-related markets. Like Crone, Powell limits her analysis to the 'mid-century *working-class* anxiety in relation to retail, production[,] and consumption' of 'the human corpse as product' (2004, p. 48, emphasis added). Thus, while these several critics have engaged with the issues of poverty and class conflict within and around the novel, it is my hope that the present consideration of *The String of Pearls* as not just a critique favoring the poor and working classes but as, if not precisely a call to eat the rich, at least a cause for their discomfort will enrich the discussions around the novel.

The Crimes of Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett

It would be foolish to ignore the significance of cannibalism within *The String of Pearls*, which I will later explore in more detail. However, there is more to the crimes of Sweeney Todd, the demon barber, and Mrs. Lovett, his accomplice, than just suborning customers into consuming

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[5] As the plots of the print and stage version diverge in significant ways, Guest's excellent reading of the class tensions present in the melodrama is only peripherally useful to the present argument, but I greatly appreciate her interrogation of equally permeable class attributes and boundaries in the 1840s.

human flesh, and an examination of these topics will provide a foundation for my reading of the novel's specific uses of cannibalism, facilitated by murder, in relation to anxieties about class destabilization. Firstly, there is its interrogation of and engagement with capitalism: Todd is the consummate capitalist in his adherence to the time-honored traditions of blood, dishonesty, and theft, motivated purely by greed. He wants money, he kills his wealthy middle- and upper-class customers in order to rob them, and he has to do something with the bodies afterwards. He turns the bodies of his victims over to Mrs. Lovett in the interest of self-preservation: while he could, perhaps, have turned his victims over to medical students as killers like Burke and Hare did, he instead provides Mrs. Lovett with the meat for her delectable pies. He is a middle man, providing a vital commodity for making a consumable product and working toward a financially stable future, and his industry also allows Mrs. Lovett to thrive. [6]

The novel not only perverts the idea(l)s of capitalism, the economic system by which the middle classes flourished, but additionally explores the fluidity of social mobility, itself a source of discomfort. *The String of Pearls* foregrounds members of the service-worker class amassing the same kind of wealth that enabled a rapidly growing, perpetually upwardly mobile middle class to acquire power throughout the nineteenth century. This reminder of their own possible origins and of class permeability more generally would be unsettling enough, as more highly regarded novels of the same period suggest, and Todd's ability not only to amass middle-class wealth but to successfully impersonate the upper classes for his own benefit destabilizes the signifiers that compose class boundaries.

Todd, the narrator explains, is ill-favored and not very popular within his neighborhood, '[b]ut for all that he did a most thriving business, and was considered by his neighbors to be a very well-to-do sort of man': 'It was so handy for the young students in the Temple to pop over to Sweeney Todd's to get their chins new rasped . . . that from morning to night he drove a good business' (2007, p. 5). That Mrs. Lovett's pie shop is similarly successful is apparent, even to observers unaware of just how low her operating costs are. Its introduction occurs in Chapter 4, a change in location from Todd's neighboring barbershop, which has dominated the opening chapters: a scene of chaos is described as taking place at noon each day, with the narrator asking what might be 'sufficiently alarming and extraordinary to excite the junior members of the legal profession to such a species of madness' before identifying the cause as 'purely one of a physical character,' that is, 'to see who will get first to Lovett's pie-shop' (p. 28-29). The pies, beginning at noon, 'were brought up on large trays, each of which contained about a hundred, and from these trays they were so speedily transferred to the mouths of Mrs [sic passim] Lovett's customers that it looked like a work of magic' (p. 30)—the entire process of production and consumption reduced to something like an assembly line for maximized profit, even down to the St. Dunstan's bell serving as a factory shift whistle.

Mrs. Lovett is the consummate customer service professional, 'buxom, young and good-looking,' and able to produce an atmosphere wherein 'every enamoured young scion of the law . . . pleased himself with the idea that the charming Mrs Lovett had made that pie especially for him' (p. 30). The narrator acknowledges her charm as customer service rather than any

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[6] Despite their physical proximity and an overlapping customer base, Todd's barbershop and Mrs. Lovett's pie shop remain discrete entities both in location and plot for the first several chapters of *The String of Pearls*; Todd has long since polished off his first victim within the narrative by the time that Mrs. Lovett's pies are brought to the table. St. Dunstan's Church lies between them, with its catacombs serving as the conduit between the two. Notably, the chapter in which the stench from beneath the church, which eventually drives off the archbishop, lies at the numerical center of the novel, and marks the beginning of the end of the joint enterprise that has been going on for years.

authentic fondness: visiting Mrs. Lovett's 'was pleasant, but at the same time it was provoking to all except Mrs Lovett, in whose favour it got up a sort of excitement that paid extraordinarily well' (p. 30). Her smiles and flirtations come free with a purchase. Unlike Todd, to whom the narrator never attributes a moment of regret, Mrs. Lovett seems hindered at times by feelings of guilt, but these moments can just as easily be read as self-interest, as her cupidity (bolstered by significant quantities of brandy) quickly overcomes any fear-*cum*-guilt; even cat meat would cost more than the free meat that Todd provides, and her customers love it. The origins of the product are eliminated from her consciousness as quickly as from the finished product that she sells, and she regularly has her bakers killed to further remove the means of production from the marketplace.[7]

While the obvious horror of the novel is in its eventual revelation that all of London has been paying for the privilege of devouring human flesh in Mrs. Lovett's luscious meat pies, Todd's mercenary motives and the threat embodied in his ability to transcend his own social class through the spoils of his crimes play an equally significant role. While many of his regulars hail from the courts, he also sees a significant number of out-of-town visitors and sailors, and it is these transient customers, specifically those with some sort of portable wealth, that he tends to kill and rob while performing the intimate service of a straight-razor shave. He is greedy, but typically not foolish, with the exception being his hoarding of material goods, the spoils of his crimes. This dangerous action suggests that he desires not just the wealth of the higher classes but also the visible markers of their class. Had he disposed of the top hats, canes, watches, and other objects taken from his victims, some marked with names, seals, or monograms, like he did the bodies of his victims, he would have perhaps been safer, but even when his terrified apprentice Tobias begins to remark on the numerous gentlemen who seem to have left their hats behind, Todd continues to stockpile these material spoils of his crimes. Todd's precise motives for keeping these commodities are out of character in a man for whom '[t]here can be no doubt but that the love of money was the predominant feeling' (p. 141).

Impersonating the Rich

Taking into account that Todd's first attempt to sell the titular string of pearls is to a pawn shop/lapidary, and that, as many readers would have been aware, opportunities for disposing of ill-gotten goods were not scarce in London in the 1840s (and even less so in the 1780s, before the creation of the London police force), it seems clear that it is not the difficulty in disposing of them that drives Todd to keep these items. The narrative describes his hoard in rich detail: 'such a volley of hats of all sorts and descriptions, some looped with silver, some three-cornered, and some square, that they formed quite a museum of that article of attire' (p. 145) in a locked cupboard in the parlor. Another cupboard conceals the entrance to the shut-off upper floors of Todd's home, and the first floor rooms 'contained a great quantity of miscellaneous property of all kinds and descriptions' (p. 145), a miscellany that the novel spends two pages cataloging in great detail, emphasizing both the monetary value and the uniqueness of the items.

Despite the locks and booby traps, this hoarding seems unreasonable in a man who does away with bodies and otherwise covers his tracks as thoroughly as Todd, and his plan to 'carry on the business in Fleet-street' for another few months once he sells the pearls 'so that any

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[7] Mrs. Lovett's at first unknowing and then unwilling accomplices, her bakers, live underground, locked in a hellish mechanized bakery in her shop's basement and producing the sustenance for those who live above while subsisting on the only food available to them, human flesh, anticipate H.G. Wells' Morlocks, the laboring underclass that sustains the indolent Eloi in *The Time Machine*.

suspicious alteration in [his] fortunes may not give rise to suspicion' (p. 140), coupled with the material evidence of years of success, shows that he is not a careless man. But the hoarding of the identifiable spoils of his crimes and his stated intention to 'commence a new career, in which the barber will be forgotten, and the man of fashion only seen and remembered . . . fully capable of vying with the highest and the noblest, let them be who they may' (p. 141-142) suggest a dangerous fetishizing of social class as much as material wealth.

Todd is able to successfully dispose of the titular string of pearls, the acquisition of which opens the novel, by impersonating a nobleman negotiating a loan on behalf of the royal family. He is able to do so easily, first through the judicious expenditure of some of his amassed wealth on a suit of clothing and a hired carriage, easily-purchased markers of his feigned social status. The boy who delivers Todd's suit of clothes, ''which were to come to no less than 30 pounds . . . [and made] up in such a style that they were to do for any nobleman . . . only fit to go to court in'' (p. 131), adds that, had it been known that they were clothes for a barber, ''I am quite certain that the clothes would not have been finished in the style they are, but quite the reverse'' (p. 131), but since they were paid for in advance, ''[t]he coat is of the finest velvet, lined with silk, and trimmed with lace . . . and all the rest of the dress is of the same style'' (p. 131). Another delivery boy follows, with '[s]ilk stockings, gloves, lace, cravats, ruffles, and so on' (p. 132), and nearly comes to blows with the boy coming to confirm the carriage and 'really handsome horses that Sweeney Todd had succeeded in hiring for the occasion' (p. 136).

Todd leaves his shop 'attired in the very height of fashion for the period' (p. 134) and accessorized with a sword that, to Tobias, looks hauntingly familiar: 'he had a recollection that a gentleman had come in to have his hair dressed, and had taken . . . off, and laid just such a sword across his hat during the operation' (p. 134). That is, the final touches to Todd's costume are drawn from his treasure hoard, material objects stolen from his victims; by taking a gentleman's sword in hand, he is able to slide into the gentleman's shoes, at least for a brief period. That he can so easily take his place not merely among the wealthy but among the powerful embodies a middle- and upper-class anxiety about social mobility and the attendant dilution of their own power and position. Todd achieves his social aspirations not through his purported occupation, which would elevate him at best to the lower edge of the class barely above his own, but through imitating those whom he serves.

Todd takes the pearls to 'John Mundel, an exceedingly wealthy person, a Dutchman by extraction, who was reported to make immense sums of money by lending to the nobility and others what they required on emergencies, at an enormous rate of interest' in exchange for 'the jewels, some costly plate, or the title deeds of an estate, perchance, as security' (p. 135). The narrator clarifies that Mundel is 'nothing more than a pawn-broker' and critiques the entire profession, lower-class practitioners of which the readers of *The String of Pearls* might be unhappily familiar. Mundel, perhaps a more critical audience than many, falls for Todd's outward presentation, calling him 'his lordship,' 'admitting to himself that that the equipage was faultless' and deciding that, based on the carriage and 'the rich dress of his visitor,' he would be happy to ''lay under an obligation a rather illustrious lady, by helping her out of a little pecuniary difficulty,'' provided the security is sufficient (p. 136). Mundel deceives himself that he is doing business with a duke on behalf of the queen, and his greed and desire for power leads him to write a check for a greater sum than he normally would, and the fraudulent exchange is presented as a victory over the powerful even as Todd himself is vilified.

Poor and working-class readers, relishing Todd's turning of the tables on a figure like Mundel, might similarly appreciate Todd's choice of victims even as they find Todd's actions

objectionable. The first victim within the context of the novel is contemptuous of Todd, his seemingly servile barber, and the majority of Todd's victims not only are wealthy but engage in ostentatious public displays of that wealth coupled with contempt for those who serve them. Furthermore, as Todd nears his goal of becoming 'a man of fashion' (p. 141), his abuse of his dependent, Tobias, is emphasized—it is not new behavior, but the narrative becomes more descriptive—and if Tobias is morally right to turn on Todd—and the narrative and audience agree that he is, just as the dog who snaps at Todd for threatening him is in the right—then an argument could be made that Todd is also in the right, within the world of the novel, to turn on his oppressors.

Cannibalism in the Big City

Even as it casts Todd and Mrs. Lovett as the primary antagonists, *The String of Pearls* absolutely indulges fantasies of violence against the upper classes, most significantly through its use of and challenge to the trope of urban cannibalism.[8] Cannibalism, an act subject to some of the strongest taboos in most cultures and a near-universal measure of savagery, is not uncommon in folklore and fiction, although the actual practice is less common historically than these representations suggest. In his introduction to *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, Peter Hulme explores 'why the cannibal scene means so much to us' (1998, p. 5) and how this 'trope of exceptional power' is met with '[d]isgust, but also desire; loathing, but also fascination' (p. 4, p. 6); rather than as an actual phenomenon, Hulme identifies cannibalism as 'quite simply the mark of greatest imaginable cultural difference' (20). The act of devouring human flesh is the indicator of the moment when the world has become a different place altogether.

The literal act of cannibalism serves many functions in literature. In the realms of travel narratives and imperial romance, the threat of cannibalism occurs almost as frequently as forbidden love or the submission of [insert Indigenous population here] to the white man's magic and is a simple means of justifying whatever brutality follows. Within a conflict between two ostensibly civilized populations, the turn to cannibalism becomes an ethical choice, as in the contemporary examples of *The Walking Dead* or Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*: the 'good guys' don't ever give in to survival cannibalism, whereas the 'bad guys' not only do but begin to revel in it. Revenge cannibalism often serves up poetic justice, as when Titus Andronicus delightedly feeds his daughter's rapists to his nemesis, their mother. Finally, there is literary cannibalism of the type that Jonathan Swift so modestly proposes, a system of cannibalism that mimics capitalism by advocating the exchange of money for a desired product.

The less satiric progeny of this final thread thrived and evolved throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and into the present, and in fact, urban legends of human-meat pies were in regular circulation by the time that *The String of Pearls* was published.[9] In Charles Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*, for example, Tom Pinch 'going astray,' may have possessed an 'evil genius,' but not to the extent of joining the ranks of 'those preparers of cannibalistic pastry,

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[8] In *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd*, Mack draws on many of the sources that I have used to contextualize notions of cannibalism in and around the 1840s; however, as these examples were employed independently and are, I think, necessarily illustrative, I acknowledge the overlap but let the examples stand. Mack's discussion is much broader than my own, surveying both the mythic/literary cannibal from antiquity to the Brothers Grimm and real-life examples pre- and post-dating *The String of Pearls* to argue that the act itself has much to do with the story's longevity. Like Powell, he also makes explicit connections between cannibalism and body snatching.

[9] See Mack, *The Wonderful and Surprising Life of Sweeney Todd*, pp. 7-14, for an in-depth discussion of nineteenth-century meat pies and their consumers.

who are represented in many standard country legends as doing a lively retail business in the Metropolis' (1884, p. 577), suggesting by virtue of the brevity of the reference that 'cannibalistic pastry' had achieved the status of full-blown urban legend by 1844. Indeed, a character in *The String of Pearls* uses ''I wish . . . as I may be made into veal pies at Lovett's in Bell-yard if I as much as says a word'' (p. 6) as an oath. Sally Powell, writing about the robust trade in human remains in nineteenth-century fact and fiction, focuses primarily on 'the commodification of the human body' and the market for intact corpses rather than byproducts, but connects this issue—one of bodily autonomy, integrity, and sanctity—to that of bodily corruption from within, via the consumption of human flesh (p. 48); a robust trade in cadavers, whether found or 'resurrected,' existed alongside food and water of at best questionable origins and quality.

In *London Labour and the London Poor*, Henry Mayhew, in discussing the collapse of the street trade in 'penny pies' as shops became the norm, considers both the meat, 'bought in 'pieces,' of the same part as the sausage-makers purchase' (1861, p. 196), and the only somewhat facetious speculation into its origins, quoting one pieman who tells of ''[p]eople . . . [who] often begin crying, 'Mee-yow', or 'Bow-wow-wow!' at me; but there's nothing of that kind **now**. Meat, you see, is so cheap'' (p. 196, emphasis added). Mayhew began the work that became *London Labour and the London Poor* in the 1840s, and the street vendors with whom he spoke lamented the collapse in their trade because pie shops like Mrs. Lovett's 'have now got most of the custom, as they make the pies much larger for the money than those sold in the streets,' as Mayhew was told by a pieman 'with considerable bitterness' (p. 196). The meat in the pies was highly seasoned 'because persons can't exactly tell the flavour of the meat with it,' and the gravy often provided with pies 'consisted of a little salt and water browned . . . [and w]ith this gravy a person in the line assured [Mayhew] that he has known pies four days old to go off very freely, and be pronounced excellent' (p. 196). This is all to show that meat pies, no matter how well-enjoyed, were justifiably suspect: whether cat, dog, or horse; the cheapest bits of veal or pork (and whatever vermin might slip in); or meat well past its prime in an era predating refrigeration; the meat in pies could be anything.

Some of the squalor of urban industrial mid-century London impacted all residents, given that the dirty, stinking Thames ran through the whole city and a cloud of industrial pollution hovered over it, but the worst of the adulterated food and contaminated water would be that available in the poor and working-class neighborhoods. *The String of Pearls*, however, extends the reach of the taint of cannibalism throughout the city and beyond. The narrator says of Mrs. Lovett's 'pork' and 'veal' pies that '[t]heir fame had spread even to great distances, and many persons carried them to the suburbs of the city as quite a treat to friends and relations there residing. And well did they deserve their reputation, those delicious pies; . . . to eat one of Lovett's pies was such a provocative to eat another' (p. 29).

Mrs. Lovett's pies are ''the cheapest and the best'' option in the area (p. 245), an area that Robert Mack identifies as 'a space within which the members of different social classes mingled . . . one in which the class divisions that elsewhere often rigorously separated and divided one group from another broke down; . . . an area of unpredictable social contagion and collision' (2007, p. 86). Given the area's mixed demographic and Mrs. Lovett's pies being cheapest as well as best, it must be assumed that they are consumed by working poor residents, but the narrative focuses on the consumption of those from the area's legal institutions, 'mostly from Lincoln's-inn . . . young and old, but most certainly a majority of the former . . . although from the neighbouring legal establishments likewise there come not a few; the Temple contributes its numbers, and from the more distant Gray's-inn there come a goodly lot' (p. 29),

and into their mouths 'with what rapidity the pies disappeared!' (p. 30). It is these consumers whom the narrative critiques; while it is true that the unknowing consumers are victims of deception, the simple fact is that cannibalism was committed, and with great enthusiasm. Mrs. Lovett's middle-class customers garner little sympathy; they're faceless, for the most part, and Todd's assistant Tobias gestures toward the popular conception of the legal system when he says to an acquaintance, ''I have gone into another line: instead of being a lawyer, and helping to shave the clients, I am going to shave the lawyers now'' (p. 31).[10] The first connection in the novel between Todd's barbershop and the pie shop is one that emphasizes both the disparate customer base and the irresistibility of Mrs. Lovett's pies. Tobias risks his master's wrath because, the narrator explains, 'two penny-pieces were lying at the bottom of his pocket, [and] it was not in human nature to resist running into Lovett's and converting them into a pork pie' (p. 31): 'High and low, rich and poor, resorted to Mrs Lovett's pie-shop,' and Tobias sums up the feelings of all of greater London when he asks ''[W]ho would be an emperor, if he couldn't get pies like these?'' (p. 31).

Throughout the novel, the tremendous enjoyment with which the pies are consumed is emphasized, complicating the consumers' status as victims of deception and also suggesting gluttony outside of their workday lunches. Perhaps in parody of the legal principle that ignorance of the law is no excuse, the narrative explicitly condemns a significant segment of London's population and singles out the lawyers among them, returning to Mrs. Lovett's at regular intervals to describe the insatiable lawyers and other middle-class consumers, particularly after it becomes clear to the reader what they are eating. Mrs. Lovett's pies attain the status of a poison, not as in a toxin but as a dangerous comestible, a source of corruption, and the middle class consumers are not permitted to recover from the infection. One man, shopping for his wife who is 'in a certain condition . . . and won't fancy anything but one of Lovett's veal pies' (p. 279), references the popular belief that a pregnant woman's desires will be impressed upon the child, leading the audience to imagine a London of the novel's future (the Dickensian present in which it was published) populated by citizens with a taste for human flesh. The final chapter looks into the future to describe the last surviving member of the Inns of Court 'who visited Lovett's pie-shop, and there luxuriated upon those delicacies . . . even now, as he thinks of how he enjoyed the flavour of the 'veal,' he shudders, and has to take a drop of brandy' (p. 281).

Absolving the Workers

While the narrative does not encourage the audience to absolve the middle-class consumers—who could just as easily be the consumed as the consumers, and the consumed, as representatives of a social class, are not innocent in *The String of Pearls*—it presses the audience to sympathize and even identify with two representatives of the working class who have also committed unknowing cannibalism: the exploited child laborer Tobias (whose mother has essentially sold him to Todd, who abuses him verbally and physically and eventually has him locked up in an asylum) and the nearly starving man who takes the job of baker that Mrs. Lovett offers. The latter is the last in a long line of at-first unknowing and then unwilling accomplices, and both the baker and Tobias are described consuming and enjoying the pies with as much enthusiasm as the men from the courts. Because penny plots cannot advance without wild coincidence, the baker turns out to be Mark Ingestrie (whose name

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[10] It is worth noting that the novel does not identify as Mrs. Lovett's customers workers in the industries for which Fleet Street is best known, journalism and publishing. This could, of course, be due to authorial wisdom or the influence of Edward Lloyd.

suggests both ingesting and industry, the hallmarks of capitalism), the original 'owner' of the titular string of pearls[11] and the missing-presumed-dead beloved of the closest thing the novel has to a heroine, Johanna. At the end of the novel, it is he who springs out of a tray of pies to announce that ''Mrs Lovett's pies are made of *human flesh*'' (p. 280, italics in original) in the presence of a constable brought by Tobias, and their participation in the unmasking of Todd and Mrs. Lovett, the structure of the narrative suggests, outweighs their participation in both cannibalism and the crimes that surround it. Furthermore, as ever, the love of a good woman—Johanna remains faithful and devoted even as she joins forces with the characters investigating Todd, even dressing in drag to take the place of Tobias—contributes to the narrative absolution of his sins.

Episodes of their suffering provide a not-insignificant portion of the well-padded narrative; for the baker, 'At first everything was delightful, and . . . he found that it was no difficult matter to keep up the supply of pies by really a very small amount of manual labour. And that labour was such a labour of love, for the pies were delicious' (p. 172). However, when the novelty wears off, he is astounded—as a member of the middle class brought low by circumstances—to discover that he is ''condemned to such a slavery . . . even in the very heart of London . . . without the means of resisting the most frightful threats that are uttered against me'' (p. 176), a revelation that would perhaps be less astonishing to readers of the novel. His initial discontent is simply that ''one cannot be continually eating pie'' (p. 173), but he quickly progresses from bored consumer to alienated worker, resisting being ''made into a mere machine for the manufacture of pies'' (p. 173) before being told that he is a prisoner and that he will be killed if he quits working (p. 176). Todd then speaks to him through a trapdoor, and his words could be those of a wealthy industrialist: ''Make pies,' said the voice, 'eat them and be happy. How many a man would envy your position - withdrawn from all the struggles of existence, amply provided with board and lodging, and engaged in a pleasant and delightful occupation. It is astonishing how you can be dissatisfied!'' (pp. 177-178). The baker resumes his work, but Mrs. Lovett eventually complains to Todd that this baker is ''the most troublesome one I have had, because the most educated'' (p. 259), a charge that echoes those who complained that educating the working class would have a negative impact on the status quo.

Tobias's earlier suspicions about the luxury items seemingly left behind by customers lead him to investigate while Todd is meeting with Mundel. Upon finding the hoard previously described, he 'could not help exclaiming aloud, — 'How could Sweeney Todd come by these articles, except by the murder of their owners?'' (146), but he is carried off to a madhouse by Todd before he can share the information with anyone (which is not his first inclination, being himself fearful of the law). Only after he escapes over the course of several chapters does he go to the constabulary, providing evidence that leads to Todd's downfall. The two plots intersect when Tobias's constable is on hand after Ingestrie's revelation, having just arrested Sweeney Todd. Mrs. Lovett is immediately placed under arrest, although the charges are never stated, but then collapses, announcing that she, ironically, has been poisoned: Todd had earlier poured actual poison into her brandy bottle as she started questioning and threatening their long-standing agreement, knowing that she would at some near point turn to her brandy for comfort.

While 'the throng of persons recoiled - what a roar of agony and dismay there was! How frightfully sick about forty lawyers' clerks became all at once, and how they spat out the

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[11] That is, he is the man who stole them first, from, in fact, the indigenous population of a Pacific island who, of course, practice cannibalism.

gelatinous clinging portions of the rich pies they had been devouring' (p. 280), Ingestrie is reunited with Johanna and restored to his place in the social order, and the plot wraps up abruptly. Unlike the brandy-drinking legal man, who is the last of 'the youths who visited Lovett's pie-shop' and is now 'very, very old' (p. 281) but still implicated in the mass cannibalism, Mark and Tobias are explicitly exonerated by the narrative, which closes with the end of their story. The former marries his beloved (who, the narrative makes explicit, never consumed a pie from Mrs. Lovett's), and they 'lived long and happily together, enjoying all the comforts of an independent existence' with Tobias as their servant (p. 282). '[T]hey never forgot the strange and eventful circumstances connected with the String of Pearls' (282), but Tobias and Mark, along with the narrative itself, seem to forget that they were active, albeit unknowing, participants and consumers in Todd and Mrs. Lovett's schemes, absolution not granted to the anonymous middle-to-upper-class consumers. Additionally, the poor and working-class residents of the neighborhood, with whom the original audience of *The String of Pearls* would identify, must be cannibals as well, but the text does not implicate them as a group as it does the men of the law courts.

Conclusion

The cannibal may devour from the margins or from within, embodies unparalleled violence, and is almost always infused with meaning as a symbol beyond their place in a plot. It may be a critical commonplace to read cannibalism as a metaphor for any struggle between a dominant group and those whom they oppress, but Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett conspire to feed the rich to all of London, turning the popular metaphor-made-flesh of cannibalism-as-exploitation on end. The tale of Sweeney Todd has been rewritten more than once and, most famously, set to music by Stephen Sondheim to become a revenge tragedy with only the collateral damage of cannibalism on a massive scale marring the satisfaction that audiences can take in Todd's actions against the man who had him framed and transported, raped his wife into insanity, and now has designs on his teenaged daughter. It is this version of Sweeney Todd and these motives with which most audiences are familiar, but the original version of the tale offers no such motivation, emphasizing a desire to accumulate tangible rewards rather than to fulfill a physical or emotional need. In *The String of Pearls*, Todd and Mrs. Lovett are rebellious representatives of the metaphorically devoured who facilitate a revolutionary turn on their oppressors, who become the literally devoured.

The criminal enterprises of Todd and Mrs. Lovett are not just the products of capitalism and generic desire; they are facilitated by the changes that industrialization and capitalism brought about: urban alienation is a product of communities growing and populations moving as well as of the terrific poverty in which many lived. With the rise of capitalism, its leaders reasonably began to fear the rise of those whom they oppressed, and *The String of Pearls* capitalizes on anxieties about working class insurrection and urban crime, fears rooted in the imagined, the historical, and their present.

Crime ultimately does not pay in *The String of Pearls*, challenging arguments about the slippery slope between reading material and a life of street crime; however, the novel is staged in a commodity-driven world of fluid boundaries and suggestively enacts violent conflict between social classes. The cannibalism, itself an almost too-obvious metaphor for the capitalist system that created the conflict, also reflects a fear of poison, of contaminated goods, that is paralleled in the panics over what Greenwood called, decades later, 'penny packets of poison,' texts that he claimed were just as dangerous as Sweeney Todd's penny shaves and as toxic as Mrs. Lovett's penny pies. Although the apprehension over their consumption by servants public and

private was presented by concerned parties like Greenwood as altruism, it is likely that the unease was as much about protecting the bodies of the bourgeoisie as the minds and souls of the poor and working classes.

Furthermore, although Mrs. Lovett's customers come from all levels of London society, it is the middle classes' cannibalism that the narrative highlights, implicating them in a most savage act of devouring their own rather than their usual diet of the oppressed. In this reversal, the capitalist—living and flourishing off of the blood and bodies of the workers as part of a system of industrialized exploitation in worship of Mammon—is devoured. *The String of Pearls* uses cannibalism to challenge social hierarchies constructed on an equation of social standing with morality, instead indulging 'a frisson of escapist 'what if,' in which audiences simultaneously identified with the horror of the act' and enjoyed a parodic inversion of social interaction in a capitalist system (Guest, p. 113), a fantasy of having one's oppressors for dinner with some fava beans and a nice Chianti.

Author Bio

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Nationalizing Realism in Dermot Bolger's *The Journey Home*

Erika Meyers

Abstract

Dermot Bolger's third novel, *The Journey Home*, emerged in 1990 in the author's home country of the Republic of Ireland, yet took 18 years to be republished in the United States in 2008. The novel's graphic depiction of an array of abuses, including sexual, physical, political, and economic, not only illustrated the author's intention to shock the reading public regarding the government's conscious disregard for these struggles, but its publication also elucidated the aftereffects of exposing the differences between experiences with abuse and the ways in which both national and socio-economic processes mediate their interpretations. In this paper, I will argue that Bolger's illustration of corruption and abuse does not only display a contrast between the public and those who represent their image, but also how socioeconomic paradigms are used to mediate perceptions of what constitutes 'reality'.

Keywords

Dermot Bolger, Ireland, Murphy Report, Ryan Report (CICA), reality, working-class literature, company scrip, company town, abuse, national identity

Following up on a mélange of literature focused on the Republic of Ireland's working class, including the work of Lee Dunne (*Goodbye to the Hill*, 1965), Heno Magee (*Hatchet*, 1978) and Roddy Doyle (*The Commitments*, 1987), Dermot Bolger's third novel, *The Journey Home*, traces Hano and his best friend Shay's gritty expedition through Dublin's nadir of corruption and abuse that is perpetuated by the political enterprises of the Plunkett family. In order to elaborate on themes of inequality, poverty, and stagnation in the Republic of Ireland in the 1980s, Bolger interlaces three narratives: one following Hano's life, one from Shay's posthumous perspective, and one omniscient viewpoint. While this could provide a feeling of movement and change, such a notion is undermined by Shay and Hano's increasingly limited job prospects as generations of corruption enacted through the Plunkett family maintain their economic immobility (McCarthy 1997, p. 99).

First published in Europe in 1990 and republished in the United States in 2008, *The Journey Home*[1] was written to shock the reading public with its interrogation of the wilful ignorance of the government toward sexual abuse and political corruption. While fiction should not be taken as a direct reflection of 'reality', it is important to note that one year after *The Journey Home*'s 2008 American publication, comprehensive revelations uncovered in both the report of the Irish Republic's Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA or 'Ryan Report') and the Murphy Report helped to maintain Bolger's pronouncement of the existence of the blatant disregard for abuse carried out by those in power.

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[1] *The Journey Home* follows three friends, Hano, Shay and Cait in 1980s Dublin amid a backdrop of political corruption and capitalistic oppression in a city controlled by a powerful family (the Plunkett family).

> The nine-year investigation (Ryan Report) found that Catholic priests and nuns for decades terrorised thousands of boys and girls in the Irish Republic, while government inspectors failed to stop the chronic beatings, rape and humiliation. The high court judge Sean Ryan today unveiled the 2,600-page final report of Ireland's commission into child abuse, which drew on testimony from thousands of former inmates and officials from more than 250 church-run institutions. Police were called to the news conference amid angry scenes as victims were prevented from attending. (McDonald 2009)

The eighteen-year gap between when this novel was first published in Europe and eventually found publication in the United States identifies a more global desire to persist with images of national identity, rather than the sometimes disturbing elements of social realism illustrated in this novel. This is highlighted by Rafferty's *New York Times* review where he asserts '[t]hat Ireland, perennially emerald green in the mists of memory, is dead and gone, Dermot Bolger wants us to know. This is news no Irish-American is keen to hear, which might explain (not justify) why this book has had such a long passage across the Atlantic […]' (Rafferty 2008). The stagnation between its initial and American publications, contrasted by sweeping changes brought on by the Celtic Tiger[2] within this gap, is evident of the disconnect between the public and those who represent its image as well as between writers and readers of what constitutes 'reality'. Granted, books such as Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* also depict bleak images of the Republic of Ireland; however, by returning to the United States with hope for the future after a childhood of loss and turmoil in the Republic of Ireland, McCourt 'clearly maps one of the trajectories of the myth of the American Dream', which, in turn 'has certainly helped the book's sales' (Mitchell 2003, p. 619). By contrast, travel in *The Journey Home* merely reveals the ubiquitous nature of corruption, a phenomenon outlined via the Panama Papers, which contradicts the hope of prosperity instilled by the prospect of leaving one place for another. Therefore, the interpretation of subjectivity in Bolger's depiction of poverty and abuse in *The Journey Home* is based on a historical consensus between fiction and the public on what constitutes 'reality'. By focussing on this consensus, I will argue that the exact truth revealed in the realist novel is not as important as understanding how 'reality' is mediated through national and capitalist stratifications used to favor one perception over the other.

Narrowly speaking, and in a very basic sense, a perspective of 'reality' can be established in literature when readers encounter stories and characters that are analogous to themselves. When looking at literature as a form of discourse, characters with similar speech patterns, for example, can provide one of the primary similarities in the reader's encounter with a likeness to their own styles of communication; however, taken further, characters who may display and understand similar speech patterns as, but whose interactions and experiences within the text differ from those of the reader can also expand the reader's concept of 'reality' beyond similarities and pre-existing beliefs about other potential 'realities'. It is the job of 'the speech act, as a unit of communication,' to 'not only organize the signs but also condition the way in which these signs are to be received', which therefore enables 'us to take the speech act as our heuristic guideline in considering the fact that the written utterance continually transcends the margins of the printed page, in order to bring the addressee into contact with nontextual realities' (Iser 1978, p. 55). As a form of communication then, the speech act can not only be interpreted by its linguistic qualities, but also in terms of context. This context elucidates an

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[2] This term refers to the economic boom years of the Republic of Ireland from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s.

understanding of the nature of 'reality' while also potentially providing the reader with a percipience of 'reality' that exists outside of their personal lives.

> Iser suggests that a literary work should be thought of as an illocutionary act. In normal speech contexts illocutionary acts gain force only when speaker and recipient share the same conventions and procedures so that the recipient's response brings into being the speaker's intention or meaning. [T]his act of communication tells us something new about reality because the literary text reorganises the familiar repertoire of social and cultural norms. (Morris 2003, pp. 123-124)

Morris's interpretation claims that meaning, and therefore interpretation, can be derived from the recipient's recognition of commonalities between themselves and the speaker through their similar illocutionary acts. While perceptions of 'reality' can be recognized by similar speech patterns, these patterns are restricted due to their usage as literary techniques since '[r]hetorical devices manipulate or direct responses under the fictive stance so that a reader is guided not only in *what* to imagine but also *how* to imagine it' (Lamarque and Olsen 1994, pp. 139-140). Literary devices can show their own restrictions by facilitating narrow viewpoints, therefore mediating the audience's opinions by omitting other potential perspectives. While literary techniques could provide an unbalanced point of view, and therefore censor other potential 'realities', the reader's acceptance of them can overshadow investigations into the origins upon which the concept of 'reality' is based, underlining 'the precise definition of the real object: a cause which in itself does not exist--which is present only in a series of effects, but always in a distorted, displaced way. If the Real is the impossible, it is precisely this impossibility which is to be grasped through its effects' (Žižek 1989, p. 163). Perceptions of 'reality' can be based on the subsequent effects of what is, or what once was, 'real'. If the audience is to accept 'reality' on the basis of its effects and not its origins, then they are in danger of basing their opinions of 'reality' on concepts that are inauthentic to begin with.

The emergence of representations of 'reality' can be due, in part, to the influence of mass production on the public's perception of 'reality' and vice versa as '[t]he adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception' (Benjamin 2004, p. 66). This consistently augmented relationship between 'reality' and its mass interpretation is unlimited, therefore contesting the notion of 'reality' as historically stagnant. Adorno furthers this position by placing it into the context of the artworks that demonstrate 'the possibility of the nonexisting. The reality of artworks testifies to the possibility of the possible. The object of art's longing, the reality of what is not, is metamorphosed in art as remembrance. In remembrance what is qua what was combines with the nonexisting because what was no longer is' (Adorno 2013, p. 181). While art has the potential to connect us 'to the possibility of the possible' (Adorno 2013, p. 181), Adorno also recognizes that there are important factors that preclude the production of art when it does not conform to pre-existing standards and is subject to 'competing specialists, a victim of that division of labour whose hegemony it tries to challenge. The original, authentically bourgeois reduction of truth to what we have the power to do, as Bacon formulated the idea, affects the content of the work of art' (Adorno 2005, pp. 87-88).

One contributing factor that can be used to determine the survival of a book in the marketplace is the ways in which poverty is illustrated. This is evident through the opposing depictions of the experience of poverty in Dublin by Roddy Doyle and Dermot Bolger. 1993 Booker Prize winning author Roddy Doyle's Barrytown Trilogy, which includes novels such as *The Commitments*, (a humorous exploration of working-class Dublin through the trials and

tribulations of a Dublin-based soul band trying to find success in the music industry) and *The Snapper* (which focuses on the social repercussions of a young woman's unplanned pregnancy) gained national and international attention due in part to successful marketing strategies and movie adaptations. In contrast, Bolger's early work has focussed on similar themes with strikingly darker consequences: the unexpected pregnancy in *Night Shift* and ultimate death of the child that frees its young parents from adult responsibilities, and the exploration of the impact of political corruption and wilful ignorance towards abuse in working-class Dublin in *The Journey Home*, have struggled to reach markets in, for example, North America. One explanation for this difference between Doyle's work and Bolger's is through Doyle's references to American culture. This allows Doyle's work to be received on a more international level by occupying pop culture subject matter that transitions outside of Ireland and onto a more global scale.

> Tracing the short lifespan of a soul group in 'Barrytown,' *The Commitments* self-consciously makes an iconic use of popular cultures and watches their mutation, examines their applicability, in the context of contemporary urban Ireland. [T]he terms of cultural reference in *The Commitments* are necessarily delimited by its subject matter (usually American soul music), but the hybrid 'Dublin soul' that is briefly born in the narrative points the way forward in Doyle's fiction to a continual, and politicized, prioritization of all elements of lived culture over the strictures of readily available 'literary' tropes. (Graham 2018)

Here, Doyle's ability to find the applicability of American pop culture in an Irish context allows him to connect on a cultural level that exists beyond literary devices. While both authors' work incorporate elements of dirty realism into their writing, the international attention of Doyle's fiction ironically makes the experience of poverty appear to be more 'authentic' as his depictions are more commonly accepted worldwide, which aligns with Adorno's notion that: 'Reality becomes its own ideology through the spell cast by its faithful duplication' (Adorno 2005, p. 63). By conforming to international expectations, Doyle can provide the notion that his illustration of poverty is more 'real', therefore pushing bleak depictions of social inequality in contemporary Ireland, as seen through Bolger's work, to the margins of Irish national identity, thus recognizing the subjective nature of our interpretations of 'reality' in the first place. What becomes significant then, is not looking for an exact truth, but examining how the idea of 'reality' is mediated through capitalist stratifications used to favor one perception over another.

One way that capitalist stratifications have been successful is through historical amnesia, which can constrict the understanding of the social processes that condition interpretations of 'reality'. For example, the ubiquitous nature of the Plunkett family's political and economic stronghold provides a sense of entrapment within Dublin. Such a depiction allows Bolger to demonstrate the limitations that reduce the ability to encounter more global modes of thinking and living due to the confines of their daily struggles under the control of the Plunkett family; however, Bolger's rendering of such restrictions is also a point of contention due to the exaggerated business practices of the Plunkett family.

> The control that the Plunkett family exercise on business and politics in Finglas, for example, reads like a bad conspiracy theory. Plunkett Auctioneers, Plunkett Stores, Plunkett Motors, Plunkett Undertakers – 'the crucifixion' of Plunkett enterprise – plus, for good measure, their 'name on every second shop front', is a grossly exaggerated

departure from any monopoly on commercial affairs in any Dublin suburb. (Pierse 2010, pp. 99-100)

Although the Plunkett family's autocracy is a hyperbolic depiction of Dublin, it is necessary to acknowledge the global practices of labor exploitation that have influenced Bolger's work. For, if the reader is to only examine this monopoly within an Irish context, then they are negating the historical origins of corporate monopolies and the acts of labor exploitation that exist worldwide. For example, a company town can be defined as a place 'where an individual company owned all the buildings and businesses'. Ownership over the flow and access to capital, combined with 'remoteness and lack of transportation' conspire to keep 'workers from leaving for other jobs or to buy from other, independent merchants (…) Without external competition, housing costs and groceries in company towns could become exorbitant, and the workers built up large debts that they were required to pay off before leaving' ('Slavery by Another Name' 2017). Therefore, by asserting economic control, the Plunkett family's business dealings mimic the exploitation of labor that historically occurred throughout company towns. Hence, the overstatement of the pervasive enterprises of the Plunkett family provides the opportunity for Bolger to develop a correlation between Dublin and Appalachia. Moreover, Pascal Plunkett's payment system further parallels the allocation of wages practiced in company towns. This is evident when Hano's father is diagnosed with cancer and his mother, who works for Plunkett Undertakers, still needs to take out 'a note for Plunkett Stores' where she 'can buy what I like there and use the rest as credit whenever I come down again' (Bolger 2008, p. 97).

This excerpt is twofold. On the one hand, Bolger is using Hano's mother's reaction to this payment method to criticize her level of acceptance with the system that determines the status quo, which can be seen through her inability to recognize that if she had been paid better wages in the first place, she would not have to take out a loan. Satisfaction with the status quo has appeared elsewhere in Bolger's work. For example, in Bolger's play, *Blinded by the Light*, protagonist Mick is characterized by his refusal to join or become a part of anything. This can be witnessed via statements such as 'I've a life-long aversion to joining anything' (Bolger 2000, p. 160) and 'I'm not lazy, I'm just trying to live my life in my own way in the Independent Republic of Mickonia' (Bolger 2000, p. 162). While contentedness can sometimes be depicted through lack of ambition for class mobility, which can be seen through Jennifer's Johnston's *How Many Miles to Babylon?*: ''It is a sad fact, boy, that one has to accept young. Yes, young.'(…) 'The responsibilities and limitations of the class into which you are born. They have to be accepted' (Johnston 1974, p. 29), it can also be recognized through the condemnation of political leaders who contributed to social inequality. This is similarly shown through Michael O'Loughlin's poem 'Stalingrad': 'This is my childhood and country/ the cynical knowing smile/ Plastered onto ignorance/ Ideals untarnished and deadly/ Because never translated into action/ And everywhere/ The sick glorification of failure'. Thus, social dissolution through 'the sick glorification of failure' (O'Loughlin qtd. in Mac Anna 1991, p. 22) is due, in part, to political corruption. This is particularly applicable to the scandals that characterized Charles Haughey's tenure as Taoiseach. Son-in-law to former Taoiseach Seán Lemass, Charles Haughey was Taoiseach for three terms between 1979 and 1992; a career defined by allegations of corruption.

> Several official investigations into his private life revealed that he had received millions of pounds from a number of top businesses, including payments from the Irish Permanent Building Society, the hotelier PV Doyle and the property developer Patrick Gallagher. Ben Dunne, head of Dunne Stores, acknowledged that he had paid him more

than £1million in donations which began within weeks of Mr Haughey's election as Taoiseach in 1987. Haughey denied this but later admitted it was true. (Obituary: Charles Haughey 2003)

The investigations mentioned refer to the McCracken Tribunal, its successor, the Moriarty Tribunal, and the Tribunal of Inquiry into the Beef Processing Industry. Although each tribunal attempted to implicate Haughey in illegal financial dealings, they reached varying levels of achievement in proving his guilt. Notably, the Moriarty Tribunal (also known as Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Payments to Politicians and Related Matters) began in 1997 and investigated the financial dealings of Charles Haughey and Michael Lowry (Communications Minister) (Moriarty Tribunal publishes final report 2011). The tribunal implicated Haughey in financial corruption because it uncovered 'payments totalling £8.5 million that appear to have been made to Charles Haughey between the years 1979 and 1996' (Tribunal identifies £8.5m in payments to Haughey 2000). So while Haughey was concerned with his own personal financial gains, unemployment doubled between 1978 (8.2 percent) and 1988 (16.3 percent) (Ireland and the EU 1973-2003 Economic and Social Change 2004, xiv).

Secondly, in terms of *The Journey Home*, Bolger does not only include this experience to assert the power of the Plunkett family, but he is also calling attention to a historical practice within company towns between workers and wealthy business owners who keep their workers poor by only paying them in company scrips. Company scrip is a form of payment to employees that is only redeemable in stores that are owned by their employers; a practice that still exists today. For example, in 2008, the Mexican Supreme Court ruled that Wal-Mart de Mexico violated the constitution after a complaint was made that employees received 'coupons as part of their pay', which is reminiscent of ''the practices carried out in old-time stores where workers also received their salaries in the form of vouchers to be redeemed in the stores owned by the boss,' the court said' (Aspin and Rosenberg 2008). By incorporating a more global experience of labor exploitation, Bolger is not only widening perceptions of 'reality' beyond the Dublin suburb in which *The Journey Home* is set, but he is also creating an indelible link between past and present.

Throughout his career, Bolger has hinted at how the link between past and present has provided a sense of stasis. In *Temptation,* he notes '[l]ives overlap, events recur but differently' (Bolger 2001, p. 174), suggesting that the redistribution of experiences from life to life prevents forward progression. In *Emily's Shoes*, the feeling of repetition and torpor is again witnessed: 'In those years silence and reserve had formed like a glacier around me and I was preserved within it, each day a replica of the one before […]' (Bolger 1992, p. 197). However, in *The Journey Home*, the tie between past and present is especially significant because it is maintained by inherited cycles of poverty that reinforce notions of 'reality' by keeping the poor working against the poor, despite certain advancements in social policy, as the basic structures that facilitate select notions of 'reality' are maintained. Such perceptions of 'reality' help to ensure their own survival by embedding themselves in the social consciousness of the poor. For example, Bolger does not only use historical inheritances in order to establish a theme of alienation, but he also repeatedly emphasizes the inheritance of social position through father-child relationships. Within *The Journey Home*, one of the most significant elements of inheritance of social position is through Bolger's use of the death of the father. This occurrence is threefold. Firstly through the death of Hano's father, secondly through Hano's co-worker Carol as she carries the family responsibilities after her father's death, and, in the end, through Hano's own impending death as he considers the future of his unborn son.

After losing his job as a filing clerk, Hano returns home to help his family while his father struggles with his cancer treatments. Hano's first major realization of his inheritance is encountered when he is at his father's deathbed in the hospital. As they wait for the rest of the family to arrive, he states: 'It was only when my family arrived that the horror began' (Bolger 2008, p. 104). It is important to be cognizant of Bolger's word choice. Though his father is still alive and they share the same family, Hano does not refer to them as *our* family, but rather, 'my family' (Bolger 2008, p. 104). While subtle, this word choice not only marks the acknowledgement of the imminent death of his father, but the entrance of his family also marks the arrival of the responsibilities that, as the oldest son, he will now be in charge of.

Further to Hano's role as the head of the family, Bolger's illustration of the conditions for females in Irish society can be used to support the argument that the pressures to provide for the family are not just passed down from father to son, but this is a hardship that can also be experienced by women. This can be identified most clearly through Hano's co-worker Carol's social position where, as the eldest of her siblings, she, too, is responsible for their care and financial well-being after her father's untimely death, which left her with 'a large house which had cost every penny he had' (Bolger 2008, p.89), thus draining their savings. Parallel to Hano's experience, Carol finds herself responsible for the care of four younger siblings as she assumes her role as the breadwinner of the family following her father's death; however, where Hano encountered work as a place to earn money in often corrupt and exploitive forms, Carol differed from Hano insofar as she incorporated her career as a part of her identity. Here, Bolger notes strides for gender equality in the Republic of Ireland since the Marriage Bar, a law that forced women to leave their public and civil service jobs once they got married, was abolished in between the years of 1973 and 1977, and discrimination in employment was made illegal in 1977 under the Employment Equality Act. As a result of these significant changes, from 1971 to 1992 '[t]he Irish labour force increased by 240,000, or 21.6 per cent (…). The female labour force grew by 54.6 per cent, but the male by only 10.2 per cent. As a result women accounted for almost two-thirds (65 per cent) of the total increase and the share of women in the labour force rose from 25.8 per cent to 32.8 per cent' (Walsh 1993, p. 369). This was also buttressed by the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974, which mandated that men and women receive equal pay when performing the same job:

> Subject to this Act, it shall be a term of the contract under which a woman is employed in any place that she shall be entitled to the same rate of remuneration as a man who is employed in that place by the same employer (or by an associated employer if the employees, whether generally or of a particular class, of both employers have the same terms and conditions of employment), if both are employed on like work. (Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974' 1974)

Although legally women were provided with more rights, in *The Journey Home*, the death of Carol's father and her subsequent role as the head of the household demonstrate that their access to these rights did not necessarily guarantee a better life. It also depicted a lack of change in their social position when the structure used to maintain cycles of poverty endure since women were 'found in a restricted range of occupations, primarily professional and managerial, white-collar and semi-skilled manual classes; they are largely excluded from farming, petit bourgeois, technician and skilled manual occupations' (Share and Tovey 2003, p. 165). Consequently, as Carol is faced with the combined impact of limited options and an obsolescent career, her mental state soon deteriorates as she is ''[o]ut sick for the past month'' after she was under the impression that her dedication and overtime hours meant she could 'be taking over from' their manager only to learn that 'a new system' (Bolger 2008, p. 169) was to be

implemented, rather than a change in roles. So while access to employment may appear to provide females such as Carol with a greater possibility for upward mobility, the fact that her skillset is soon to be made obsolete reinforces her financial immobilization when the sources that allow for the 'reality' of socioeconomic inheritance remain intact. Therefore, by illustrating unremitting economic confines, Bolger is able to show that this lack of change is a result of Carol and Hano contributing to a workforce that they are simultaneously thwarted by. Rather than directly fight against the structures that threaten her job and therefore her identity, Carol commits suicide in the company bathroom. So where Hano takes part in the cycles of poverty keeping the poor working against the poor, Bolger further develops themes of economic stagnation through Carol, who internalizes her struggles.

Furthermore, Bolger overlaps male and female views toward work and family through Carol's boss, Mooney, and his description of his personal life following Carol's death: ''No wife, no son, no daughter. I have this desk, boy, this room. Soon I won't even have that'' (Bolger 2008, p. 176). By illustrating the sacrifice of personal life for work for both males and females, Bolger is able to use employment to demonstrate each individual's vulnerability to the stifling effect of poverty. This reinforces a continuity of disharmony that exists in the lives of those who have few options but to work the jobs they can get and further explores how notions of 'reality' can be facilitated through experiences with inheritance that do not allow for upward mobility. In this way, Bolger achieves symmetry in male and female discord through the sacrifices that work forces upon those who have few other options due to their inheritances.

After witnessing Shay's murder at the hands of Justin Plunkett, along with experiencing the futility of trying to report Justin's guilt to a bureaucracy influenced by the Plunkett family, Hano's liberation from greed and corruption has been interpreted as the point when he kills Pascal. Noting that 'Hano's murder of his rapist' can serve as 'a cathartic act' that 'represents a release from the clutches of sexual *and* social oppression', Michael Pierse also suggests further acts of liberation can be recognized when Hano wrecks 'Pascal's house, in another, parallel fire, following the murder scene,' an act that 'represents the young man's release from further social trammels (…)' (Pierse 2010, p. 98). Although this may suggest relief from Pascal's power, an earlier excerpt in the novel provides insight into what could end the reign of the family when Pascal attempts to bribe Hano, offering to 'pay for any course I wanted' (Bolger 2008, 161). As a childless man, Pascal has no direct heir to pass his wealth and power down to and therefore the continuation of his individual power is undermined. Hano's refusal to take Pascal's offer marks a departure from the continuity of greed and corruption that inhabits Pascal's everyday life.

While the death of one nefarious individual can provide relief from some from their corruption, it does not alleviate them from the environment that condones such abuse. By portraying Pascal as a man who has no one to bequeath his fortune and power to, Bolger is insinuating that there may be an opportunity for change through the discontinuity of inheritance, therefore providing further insight into the possibility of different perceptions of 'reality' that can occupy one's life once the cessation of inheritance is enacted. Conflicting notions of continuity versus discontinuity play a prominent role in Hano's thoughts as he considers both his impending death by Pascal's men and the futures of his unborn son and his unborn son's mother, Katie/Cait, noting that he will remain on the run from Pascal's men, 'Then it will be your turn and the child inside of you' (Bolger 2008, p. 240). Here, two aspects of inheritance are salient. On the one hand, there is the possibility of the continuity of the reign of the Plunkett family if Patrick Plunkett recognizes his political ambitions and wins the election. On the other hand, the implied birth of Hano's future son with Katie/Cait can be indicative of hope for a change

in the continuity of inheritance, especially since Pascal will not dominate his life. By considering the birth of a child along with the continuation of the power of the Plunkett family through Patrick Plunkett's potential election, Bolger is again reinserting the tension between common perceptions of change versus stagnation, ultimately marking both his child's and the Republic of Ireland's future views of 'reality' with ambiguities.

Whether it has been through gritty depictions of poverty in books like *Night Shift* and *The Journey Home*, a recurrence of ghosts and hauntings (*The Passion of Jerome*, *New Town Soul*), or indictments of the treatment of women in Irish society (*A Second Life)*, Bolger's hyperbolic approach can elucidate the ways in which literature can trouble conventional views of national identity. So while the tenebrous final pages of *The Journey Home* offer no solutions, and no guide for a path toward change, the uncertainty of his characters' futures forges the possibility for readers to consider multiple outcomes. This not only challenges readers to consider the possible realities Bolger's characters could face as a result of their actions, but also urges us to diversify notions of what constitutes national identity.

Author Bio

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Are We All 'BBC Dad' Now? What Covid-19 Restrictions Reveal About Comedy, Class, Paid Work, Parenting and Gender

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Abstract

The meme 'BBC Dad' first emerged in 2017 in response to an 'embarrassing' moment where a Professor was interrupted by his family during a live interview with BBC news TV. At the time the incident was circulated around the world as a curiosity, as the worlds of work, domestic (family) life and gender politics combined in a way that was apparently so unacceptable that it was comedic. The expectation was that the 'victim', the Professor, should somehow be ashamed of how his two roles as 'professional' and 'parent' had been shown to be in competition in that moment. Although this competition is often played out, especially by women and working-class workers, it is rarely shown in public, let alone discussed. However, during the global pandemic in 2020 many workers and parents are being placed in this situation and forced to juggle their dual responsibilities often in the same space and in real time. By asking 'Are we all 'BBC Dad' now?', this article questions how we consider those who conduct paid work and parent simultaneously, noting how previously accepted class and gender divides have shifted culturally as a result of the physical restraints posed by COVID-19 restrictions. The 'comedy' that the original meme provided, and the way its meaning has shifted, shows how expectations have changed and hopefully how attitudes to normally hidden workers may also shift.

Keywords

Class, comedy, gender, parenting, covid-19

Introduction

Figure 1 -screenshot 'BBC Dad'

'BBC Dad' refers to a 2017 live BBC Worldwide television interview (*BBC World News/The Guardia*n, 2017 – see figure 1). During the live interview Professor Robert Kelly of Pusan National University in South Korea, was talking when his children entered the room, swiftly followed by his wife who tried to usher them out without interrupting the proceedings. The children's sudden appearance in the otherwise unremarkable interview became an international meme, with their prancing young daughter and then barely-walking but smiley toddler son clearly upstaging the much more serious proceedings that the interview was meant to be covering. 'BBC Dad' soon turned into a meme to be shared and adapted rapidly online and across broadcast news outlets. From *Star Wars* parodies to Trump and White House re-workings (Vijaykumar 2017), it seemed the basic narrative of the meme, 'man tries to give serious talk, ends up having to admit that he has a family and that efforts to contain them are more interesting than that talk', provided perfect comedic conditions.

The 'BBC Dad' story was recirculated during global COVID-19 preventative lockdowns in 2020. The meme returned, as did interest in the continued conditions of Kelly and his family, as large numbers of workers were asked to work from their homes rather than offices. In addition, children, university and college students were also required to engage in home-based 'remote learning', creating sharp competition for domestic space. Rather than an object of ridicule, in 2020 the 'BBC Dad' began to be met with an empathy, or even, 'solidarity'. For example, on March 13, 2020 the 'one year on BBC Dad' piece was re-published on Yahoo News online with the following editorial:

> 'Editor's note: This [BBC Dad] story was originally published on TODAY on March 13, 2018. We're revisiting it now in solidarity with all the parents who are trying to work from home with children underfoot during this time of social distancing.' (Stump, 2020)

Professor Kelly himself has also returned to the 'BBC Dad' moment since COVID-19 restrictions were imposed. Writing again for the Lowy Institute on March 30, 2020, Professor Kelly recalled how 'my family and I briefly became famous for a blooper which became an online sensation … The whole thing plays like a live-action comedy of errors, and it became a hit' (Kelly 2020). He continues to reflect of the incident and its impact by declaring,

> 'It is a weird experience becoming famous for basically doing nothing. We lost control of our kids for a few minutes. Every parent in the world does that, so we are not exceptional … We still do not quite believe it when some random person will approach us in a restaurant or airport to ask us about the video.' (Kelly 2020)

Kelly's 2020 reflection raises an important point about the way the combination of paid work and parenting is considered. The idea that he became 'famous for basically doing nothing' raises questions about how professional work performed at home alongside parenting has come to be considered now that it has become more common and more visible as part of regular transmissions like broadcast interviews, but also private video meetings with co-workers. The 'nothing' here presumably refers to Kelly's inability to cover up his dual role as worker and parent, as he and his wife 'lost control' (or the ability to conceal) their children from the gaze of a paid workplace. Further, the suggestion that 'losing control' of kids is a mere faux pas demonstrates a class assumption that resonates differently with working-class families. In his 2020 reflection Kelly again explains how 'My blooper occurred simply because I forgot to lock my office door when I was tired late in the day' (2020). While 'being tired late in the day' is

relatable for any worker, the idea that embarrassment might be the only consequence to this again shows a class divide.

As Attfield explains, for working-class parents the need to demonstrate an ability to produce 'respectable' children (2016) is not something that is funny, but often something that is essential. Attfield's recollection about being told to 'behave nicely when in public' by her mother 'in order to not "show her up"' (2016, p. 49) suggests that an out-of-control child is not just a display of humanity, but of class and apparent ability to function in society. Attfield explains that her mother 'was very conscious of being judged, and of the need to remain inconspicuous' (Attfield 2016. p. 49), a comment relating to funding, employment and in extreme cases, protection from government interventions. Working-class parents of colour may face an even more desperate need to avoid any possible question about their ability to 'control' their children – in many places in the world communities are threatened not just with the removal of financial assistance and other practical support, but in the extreme with the removal of their children altogether.[1]

Importantly, when considering how work performed in the lockdown conditions of COVID-19 relates to his original 'incident', Kelly writes

> 'a class divide over this new work mode, if it endures, is real. Workers in blue-collar and person-to-person service industries such as hairdressers or bartenders cannot telework. This is not the 'wave of the future' for a lot of people.' (Kelly 2020)

This insight is important as the issue of class was barely discussed directly in relation to the incident up until this point.

Comedy is created when basic expectations of the audience are predicted and then responded to in an exaggerated form. Ferguson sums up comedy's principles of set up and release by referencing 1970s BBC comedy icons Monty Python and their infamous 'Spanish Inquisition' sketch[2] where 'fear and surprise' were used as ways to grip the audience of the day and for the decades since (2010, p. 8). These basic tropes have since been used in many screen comedy outputs including comedy film (Giuffre and Evans 2016, p.3), comedy television (Giuffre, 2017), and more recently comedy as it has been performed first live, and then translated into extremely binge-worthy international streaming content as with Australian comedian Hannah Gadsby's *Nanette*. In the latter, Gadbsy describes the mechanics of comedy as 'the artificial development of tension and release' (Gadsby 2018), a trope that has since also been used as a shorthand to understand how the politics of comedy and identity works, and upon whom power lands. At its most extreme, when gender and power have been pushed too far using these tropes, the result has been called 'anti-comedy' or 'post-comedy' (VanArendonk 2018a), as straight white middle and/or upper-class white men can no longer recognise themselves as triumphant central comedic characters as they might once have been.

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[1] This process of the removal of children of colour is one that has happened across the world. These always accompany arguments based on class, about whether a parent is 'fit to provide' and if someone else would be more fit. Sadly, there are many examples of this, but here in Australia this process is known as the 'Stolen Generations'.

[2] This sketch, from the BBC series 'Monty Python's Flying Circus', famously shows three cardinals who interrupt otherwise polite proceedings and react in a completely exaggerated and unnecessarily aggressive manner. The 'fear and surprise' reference relates both to the text of the sketch itself, but also the tools the comedians used to draw the audience in, as we are confronted by how quickly the tone of the sketch and its performances change relative to what it 'looks like' should happen. A good overview of the sketch and link to it is available via *Observer* (2014).

The 'BBC Dad' effect, and its reliance on assumptions about surprise and fear, were different for working-class viewers. Paid work/parenting interruptions are commonplace for those who engage in shift work, casualised and unstable work, and work that is not supported by infrastructure like substantial (if any) paid parental leave or family support. Also, while a middle or upper-class worker may simply 'close the home office door' and wait for another parent or paid help to assist with parenting, for working-class families such options are beyond reach. The relationship between class and comedy, but also class and gender, will be unpacked here to show how the meme was first received, but also since the widespread COVID-19 lockdowns, how these relationships have been revisited in public.

How class made 'BBC Dad' funny (the first time at least)

By anticipating either 'fear' or 'surprise' in audience reactions, a skilled comedian can challenge stereotypes and reveal otherwise hidden truths (Ferguson 2010, p.8). The original 'BBC Dad' was not a staged comedy piece orchestrated by a skilled comedian anticipating their audience; the resulting viral reaction can also easily be summed up by 'fear and surprise': fear from middle and upper-class viewers that they might also one day be 'found out' as workers with responsibilities less prestigious than their professional working lives, and surprise from the broader international viewership that such an indiscretion should be allowed to happen at all. Working-class audiences, women and non-binary parents and carers may have also found an additional level of surprise here at the way the 'BBC Dad' reacted to the intrusion.

The 2017 clip was widely shared as a comedy of errors across social media and by broadcasters internationally as a quirky 'human interest' story at the end of news and current events programs. Featured is the part of the interview just before Kelly's children first enter the room behind him as he conducts his interview. Professor Kelly firstly ignores the children altogether. This reaction is a luxury that is only available to someone who is not their primary carer (at least during that moment in time). Professor Kelly continues his best to complete his interview while his partner attempts to coax the children out of the room. Never looking back, Kelly brushes his daughter away as she approaches him and simply closes his eyes and repeats 'I'm sorry', pausing his reply to the question until the children and his wife have left the frame. Kelly's failure to acknowledge his wife and her efforts here was also noted and was met with particular condemnation by some international commentators, with some using this as an excuse to mis-identify his wife as the children's nanny (Chok 2017).

'BBC Dad' initially generated so much international interest that Professor Kelly and his family released a press statement (Kelly 2017) and formal press conference (Bernarth 2017) to address some of the speculation about it. A year later Kelly published another formal reflection on the events (Kelly 2018) for the Lowy Institute. These revealed relatively silly internet-like conspiracy theories 'that we somehow staged the scene to become famous, and that I did not stand up because I was not wearing pants' (Kelly 2018), and showed a continued expectation that the professional middle- or upper-class working man should keep a clear distance between his domestic and professional lives. The difference between a serious mistake and comedy event is again 'fear' and 'surprise' – the fear of loss of professional reputation and surprise that perhaps this could even happen at all. In this case Kelly was 'lucky' enough to escape with mild international embarrassment rather than the loss of his job, although the threat of the latter is what had audiences laughing along.

Performing paid work while parenting has long been a simple fact of life for working-class people. Consider, for example, the cleaners who bring their children to jobs or truck drivers who take their children on the road. However, middle- and upper-class crossovers for working parents have traditionally been shielded from public view or treated as novel. For example, the American 'take our daughters to work day' (later also 'take our daughters or sons') tradition began in the 1990s as part of a quest to get women back into the workforce after they had children (Waxman 2017). Although it is not a tradition that has been taken up beyond the USA in any easily measurable way, 'take your child to work day' has often been used in sitcoms as an easy comedic juxtaposition – as the 'professional worker' is shown to have (usually his) authority challenged in the office as his child's presence becomes something other than just an image in a frame on his desk.[3]

Working-class families and experiences are rarely the focus for sitcoms produced in the US, Britain and other English-speaking centres. Within these there are even fewer instances of unpaid parenting/domestic work and paid work been shown. One exception is *Roseanne* (1988-1997) where The Connors' children were shown to be involved in Roseanne's at-home telemarking job, often hanging up on clients or interrupting her as she tries to conduct her work while using the home phone in the middle of the kitchen. Beyond the scope of this article is a broader discussion about working-class life, work and parenting. There have been few working-class sitcoms created anyway, and what has been made has explored broader intersections of gender and race as well as family life. For a starting point on the complexities of these relationships see VanArendonk (2018b).

How gender made 'BBC Dad' funny (the first time at least)

The 'BBC Dad' meme and its gendered comedic reception becomes most clear when key elements of the original incident are reversed. For example, when Ellen DeGeneres discussed the meme on her daytime talk show *Ellen* (2017) she used a mock teacher's ruler to draw attention to its key (gendered) components and demonstrated how it functioned as comedy. DeGeneres described Kelly's daughter as having 'her own woman's march' while interrupting her father's serious debate; also noting that Kelly's wife's pants were unbuttoned as she appeared. Here DeGeneres shifted the surprise to fear for a new audience, as her own largely stay-at-home domestic audience was asked to empathise with Kelly's wife – a parent who was also interrupted while at 'work' during the interview. As DeGeneres puts it, 'the Dad was like 'I need five minutes, this is a very important interview', and the poor Mom was doing great until she had to go to the bathroom. And that's when the kids made a break for it' (DeGeneres, 2017 – see Fig. 2)

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[3] There are many series who have featured a 'bring your child to work day' episode or incident, but some of the most mainstream examples include *The Office* (US), *Arrested Development*, *30 Rock*, *The Simpsons* and *The Big Bang Theory*. For more on the history of this movement see (Wilson in Waxman 2017)
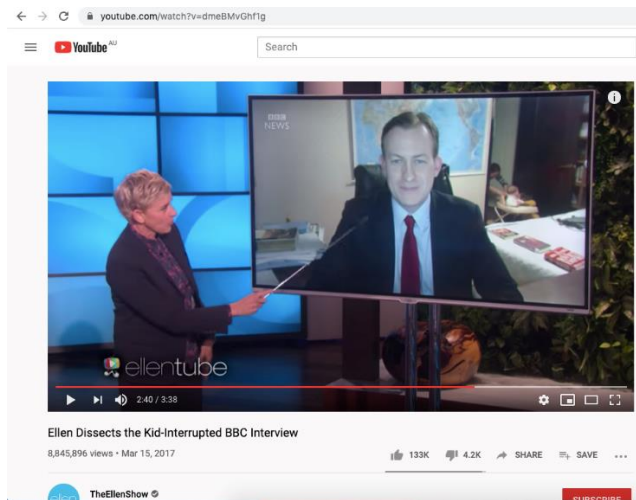
Figure 2 – screenshot from 'Ellen Dissects the Kid-Interrupted BBC Video'

DeGeneres declared the clip to be something that 'people with kids could relate to', and also would 'remind people who don't have kids why they don't' (DeGeneres, 2017). DeGeneres' focus on Kelly's wife and daughter was one of the few commentaries to explore the incident from a gendered perspective, seeing his wife as more than a prop that compounded the businessman's potential 'failure'. It also demonstrated the pressure of motherhood in conditions where paid work and parenting occur in the same space, except that her 'work' of attending to her own body is completely overlooked. Obviously, DeGeneres' comment about the choice to have children (or not), and then how to parent them, also makes assumptions about access to healthcare, education and support – access that wildly varies according to class, but also race and place.[4] However, DeGeneres' willingness to focus on Kelly's wife in any detail at all as part of this incident already showed more nuance than any other reporting of the issue.

The gender 'gap' in terms of parenting/paid work responsibility and response had been noted in the 2017 original 'BBC Dad' reactions too. Perhaps one of the most biting (and entertaining) was a clip by comedians Jono and Ben (2017). Called 'Woman interrupted during BBC interview' (see Figure 3), the set-up is the same as the original 'BBC Dad', with a professional doing an interview from home. When the interview is interrupted by small children, rather than having a partner come to retrieve them or the interviewee ignore the interruption, the female interviewee takes the first child and brings it into her arms and hands the second a bottle. As the interview continues she answers more questions while cooking a roast dinner under the desk, steaming a work shirt, cleaning a toilet and defusing a bomb. The last of these serves as a perfect comedic metaphor – as, under pressure, she is called to make quick decisions about a variety of things without support. The sketch's premise, which suggests a 'BBC Mum' would face interruptions of paid domestic work on a regular basis, shows that crossovers between paid and unpaid work in the home are, for a woman, not accidents but regular occurrences that need to be factored into the workings of the day (all puns intended). Such pressures are not news to working women, or increasingly to the academy (see for example Young 2018). The only interruption she actually ignores is a man (presumably her partner) who comes in asking for help finding a missing sock – something she promises to do once the interview is completed.

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[4] Parenting and its relationship to class has been widely written about, but for an excellent account in relation to working-class experiences see Jensen (2012).
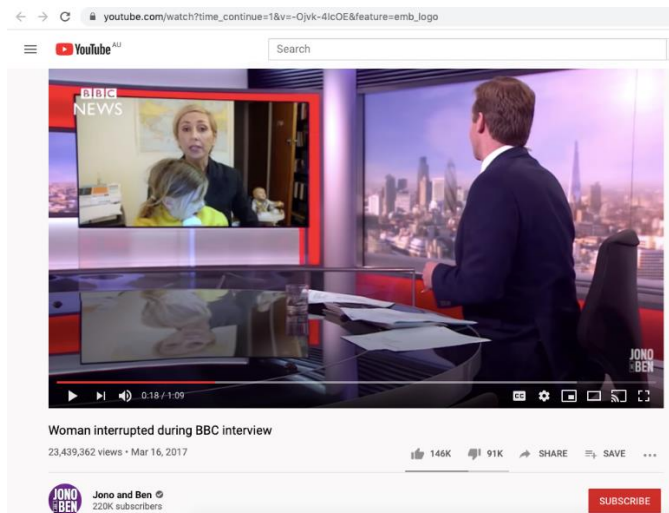
Figure 3: Screen shot from 'Woman interrupted during BBC interview'

During this parody there is no embarrassment shown, at least not on the part of the interviewee. The interviewer appears at first flustered; then impressed and finally perhaps a bit sheepish to have taken so much time out of her day. In the original (real) interview the 'working from home Dad' tries to ignore his parenting responsibilities and is visibly embarrassed to be interrupted by his children while working. In contrast, in the 'working at home Mum' parody, the woman interviewee is interrupted so often she is not only unsurprised, but swiftly prepared.

The comedy in this piece comes from the way paid and domestic work (particularly parenting) is handled when it is a woman who is being interviewed as an expert by the BBC and 'interrupted' by the needs of her children – drawing on an audience expectation of gender, too. Unlike the 'fear' of the businessman having his professionalism challenged, here the comedy comes from exaggerated surprise – on the part of the audience, not of the interviewee; there seems literally nothing the working mother cannot handle.

Is 'BBC Dad's embarrassment now 'Tonight Show Dad's triumph?

A ghost of the 'BBC Dad' meme remained in the fascinated way the media showed men performing 'dual duties' during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown. For example, American tonight show host and comedian Jimmy Fallon regularly broadcast *The Tonight Show* from his house during lockdown, with his young daughters often featured as Fallon as his family worked and lived in the one space. To begin, the small girls made signs for the show's segments and played piano as 'theme music'. However, their appearances soon became regular comedy 'bits' for the at-home broadcasts. During the first 'at home' episode Fallon explained that the broadcast was to be an 'experiment', with his wife Nancy serving as the sole camera operator and the children coming in and out of shot. In the subsequent episodes the children were literally crawling all over him as he tried to maintain his composure (and Nancy Fallon, herself a high-end screen industry producer) appeared to laugh and shake the camera. (Fallon 2020a see Fig. 4).
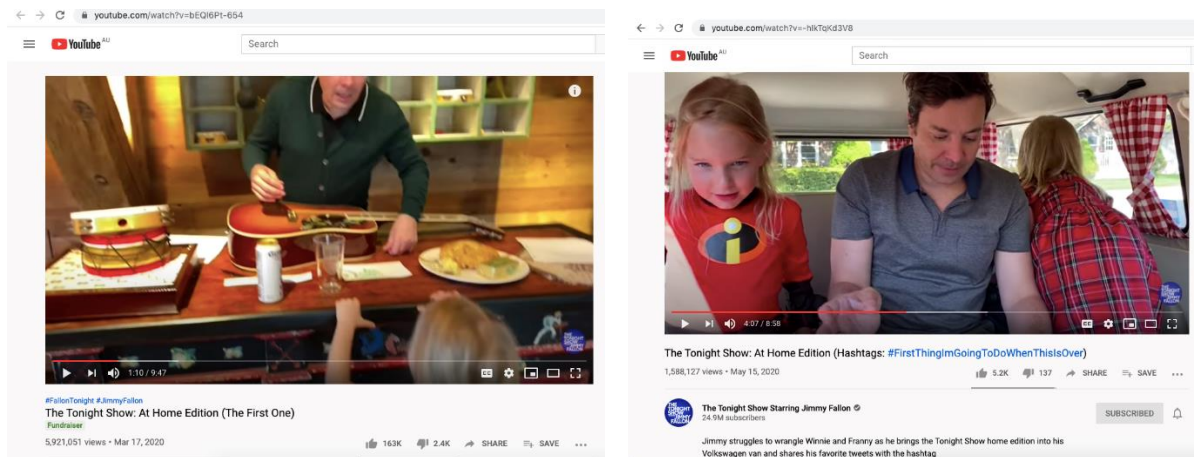
Fig 4 (left) – screen shot from 'The Tonight Show: At Home Edition (the first one)'
Fig 5 (right) – screen shot from 'The Tonight Show: At Home Edition (Hashtags: #FirstThingImGoingToDoWhenThisIsOver)'

By mid-May 2020, two months after the show's 'at home' debut, Fallon interacting with his children (or trying to 'work' and 'parent' at the same time) was clearly considered to be an important draw of *The Tonight Show: At Home Edition* series. For example, the description for the May 15 2020 segment online reads 'Jimmy struggles to wrangle Winnie and Franny as he brings the Tonight Show home edition into his Volkswagen van and shares his favourite tweets with the hashtag' (Fallon 2020b – see Fig. 5). Unlike the 'BBC (working) Dad', here Fallon was framed as a modern media hero rather than an embarrassment, shown to be a tolerant professional worker with a family, rather than someone who needed to deny their existence.

During the – initially – few nights, and then weeks, the children became obviously invited parts of the frame rather than intrusions, often upstaging him by literally drowning out his dialogue or providing more endearing 'comedic relief' to the day's events than his pre-planned scripted pieces. Their active dismissal of him too – often shown laughing or booing him – became part of the 'schtick' of the show. The children's formal inclusion in *The Tonight Show* was confirmed a few weeks into the 'at home' broadcasts when NBC finally updated the (apparently) home-made title cards and themes to include the children and Fallon's wife Nancy as part of the show's cast.

Unlike the original 'BBC Dad', Fallon's choice to include his children in these segments was deliberate. This showed a different kind of comedy at play – one where fear and surprise came from beyond the situation itself of 'professional worker meets domestic life'. There is perhaps some audience surprise to begin, as we are invited to empathise with Fallon who, like us, is finding combining parenthood and paid work a challenge while all are housebound. However, this doesn't quite stand up in terms of physical space, as clearly Fallon and his wife live in a very large house with lots of room for the family to distance from each other. There is little question that Fallon would need to set up his work computer on the kitchen table! What is challenged here is the idea of Fallon as an apparent 'nice guy' – as at times he seemed to be more and more demoralised by his children's constant undermining of his authority. The children also challenge the idea that the host should be the main regular drawcard of the show, as their reactions are often much funnier than his actual monologues (see Bradley 2020).

Interestingly, the prominent American late show hosts also broadcast from home with involvement from their families. None used the children as comedic subjects in the same blatant

way as Fallon, however. Jimmy Kimmel's equivalent 'lockdown' show, *Jimmy Kimmel Live (From His House)*, made regular reference to his small children but rarely featured them on screen (aside from using a recording of them for his theme tune), while Stephen Colbert's lockdown adaptation, *A Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, drafted his now young adult children to be part of his nightly production crew. Colbert often talks about or to his children but always while they are off camera, using them as only mild props rather than strong parts of his comedy set-up like Fallon. James Corden, who regularly features his elderly parents on his show *The Late Late Show* (and now *The Late Late Show From his Garage*), barely discusses his young family at all. His 'home broadcast' appears to be from his garage, suggesting he is able to 'go to work and close the door' in a way that others living in more closed quarters could not. It also implies there is someone else to look after the children while he does this. These extra carers are never discussed – perhaps for privacy reasons (which is perfectly understandable)[5] – but it also shows a class divide: Corden is not pretending for a minute that he is doing dual work in the same way the others are.

The 'Tonight Show Dad' (and its equivalents) might seem to assume a 'classless' type of identity at first. Fallon's presentation in casual clothes rather than his usual suit and tie already blurs the line between paid work and something else – the 'experiment' of providing entertainment rather than creating a broadcast show for a profession. However, the host and his guests give themselves away when they talk to the camera 'from home' inevitably showing their domestic spaces to be wealthy spaces – always furnished well, often in different locations within the house and its surrounds. This breaks any illusions to the crowded house or 'comedy of errors' that was implied with the original 'BBC Dad', and it also challenges the notion that these celebrities present a type of 'relatability' during this time. While yes, they might be talking to the camera, and the audience, from their homes and without their normal support networks, the experience of doing so from a multi-million dollar mansion away from a crowded COVID-19 riddled city is very different to the experience of audience members who may be watching in cramped, working-class conditions. It could be said that here another layer of comedic appeal is created – as working-class audiences witness the wealth displayed by these talk show hosts who, despite this, are still not coping with lockdown. In this instance, surprise comes as people who were once considered successful, by virtue of their celebrity, are now struggling to stay relevant and connected to their audiences (Wise 2020).

What about a BBC Mom (Mum)?

With the exception of Samantha Bee's weekly magazine show *Full Frontal* there aren't any 'Tonight Show women' with which to compare these examples. Mainstream Anglophone television has rarely featured women in these roles, a tradition which continues to this day. Notwithstanding the problems with this in itself, this limited representation of gender, as well as class and race, further sidelines motherhood and non-traditional 'Dad' parenting. An excellent discussion about what contemporary creative industries should do about this and how this needs to be addressed has been started by Dent (2020), but there is much more to be done. A locked-down version of *Full Frontal* was produced, starting with a home mini-series called 'Beeing at home'. These pieces showed Bee set away from the domestic space as possible, most often broadcasting from a location 'in the woods' near her house.[6] The deliberate choice

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[5] Curiously, there has been little public discussion about choices celebrities have made, or not, to show their families on camera as part of these shows. One exception is Lin-Manuel Miranda (Kahim 2020), but this opens up questions about privacy for ordinary workers as well.

[6] There would easily be scope for an entire article on these shows alone, but for a good round up so far see Wright (2020).

to not be inside or with family in the frame demonstrates a want to build comedy as part of a different relationship. Where Bee and her team did mention children in the early episodes of this series, there was a much more direct engagement than Fallon's apparently passive 'intrusions'. For example, the *Full Frontal* correspondent Allana Harkin discussed the 'Angry Mom' as part of her 'Quarantine Questions' segment. Her comedic response was clearly rooted in sarcasm as she declared 'yes, Angry Mom is a routine, we've just been kept down for years and years and decades, we have nothing to say, it's all a routine' (Harkin 2020). The speech is brief but delivered with a huge smile that grows as she ends with a Stepford-Wife like pose. Clearly playing on white middle-class stereotypes, the comedic surprise here comes from the exposed ridiculousness of the question – during lockdown especially, there is easily plenty for Moms of all types to be angry about.

During the early weeks of the lockdown even high-profile women like New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern were shown at home with clear distinctions between paid and unpaid work. The difference between her appearance and that of the 'BBC Dad' tonight show hosts was apparent as she engaged with her citizens (and a wider audience) on social media and made a point of noting, herself, that she was 'jumping online quickly' to 'check in with everyone', saying 'excuse the casual attire … I was putting my toddler to bed so I'm not in my work clothes, forgive me for that' (Ardern 2020 – see Fig. 6).
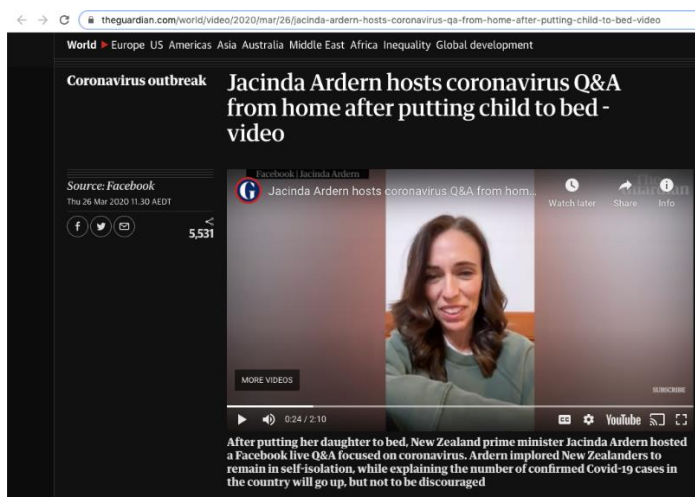

Fig 6: Screen shot of Jacinda Ardern's Facebook address.

Curiously, in its reporting of the video, news outlet *The Guardian* led the story by noting that Ardern had performed her parental role ('putting her daughter to bed') ahead of discussing the content of her address to the nation she leads. Similar frustrations were vented, and their consequences noted, in academia. Minello wrote a much-circulated commentary for the journal *Nature*, arguing 'data on publication records over the next couple of years will show that parents in academia were disadvantaged relative to non-parents in 2020' (Minello 2020). Going further to push this divide along gender lines, she added 'Care work is, in fact, unbalanced — even among highly educated couples' (Minello 2020). Although Ardern's much-publicised partner is a primary care giver for their daughter, here, again, Ardern is framed as a parent and paid worker, rather than allowed to be just the latter.

Minello also turns to humour to explain, or perhaps cope, with current events. She cites commentary from social media about the relationship between paid work, parenting and gender, saying,

> Humour is one way for women in academia to face the pandemic's consequences for their work and family lives. Last month, a viral Twitter post read, 'The next person who tweets about how productive Isaac Newton was while working from home gets my three year old posted to them!' (Minello 2020).

In Australia journalist Annabel Crabb also referenced the 'Issac Newtown tweet', adding support from an evolving study by researchers at the University of Melbourne which has preliminarily shown that women during lockdown have continued to work and parent from home in disproportioned numbers to men (2020). She sums up the effects of COVID-19 restrictions on movement of workers and children by citing a 'pink collar recession' in the making, concluding that, 'Women right now are more likely to lose work that is paid and also more likely to pick up work that is unpaid' (Crabb 2020). To answer the question 'what about the 2020 BBC Mum?', Crabb's findings might say 'she's likely to soon be unemployed.'

Class returns as a particular issue here, however, given that in the COVID-19 environment discussion of 'essential workers' – workers previously given little respect – are now being given a spotlight. In particular, cleaners, delivery workers, nurses, transport workers – often all those considered as part of the working class – are being acknowledged as performing duties that otherwise locked down or 'on hold' cities cannot function without. However, these are also jobs that cannot be done at home. The 'BBC Dad' problem, or the idea of simultaneously performing paid work and parenting at home, hits these workers even harder. How can a hospital cleaner look after their own child at home if they must leave to go to work outside that home? And perhaps, to do so with more overtime now as demand is greater for their services (and, of course, the danger of doing so is also significantly higher)?

Wilson's emphasis on 'going out to work' is framed by the cost she says she paid for the practice. Just before this quote above, Wilson adds, 'I didn't have time to give my children the time they needed, particularly once I went to work. It was hard on them.' (Wilson in Waxman 2017) This last comment about the price a working mother pays when being separated from her children is one that is almost never discussed in terms of working fathers, and if it is, is still seen as a relatively new phenomenon (Larsson and Bjork 2017; Fong and Bainbridge 2016; Goldstein-Gidoni 2020). Historically, it has been part of the argument against 'working parents' (particularly working mothers) – an argument that has always been based in class. The idea of having a 'choice' to work is one that working-class people of both genders often do not have in practice. Both or any member of the household that can work often need to in order to contribute to the family – including children when they are old enough. As has been well documented, these class issues are also further compounded by race, as the idea that migrant women or women of colour could simply 'choose not to work' is a myth; instead they are overwhelmingly employed illegally or chronically underpaid/paid in kind.[7]

Are we all now (and maybe forever) 'BBC Dad'?

I revisit the 'comedy' of the original 'BBC Dad' piece in 2020 carefully, very mindful not to undermine or downplay the severity of the situation that is unfolding as a result of COVID-19. However, by looking at the power relationships that comedy highlights, and how these have changed, we can see how the pandemic has challenged cultural expectations about gender and class (at least in some places). The 'BBC Dad' or 'Tonight Show Dad' tropes also cover up

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[7] There is a wide literature covering these issues, but one of many good starting points is the edited collection by Russo and Linkon (2005).

those workers and situations who have more to lose in terms of cultural and literal capital. Middle- and upper-class women in paid work are still at risk of having their contributions as 'professionals' overshadowed by their work as 'mothers', while working-class people in high demand (and high risk) jobs are not given the opportunity to choose at all – they are required to leave their houses, and their parental responsibilities – with higher stakes than ever before for what seems like no recognition at all. Women and working-class people are overlooked in the original memes, and again in its replacement with the 'Tonight Show Dad'. This shows that, still, their power and place performing dual duties – in the paid workforces and as parents also – is still taken for granted.

Of course, all of this is dependent on specific gender and class expectations and contexts. Choice is dependent on having the luxury of other options. In some cases this means a luxury of literal space – middle- and upper-class workers are much more likely to have somewhere they can dedicate to work when compared with working-class people and their families. If you have an office door to close, then 'forgetting' to close it becomes comedy like the BBC Dad; but if your office is the end of the kitchen table or side of a shared bedroom, these intrusions are less about surprise and fear are more inevitable and frustrating. If your work is in the street, on the road or in a cleaner's cupboard, you have no choice at all. The very real threats of mental health trauma, domestic violence and other forms of harm that may occur during these periods of isolation are also of huge concern, and much more dangerous than the potential loss of reputation that the original BBC Dad threat posed.

Coda – A personal note.

I agonised about whether or not to add this, but here it is.

This article was written during lockdown. My husband and I both work full time, and we have a baby and a toddler in a two-bedroom rented apartment. I add this because it seems ironic to leave out this detail, showing my own proximity to the 'BBC Dad/Mum' type. I wonder at what other time would I need to disclose this aspect of my personal life as part of my professional one? I am also very aware of how my position as a now middle-class worker (an academic) provides me with some ability to at least pretend that my unpaid domestic work has not intruded into my paid professional work as much as it has during this time. Many of my working-class colleagues, overwhelmingly 'frontline workers' in female-dominated areas like nursing, cleaning and caring roles, have not had this option.

However, I have decided to include this coda as a thank you – without the support of this journal (my co-editor Sarah Attfield and blind peer reviewers with very flexible timelines), as well as additional assistance from proofer/editor Demetrius Romeo, it would simply not be possible for me to do 'both jobs'. Important acknowledgement of the team effort made by my husband and I is also needed here too. However, I do wonder how many of my male colleagues would feel the need to issue a similar thankyou/disclosure, even though they have likely also benefited from help from the 'village' in order to have them perform their dual duties?

Author Bio

Liz Giuffre is a Senior Lecturer in Communication for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. In addition to this she works regularly in the national independent arts press as a journalist and commentator, including work as the regular contributing editor for *Metro Magazine*, a regular contributor to *Critical Studies in Television*, reviewer and interview for *The Music* and

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Two Review Essays:

Anti-Union Clichés float *On the Waterfront:* Rhetorical Analysis of the Film

Citizen Kane and *How Green was My Valley*: Have We Sold Ourselves Short?

Gloria McMillan, University of Arizona

Anti-Union Clichés float *On the Waterfront:* Rhetorical Analysis of the Film

(This essay is dedicated to Claudia Cassidy, the late arts critic of *The Chicago Tribune)*

Readers of progressive journals dealing with the representation of class issues in film have been under-informed about previous generations' struggles because Hollywood's memory is short. Even the major film stars with a number of roles to their credit on human rights and labor themes are almost forgotten in today's Hollywood. Who recalls today the working-class actor Joan Crawford and her string of shop girl films (e.g., *Paid* (1930), *Possessed* (1931), *Chained* (1934), etc.) that opened a door for young women to see ways to empower themselves? Other actors and filmmakers made startling statements about the working class long before our currently remembered landmark labor films. Yet a few classic films of the 1940s and 1950s have remained in the public's eye, often those films that repeat many stereotypes about labor and the working class. One film in particular, director Elia Kazan's famed 1954 dock worker film *On The Waterfront*, is perennially aired on film channels, its Leonard Bernstein score played in concert by symphony orchestras. While it would be inspiring to note that this film has advanced the cause of the working class and of labor, it has not. Although claims can be made that *On The Waterfront* is pro-labor and is just exposing corruption, these claims are weak and fallacious. Few other labor-themed films balance this film's level of ongoing global media exposure.

While clarity of vision is a virtue, over-simplification is not. In 1954, the historical context of the McCarthy Era House Un-American Activities Hearings was one of rough tactics, forcing people to declare a political side, ruining careers of those who declined or who backed the wrong color political horse. 1954 was the year of gleeful commie hunting and narking on friends. People were feeling 'oh, so right' in whatever position they took. What about artists? Artists generally took to the hills and avoided making comments on the real-life melodrama that was happening all around them. But *melodrama* is not only 'life with the boring bits edited

out,' as Alfred Hitchcock is quoted by Francois Truffaut[1] as saying, but the art of turning all life's colors into blacks and whites suitable for the kiddies.

The 1954 film *On the Waterfront* is an operatic-scale example of a Cold War melodrama that takes a target and demonizes it in such a way that the film becomes the 'slam' that keeps on slamming. That this film is both partisan and propagandistic can be shown in that *On the Waterfront* is used in college economics classes such as Econ 108 at the University of Southern California as an example to illustrate the neoclassical economists' negative views on labor unions (Kaun 2020).

On the grounds of its 'cinematic artistry,' *On the Waterfront* is played often on television, both on commercial classic film channels and on PBS. Symphony orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and opera companies celebrate its musical score, composed by Leonard Bernstein ('CSO'). Thus, the 'slam' about unions and their corruption is a perennial feature of the media landscape. Usually there is no parallax view, no other media giving any differing perspective.

On the Waterfront denigrates and over-simplifies unions as criminal organizations in ways too numerous to exhaustively examine here, but two obvious methods are the use of the *synecdoche trope* and Ernest Bormann's tool of symbolic convergence, the 'fantasy theme' theory in his text *The Force of Fantasy*. Fantasy themes can include negative words and phrases about a group not present used to bind a different group (1985).

'Seen one, seen 'em all'

Terry Malloy, (Marlon Brando) is a sacrificial lamb used by his criminal dock workers' union boss brother Charlie (Rod Steiger) to achieve his ends. Charlie makes Terry throw a boxing match and spoils his chances at a boxing career, which, in turn, ruins Terry's life. Terry becomes a bitter loser who can only be redeemed by a selfless woman's love, provided by Edie Doyle (Eva Marie Saint.) Karl Malden presents a nuance-free portrait of a heroic priest, Father Barry. The two characters, Charlie and Father Barry, are flip sides of each other, devoid of depth and growth of character. In this dock opera, one is either good or bad. Terry is that anti-hero who is supposed to give the depth lacking in the other characters. Brando's acting and that of the other fine actors added depth to parts that was largely lacking in the script.

There is no hint that unions ever do much positive for workers in *On the Waterfront.* Charlie Malloy, the evil brother character in *On the Waterfront* functions as synecdoche for unions in general. The term synecdoche is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a figure of speech in which a more inclusive term is used for a less inclusive one or vice versa, as a whole for a part or a part for a whole.' In the most powerful lament in the film, Terry complains that his brother, who should be looking out for him (like unions), has only betrayed and destroyed him (like criminal unions.)

> It wasn't him, Charley, it was you. Remember that night in the Garden you came down to my dressing room and you said, 'Kid, this ain't your night. We're going for the price on Wilson.' You remember that? 'This ain't your night'! My night! I coulda taken Wilson apart! So what happens? He gets the title shot outdoors on the ballpark and what

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[1] 1967, *Hitchcock by François Truffaut, With the Collaboration of Helen G. Scott*, English Translation by François Truffaut, New York Simon and Schuster.

do I get? A one-way ticket to Palooka-ville! You was my brother, Charley, you shoulda looked out for me a little bit. You shoulda taken care of me just a little bit so I wouldn't have to take them dives for the short-end money. [. . .] you don't understand. I coulda had class. I coulda been a contender. I coulda been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am, let's face it. It was you, Charley.

The dominant culture views difference as pathology. The history of the Hollywood film is littered with 'mammies,' 'reel injuns,' 'chinamen,' Jewish crooked lawyers, and other racial stereotypes. The characters were one singular person but they represented a class, just as the character of Charlie Molloy represents unions. And in the case of such fictional representations, no direct charge is made that all persons of this race are - - -, but the synecdoche sticks. Any group will have people who are criminals and less-than-admirable types. That is the 'grain of truth' so often cited for the value of stereotypes. Propagandists know how synecdoche of this 'one person represents his entire group' works and they use it frequently. In the 1930s, German filmmakers made films such as *Jud Sȕss,* called the most anti-Semitic film ever made (Liscotto 2008). An insidious court financier makes the Duke of Wȕrtemburg dependent upon him, rapes his daughter and is finally tried and executed. This film was only about one man named Joseph Süss Oppenheimer, but its final line could serve equally well for a concluding line to *On the Waterfront*: 'May the citizens of other states never forget this lesson.' Have other states learned the lessons of the propagandistic use of synecdoche (letting one person represent a whole group?) That remains to be seen.

All we know about you is . . .

Rhetoric has many useful tools to describe our own group and other groups so as to aid our in-group binding. 'Fantasy theme' analysis developed by Ernest Bormann involves words and phrases that portray persons, places, or events not present. We often reserve the best 'fantasy themes' for our own group while other groups do not fare as well. One example can be a favorite sports team and what adjectives describe them: top hitters, best base stealers, etc. Other teams might be threats, weak on their outfield, or not much of a challenge this season.

When a 'dock opera' like *On the Waterfront* relies exclusively upon negative fantasy themes, similar to those we might use about that 'other team,' our picture of unions is bound to become skewed. Let's examine a few of the 'fantasy themes' about unions in *On the Waterfront*. The sole interest of unions is in their 'cut,' not workers' welfare.

<div style="text-align:center">

JOHNNY
(to Terry)

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> I know what's eatin' you, kid. But I got two thousand
> dues-payin' members in my local— that's seventy-two
> thousand a year legitimate and when each one of 'em
> puts in a couple of bucks a day to make sure they work
> steady— well, you figure it out. And that's just for
> openers. We got the fattest piers in the fattest harbor in the
> world. Everything that moves in and out— we take our cut.

This is a repeat fantasy theme in *On the Waterfront* about unions. The idea that unions ever fulfill their mission as representatives looking out for workers is repeatedly made laughable throughout the film.

The dignity of labor is also made into a ridiculing fantasy theme, as opposed to the film *How Green was my Valley* (1941) about the Welsh coal mining community of Cwm Rhondda, where people worked in mines, but were portrayed in sympathetic fashion.

> NOLAN
> He was just tellin' me how proud he was
> to belong to a fine honest local run by such an
> outstandin' labor leader as Johnny Friendly.

> SONNY
> Don't get wise now, you.

> NOLAN
> Wise! If I was wise I wouldn't be no longshoreman
> for thirty years and poorer now than when I started.

The fantasy theme of strong arm intimidation is also a leitmotif in *On the Waterfront.*

> J.P.
> (retreating slightly)
> Raise a hand to me and. . . .

> NOLAN
> . . . and you'll tell Johnny Friendly.

> J.P.
> You'd be off the pier for good.

The cluster of rhetorical themes surrounding unions in *On the Waterfront* strongly suggests that, while wildly ineffective in helping workers in any way, unions are quite effective in making workers' lives a misery. This is a set of fantasy themes from an opposing rhetorical discourse community.

Fantasy themes surrounding 'ratting' on friends and betrayal imply that such friends as those in a union deserve to be ratted on and that those who are 'ratting' have the moral high ground. Only those *outside* the union know how to run things equitably, according to these fantasy themes.

> CHARLEY
> (tolerantly)
> Let me explain you something, kid.
> Stooling is when you rat on your friends, on
> the guys you're with.
> (sees Terry frown)
> When Johnny needs a favor, don't try to figure it out,
> just do it. Now go ahead, join the congregation.

This congregation is missing a few members, not least of which are the owners of the industry, those powerful New York financiers and shipping magnates. But there is no portrayal of the

managers and owners of the docks in *On the Waterfront*. Since they are entirely absent, there is no chance for dialogue nor for any cinematic representation of their role in the industry. Has this omission ever been noted by any film critic? The workers in *On the Waterfront* seem blissfully unaware that the docks are, in fact, owned by *anybody*. And their union is too busy picking the hapless workers' pockets to ever deal with labor negotiations. The subject never arises. In this opera of the docks, there are *no* depictions of union contract negotiations, *no* pickets of unfair conditions at specific docks, *no* strikes in which brave workers risked their livelihoods, *no* wives and children supporting their family members for better conditions. Why waste time on such incidentals?

Before throwing one's hands up in the face of such glaring omissions in a film that purports to represent the shipping industry, a word might be said for poetic license. Leo Braudy's book-length analysis of *On the Waterfront* studies the factors involved in Elia Kazan's 'take' on the shipping industry, in which he had never worked nor appears to have even a familial connection, is a metaphor for his *own career*, starting as a Communist in the 1930s, then a reformed Communist in the 1940s, then a singer of McCarthy-era testimony in the 1950s. The slightly self-serving plot of this 'dock opera' served Kazan well to justify his own testimony naming friends' names during the McCarthy Hearings. There may have been delightful music in the film as a by-product, similar to those yummy tasting Armour Star by-products of the meat packing process. Another by-product may have been to empower some people in legitimate situations where testimony was required and difficult decisions made, but here Kazan's self-interest is just too obvious to sing angelic notes above the madding crowd. In Elia Kazan's fantasia of wanton union vice *On the Waterfront*, the anti-union clichés merely float, slightly belly-up from long overuse, like rotting bloated mackerels.

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Citizen Kane and *How Green was My Valley*: Have We Sold Ourselves Short?

Another way that the voice of the working class and labor have been muted in film history is to compare a sympathetic film that portrays working people in depth unflatteringly to other films. The case of *Citizen Kane* and its 1941 Best Picture Oscar rival *How Green Was My Valley* is a unique confluence of artistic and social pressures that begs to be examined. The only way others who are not working class experience the lives of working-class people is via the media. To know ourselves as working class, it is important to follow the trajectory of how we have been socially constructed via media representations. And this skewed representation did not begin last week.

Film critics tend to be outraged and marvel today how this miscarriage of aesthetic justice ever could have happened. Why, they cry, did *How Green was My Valley* ever get chosen as 1942's Best Picture of the Year over Orson Welles' artistic triumph *Citizen Kane*? A couple summary critiques of *How Green was My Valley* may show the general tendency. One of the unnamed reviewers at the online *AMC Filmsites* argues that *How Green was My Valley* 'is one of John Ford's masterpieces of sentimental human drama. It is . . . melodramatic and nostalgic' (AMC). Renowned film historian David Bordwell found *How Green was My Valley* included in a list of 'The Most Overrated Best Picture Winners' and challenged the derogatory attitude toward *How Green was My Valley* in his online essay 'The Citizen Kane Assumption.' Bordwell takes on the easy dismissal of *How Green was My Valley*, but stops short of explaining how all this

controversy fits into larger issues of class and society. The history beyond the frame of the two films is needed to establish the magnitude of the problem.

Citizen Kane's innovative cinematography, non-linear plot, and stream-of-consciousness narration fit with the aesthetics of high modernism, such as breaking the frame of linear time, detailing ruptures in Kane's psyche. But was this merely a mistake? Or is something else going on? Did 'the heart' win over 'the head' and a 'sentimental' film about the hardships and changes over a generation in a Welsh coal mining village temporarily surpass a 'timeless' masterpiece?

 A person's world is a pastiche of responses to various people, events, and concepts that the mind renews daily. Personalities shift but the mind tends to normalize the shifts as coming from outside. Things 'out there' cause people to change their minds occasionally about certain things but they remain the same inside. People seem to possess a unified inner self as they rehearse those words mentally that make them who they are. Sometimes one's mind can see the strings being pulled in the media to draw the crowd this way and that. But those interior monologues go on saying that 'we are we' and 'they are they' and so that a person remains the same person she or he always was. The juncture between the individual subjectivity and the present time, between selves now and in times past is fascinating because this juncture is as iridescent as the rainbow streak on the stream(s) of time.

The events of another time tend to be viewed through the lens of today, no matter how much the viewer tries to adjust the camera's focus. The artifacts of the past have something to tell but they are filtered by today's light. Current dominant social narratives make the past seem to us as though its contours fit the selves constructed to meet today's world. In general, past is considered as a time when life was simpler and people's choices may have been clearer, even though there were social constraints that do not exist currently.

'Today is better than the past and the future will offer even more than today' is one narrative. 'The past was better than today and life has been going downhill since . . . ' (some fixed key event) is another narrative. A third narrative might be that 'life has always been full of surprises and we pull the threads we choose (or threads that choose us) from a tangled skein.'

That brings me to the point of this essay: how do the viewers of films shift between the 'we' and 'I' of life and how do stimuli from culture reinforce one's constantly refurbished life? The public's lives are reflected in the imaginative media so it follows that the key films of a year can tell how spectacle helped people of the past to make sense of their lives, as well as how students of culture reinterpret these artifacts in the present. Two 1941 films, *Citizen Kane* (Dir. Orson Welles) and *How Green was My Valley* (Dir. John Ford) turned 75 years old in 2016. These two films competed for the Oscars in the World War II year of 1942. The reasons are multilayered to even begin to understand why *How Green was My Valley* won the best picture over *Citizen Kane* in the 1942 Oscar competition. Neither film portrayed the war. *How Green was My Valley* was an adaptation of the 1939 autobiographical novel by Richard Llewellyn, set in Queen Victoria's time, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Citizen Kane* detailed the life of a newspaper baron, largely based upon the lifespan of William Randolph Hearst from roughly the 1860s through the 1930s. Did giving Ford's film the Best Picture Oscar represent the greatest error of the Oscar voters ever or something else? How can this Oscar vote speak to us about our social values then and now?

It's Huge to be Great

In order to view any film in its historical and social context, like most film history students, I need to look at what can be gleaned from the dominant historical narratives at the time of that film's production and showings. The ideals of the various countries are different but all sides in what would develop into the confrontation of World War II had huge personalities leading them from chaos into the light. So I will first speak about the world into which these two films came. The 1930s had seen a history-altering parade of state actors on the world stage: Adolph Hitler, Josef Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill, to name the most obvious cast of characters.

The impersonal forces of the global 1930s financial collapse were difficult for non-specialists in the field of economics to understand. To assuage the fear of the populace, an untiring media put wind in the Great Leaders' sails so that, to this day, new biographies are being written and filmed of the leaders of the twentieth century. They steered the courses of their individual nations, forming alliances through the entire 1930s era of financial loss and upheaval. Each great leader offered something that a population would call 'hope.' All the above leaders were far, far larger than life. If their virtues were monumental, then their flaws were gargantuan. And if history tells the story accurately, many people had lost their sense of social cohesion during the dark 1930s. These men helped to bond their various countries together by being icons of change, but people watched the giant personalities with admiration and alarm, because their acts rippled for good and ill across the globe.

In media studies, Stuart Hall's methods of creative encoding and audience decoding known as audience reception theory (2001) tells us that, not only were there actors on the global stage, there were also those who reacted and were swept along willingly or unwillingly into the orbit of these 'great,' 'celestial' human bodies. How did it feel to be led? Until recently, this was uncharted territory. Jackie Stacey (1994) analyzes decades of fan letters to British film magazines in *Star Gazing* to see how the lives of fans mingled and merged with those of their stars. Just as in film theory people are only now starting to study the film magazines for evidence of how *viewers* reacted to the films that have been long critically studied, historians are now studying letters from obscure people to see how it felt to be led by the great leaders of the twentieth century. From this evidence, we can say that great public figures exerted a magnetic pull on the public's attention span. Of course, those who controlled the media also controlled how people would estimate the value of the great leaders and all of culture.

That is, all this attention on our leaders didn't *just happen* but an imaginary Klieg light such as used in film studios was focused daily upon the *same few figures* by the film, radio, television, and newer digital media industries.

The Long Run of Fame

Despite the fevered typing by billions of hands, messages then sent out over the Internet, the sorting of society still allows but a few to be the key players on the global stage. Drama has always told us that the lives of the few are far more worthy to view or read about than the lives of the many. Look to ancient Greece, Shakespearean England, Japanese Noh, or any other culture's historic repository of fiction and drama. Any bean counter can make comparative counts: the activities of the kings and the gods at the top of the list of what counts as culture. Obviously, commonsensically, everybody cannot know everybody so some sort of selectivity

must be involved and society has to fall into some kind of structure. That has been the prevailing idea. What the Romans called 'fama' favors but a few and soon leaves even these in the dust. Who wants to read about the person next door when there are gods, kings, and monsters, or gods and kings who *are monsters*, to be viewed on stage? Over and over, down through the ages, this was the thought.

Our cultural history records mixed results in those attempts to recognize and dramatize 'the many' in society rather than just 'the few.' Most of these films, dramas, and fictional texts have been produced in societies that hold less of an individualistic dominant narrative than Western Europe and the United States. The result is that *individuals* get ground out of existence by huge—always with the 'huge!'—stone wheels of history that depict a phalanx of people, each having no face to speak of, stepping shoulder-to-shoulder into some kind of collective Valhalla. And then there are monstrous lapses, genocides, and abuses that tend to give a bad name to the whole project of focusing a film studio's Klieg lights on 'the many.' Readers and viewers have become wary of any idealized film or novel delighting in the lives of 'the people' as opposed to their 'great,' 'huge' leaders. In 1941, into this world came *Citizen Kane* and *How Green was My Valley*.

Serendipitously, an email just popped into my box to tell me that 'Jesus Christ is trending' but 'not for the reasons you think.'

Man and Studio

'Studio politics meets personal inclinations!' That could be a name of some new televised game show. But in fact it was within this social dynamic that both Darryl F. Zanuck and Orson Welles chose their film topics. The word 'man' does denote the idea that, in the patriarchal world of film studios, most who made films have always been men—or at least dressed that way, fitting whatever vagaries of actual gender identification into the preformed slots available for film producers and directors.

In her history of the film's production, Lea Jacobs (2016) details how Darryl Zanuck was swept into the popularity of the bestselling 1939 *How Green was My Valley* and bought the novel. The film was shot in just three months. Orson Welles shuttled a script back and forth between himself and Herman Mankewicz. They bickered about who wrote most of it (Jacobs 2016). After showing the evidence, the film industry has credited Welles for the definitive touches. Each film was timely in its own way. *How Green was My Valley* showed the recurring disruptions of an industrial community in Wales as, in real life, repeated industrial strikes and upheavals of closures went on in the mining towns of the United States (Appalachian). Newspaper oligarch William Randolph Hearst, a major model for Welles' Kane, was one of the most recognized names in the United States. His word was the law for much of the newspaper industry, so if *Citizen Kane* did not please Hearst due to its recognizable portrayal of him, the newspapers in the Hearst Syndicate did not mention the film.

The 1996 PBS documentary, *The Battle over Citizen Kane*, details the various ways that Hearst attempted to censor the film, but is this all? To list but a few of the well-funded Hearst shenanigans, he ordered Louella Parsons to defame Welles repeatedly in her film news column. He tried to buy up prints and negatives. Hearst attempted to intimidate RKO Studio head George J. Schaefer, but this, too, failed. The censorship attempts made *Citizen Kane* a cause célèbre and in the long run this has helped secure the niche for a film that challenged the

powerful. But at the time, censorship hurt box office (Battle). Failure to win the 1942 Oscar might also have been due in part to the film's inability to play well in small towns.

A New Genre of Unflinching 'Sentiment'

Are the reasons above the only reasons that the Academy voted *How Green was My Valley* as the Best Picture of 1942 or could there be another reason? Praise for *Citizen Kane* was not universal. Some prominent critics wrote negative reviews. In his 1941 review for *Sur*, reprinted in *Selected Nonfictions*, Jorge Luis Borges famously prophesied that *Citizen Kane* will endure as a certain Griffith or Pudovkin films have 'endured'— films whose historical value is undeniable but which no one cares to see again. It is too gigantic, pedantic, tedious. It is not intelligent, though it is the work of genius—in the most nocturnal and Germanic sense of that bad word (Borges 2000).

On February 7, 1942, *Argus Weekend Magazine* critic Erle Cox called the film 'amazing' but thought that Welles's break with Hollywood traditions was 'overdone.' On October 22, 1941, *Tatler*'s James Agate called it 'the well-intentioned, muddled, amateurish thing one expects from high-brows' and 'a quite good film which tries to run the psychological essay in harness with your detective thriller, and doesn't quite succeed.' Eileen Creelman of *The New York Sun* called it 'a cold picture, unemotional, a puzzle rather than a drama' (Higham 1985)

Less surprisingly, many critics such as the *New York Times*' Bosley Crowther used the word 'sentiment' for *How Green was My Valley*. In *The Times* of October 29, 1941, Crowther observed

> . . . (p)ersons who have read the haunting novel by Richard Llewellyn from which the story is derived will comprehend at its mention the deeply affecting quality of this film. For Mr. Ford has endeavored with eminent success to give graphic substance to the gentle humor and melancholy pathos, the loveliness and aching sentiment, of the original. And Mr. Zanuck has liberally provided with the funds of his studio a production which magnificently reproduces the sharp contrasts of natural beauties and the harsh realities of a Welsh mining town. In purely pictorial terms, 'How Green Was My Valley' is a stunning masterpiece.

Crowther asks viewers to forgive the 'sentiment' in *How Green was My Valley* because of other exalted qualities in the film, such as its scenic beauty. But in general being told that a film is 'sentimental' is the kiss of death and a conversation-ending epithet. Anthony Trollope sniffed in his 1855 novel *The Warden* about reformers like 'Mr. Sentiment' (code for Dickens) who is

> . . . [t]he most powerful. It is incredible the number of evil practices he has put down: it is to be feared he will soon lack subjects, and that when he has made the working classes comfortable, and enough bitter beer put into proper-sized pint bottles, there will be nothing further for him left to do. Mr. Sentiment is certainly a very powerful man, and perhaps not the less so that his good poor people are so very good; his hard rich people so very hard; and the genuinely honest so very honest. (161)

Defenders of *Citizen Kane* have lobbed the term 'sentimental' at *How Green was My Valley* like a hand grenade for daring to take an Oscar from their paragon. This attack is entirely unnecessary since both are fine films; they no longer compete because both are recognized as

masterpieces. What is more, *How Green was My Valley* created *a new genre* in film that allowed dignity in working-class families without making them an 'other' or walking case books of maladjustment and personality disorders.

How Green was my Valley not only lamented for the poor village but showed its joys over time and how characters evolve. But the film *unflinchingly* examined how religion was misused as a tool of oppression in the small town, with deacons creating little fiefdoms to pick on less powerful members of the community. Far from being 'sentimentalized,' lives in this village are ripped asunder by the narrow minds and 'idle tongues.' The minister, Mr. Gruffydd (played by Walter Pigeon), condemns such behavior in his chapel, telling the churchgoers before he leaves their village 'never to return'.

> . . . I know why you have come - I have seen it in your faces Sunday after Sunday as I've stood here before you. Fear has brought you here. Horrible, superstitious fear. Fear of divine retribution - - a bolt of fire from the skies. The vengeance of the Lord and the justice of God. But you have forgotten the love of Jesus. You disregard His sacrifice. Death, fear, flames, horror and black clothes. Hold your meeting then, but know if you do this in the name of God and in the house of God, you blaspheme against Him and His Word.

The emotions shown in *Citizen Kane* and *How Green was My Va*lley are but two different styles of sentiment. By this standard, Orson Welles followed the, let us not forget, well-worn path of making a film about the mighty and famous. *Citizen Kane* is no less a film in that 'king and gods' genre because it makes the mighty topical and current. Using Kane's flaws in its exploration of his 'rich, evolving inner life' is a close relative to the nuanced royal plays of Shakespeare.

The innovative qualities of *Citizen Kane* had less to do with content than novel camera angles, deep focus shots, and other new cinematography. Some historians attempt to make the case that *Citizen Kane* was a trail-blazer in using flashbacks and a non-linear narrative structure, but other films had done that feat before *Citizen Kane*--such films as director Preston Sturges' 1933 film *The Power and the Glory*, for instance, which is told through flashbacks. Pauline Kael in her essay 'Raising Kane,' describes the film about the empty life of a railroad tycoon as a prototype for the narrative of *Citizen Kane* (1941). Significantly, Herman J. Mankiewicz, who along with Orson Welles won an Oscar for the screenplay of *Citizen Kane*, was acquainted with the director.

How Green was My Valley took on the challenge of creating a depiction of those who are the many rather than the few. Very few films by the late 1930s could run the gauntlet of critics' condemnation of attempting to raise the lowly beyond their station. The narrative ran (and still runs) that these lives are too commonplace to be interesting. Critics' complaints included that the writer, director, or producer obviously must have had a political motive for making such a fuss about common and ordinary people. Or if the film were balanced enough to escape that criticism, then perhaps it could be said that this film 'has its points' but it strays into the 'maudlin' and 'sentimental.'

One of the greatest instances of critics' tunnel vision is their inability to see that the great man agonizing is also 'sentimental.' Critics miss this because *his* emotions are always to be respected as he clenches his mighty jaw and furrows his lofty brow or even chews his well-appointed scenery. But when those who depict lesser rungs of the social scale act overwhelmed

by what life has dealt, we are told that this is shameless tear-jerking. These are the obstacles that the film *How Green was My Valley* faced at its time of release. Just as Welles faced his dragons, so John Ford and Darryl Zanuck faced a public and critics who were nowhere near as naïve and sympathetic to a story about a coal mining village as some may believe today.

Citizen Kane Front and Center

The most short-sighted aspect of a monocular view of the outstanding individual and life at the top is that the way that the horizon becomes populated with nothing else. As the ex-lover Joe Gillis says, finding photos of the aging star Norma Desmond everywhere in her house in the film *Sunset Boulevard*,

> How could she breathe in that house full of Norma Desmonds? Around every corner, Norma Desmonds. . . more Norma Desmonds. . . and still more Norma Desmonds. (B-8, 'Sunset')

How can anyone breathe with the few taking up every inch of space on our mental maps? The star has the stage. The people at base level live through the stars. The stars need the commoners just as vampirically as Norma needed her adoring fans (who had long passed her by.) But in this addictive state, there is no room for people but only the few, the few, the few. When media makes the outstanding individual the fantasy focus of the majority, this causes a 'creeping paralysis.' This paralysis of the mind is similar to the decay of Norma Desmond's mansion in *Sunset Boulevard*. Society as it now exists may have gone too far, been too shielded from its own reality, to find a way out of the house of fame.

The few at center stage will continue to show their manufactured selves to the many. This generation's *Citizen Kane*s will flaunt their unique traits and qualities, blown to monstrous proportions. Is there any chance that a 'sentimental' film like *How Green was My Valley* ever again will win over *Citizen Kane's* manufactured egos and riding crops of the mighty*?* Whether *How Green was My Valley* won the Best Picture of 1942 because of its own qualities or because *Citizen Kane* was prevented from winning by Hearst's henchmen, Kane has won now. Big time. Kane's mesmerizing force is huge, indeed. For seventy-five years both films focused their spotlights at society. Maybe it is timely to look again at what these films are saying and ask what has been learned.

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Gloria McMillan was born in East Chicago, Indiana. She grew up in this steel mill town. She received her BA and MA in English literature from Indiana University and her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and English at the University of Arizona. She has taught college writing at the University of Arizona and Pima College in Tucson, Arizona, for over 25 years. She has published a mystery novel titled *The Blue Maroon Murder* and has edited a collection of essays on the writer Ray Bradbury, *Orbiting Ray Bradbury's Mars* (McFarland, 2013.) She has also written plays that have been produced in Tucson and the Chicago suburbs.

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Confronting COVID-19 in 'Social Class in America': Research and Reflections by Working-Class Student-Scholars

Edited by Sara Appel[1], Lewis and Clark College, Oregon

Editor's Introduction

For the second summer in a row, the editors at *The Journal of Working-Class Studies* were generous enough to provide several freshman students from my 'Social Class in America' course at Lewis and Clark College the opportunity to publish their research papers. Predicting that I'd have many excellent essays to choose from—this publication opportunity is a great incentive for students to do their best work—I decided to structure our essay project around a unifying theme this time: though, as I told my students right before spring break, I'd wait to see how their essay topics and rough drafts were taking shape before choosing a theme and issuing invitations to submit.

Then COVID-19 hit, and the semester became something unprecedented. Plopping a container of wet wipes down on the table at the front of my classroom, I handed out mini-cupcakes during what was to be our final brick-and-mortar class together, as we'd learned just a few days before. To say my students were anxious would be a laughable understatement. Several were lamenting how, though they'd originally planned on sheltering in place on campus, the school was now saying they had to pack up and go home within 48 hours; 'Where am I supposed to put my stuff?', 'How am I supposed to get a flight?', 'Is it even safe to *be* on a plane right now?', were all questions we tried to address, in addition to another that I knew was on everyone's mind: 'How the hell am I supposed to write an 11-13-page research paper from home, with no library?' I decided to make the theme of this summer's student essay project one that would address a version of that question, then: how my students from working-class and poverty backgrounds, in particular, rose to the challenge of trying to research and write a major college essay in the middle of a global pandemic.

In a questionnaire I asked each author to submit along with their essay, my four contributors shared a number of experiences common to poor and working-class college students that were exacerbated by COVID-19, or revealed as especially significant under the pandemic's glaring light. Several mention food insecurity or inconsistency as an issue that, absent the campus dining hall, they had to contend with while trying to attend Zoom classes and conduct research. Most also mention space and privacy constraints. 'I struggled with finding physical spaces [where] I could have a clear mind and enter my productive 'zone,'' one student revealed; another recalls trying to 'do online school at the same time' as her 'disabled part-time teacher mother,' in the same small apartment. The guarantee of a secure internet connection, electricity, or other technologies necessary to conduct research remotely was also a major source of stress. 'I lived in fear that our internet or power would get shut off, which of course would affect my

research process,' one student said. Moreover, in what appears to have had an across-the-board impact on newly-minted 'online' liberal arts college students from all class backgrounds, each student-essayist noted how difficult it was to be torn away from their community of peers while still being expected to produce quality academic work. 'I lost the ability to bounce ideas back and forth with my classmates, and had to rely on my own motivation to get this project done with the same high expectations that I had before the pandemic,' one contributor aptly admits. 'Without [continuously] seeing my peers, I had no idea how to really gauge where I was supposed to be in my process,' adds another.

But the impact of financial stress on health—where *health* implies both the looming threat presented by COVID-19's own mysterious, terrifying trajectory and the psychological trauma caused by major upheavals of everyday life—was far and away the most significant issue my student-contributors faced as they returned home. 'I lost all three jobs that I was working [on campus],' one student shared; 'I need to work to afford to keep going to college and it heavily impacts my mental state.' Relatedly, the possible loss of scholarships has been heavy on their minds. One contributor's comments especially capture that sentiment: 'I found myself wondering… if I'd still be able to attend my chosen college next year, would switching to a community college be more cost-effective if classes continued online, would I be able to work this summer as I planned—there were many, many worries of this sort on my mind that caused stress.' Another student misses the 'structure and control that came with being an independent college student.' She elaborates: 'I think that other working-class students would agree that life in college is sort of an escape from the chaos and disorder that is custom at home… Among the clutter of dirty dishes or unfolded laundry, there is always a veil of stress in my house because financial struggle rarely allows people to relax.'

Despite these ongoing struggles, the four students contributing to this essay project nevertheless went on to write some of the finest research papers across two sections of my class, all on topics that felt both personal and deeply political to each of them. Josie Graydon, who's never had the privilege to own her own car ('besides a 1995 Jeep Grand Cherokee… which ran for about two days'), investigates the role class plays in the use and quality of public transportation systems. Geo Langer wowed me with the frankness and intimacy of the interviews she conducted with six young, queer-identified sex workers—all of whom reached out to her after a call for participants that she posted on her Twitter and Instagram accounts. Ashleen Smith's close-analysis of the pretense to 'documentary' realism in Shelby Lee Adams' photographic archive of Appalachian holler-dwellers was prompted, in part, by Smith's own childhood discovery of a book of Adams' photographs in her 'Papa's attic.' Jezza Hutto—who struggled early on to nail down a research topic that she felt both emotionally and intellectually drawn to—shares a thoughtfully researched essay in which she argues that it is poor and working-class folks who tend to live in environmentally sustainable ways, rather than the more privileged consumers claiming sustainability as a 'lifestyle.' Read on, for more of these young scholars' impressive work.

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What Does it Cost to be Green?

By Jezza Hutto

In recent years, the environmental movement has made its way to the forefront of American mainstream media and society. While public discourse and consciousness raising is important

to foster any type of social change, mainstream environmentalism in the United States has been restrained by the 'relentless ability of capitalism to commodify dissent' (Maniates 2001). This can also be referred to as 'retail activism,' when governments and corporations capitalize on social movements for profit. With this commodification comes exclusion, as economic inequality runs deep within our country's foundation. In the contemporary environmental movement, 'Market-oriented Sustainability', 'Green Capitalism' and 'eco-friendly' are strong indicators of commitment, encouraging consumers and companies to literally buy into the cause (Moser 2018). This dominant narrative of environmentalism as a simple change in consumer choice marginalizes those who cannot afford to participate, allowing class status to be a deciding factor in the membership of the fight for our planet.

This essay will provide insight toward a greater consideration of how class affects people's ability to lead a sustainable life and participate in the contemporary environmental movement in the United States. In order to help understand this issue, I will consider four questions in sections titled accordingly: (1) What does the current environmental movement look like? In this section, I will look at how the hegemonic ideologies in the current movement largely reflect 'environmental elitism.' (2) What is the perceived and actual relationship between class and environmentalism? This section will attempt to dispel misinformation about poverty and environmentalism by comparing environmental impacts of different classes. (3) How is the current state of the movement harmful and exclusionary? For this question, I will examine how the commodification of environmental activism negatively affects low-income participants and the movement as a whole. In the last section of the essay, I will attempt to answer the question of (4) what would a more effective and inclusive environmental movement look like?

In the United States, many studies have shown that low-income and minority communities are affected disproportionately by the physical impacts of environmental degradation. A 1992 article published by the Environmental Protection Agency Journal found that three out of four toxic waste sites were located in low-income/ minority communities, two million tons of dangerous radioactive chemicals have been dumped on Native American lands, and three hundred thousand Latino farmers suffer from pesticide-related health problems (Adams 1992). These findings, among others, sparked the Environmental Justice movement, which criticized mainstream environmentalism for overlooking factors of race and class in its politics (Greenberg 2013). Disproportionate environmental impact is one of, if not the most rampant and thoroughly researched inequalities in environmentalism, but it is not what this essay is about. While it is important to note that there will be intersections with the scholarship of Environmental Justice, this essay aims to analyze how the current ideologies of environmentalism cause the movement to be exclusionary and harmful to low-income people socially and politically rather than physically. Not only do low-income and minority communities physically experience environmental degradation disproportionately, they are also silenced in discourse and immobilized in action because of the focus on consumption.

(1) The Current State of Environmentalism

A survey by Global Web Index shows that the majority of people believe that 'Individuals/ consumers' are responsible for the future of the environment (Young 2019). As seen in figure 1, 52% of people believe that 'Manufacturers/ production bodies' are responsible, and 50% believe that 'National government' is responsible, both falling nearly 20% short of the belief in individual responsibility. This belief is promoted by governments and corporations via commercialization of the movement, as it relieves them of the responsibility to enact sustainable policies and practices (Maniates 2001). According to environmental sociologist

Michael Maniates, '[Mainstream environmentalism] embraces the notion that knotty issues of consumption, consumerism, power and responsibility can be resolved neatly and cleanly through enlightened, uncoordinated consumer choice' (Maniates 2001). Environmentalism today is constructed to put responsibility in the hands, and wallets, of consumers.
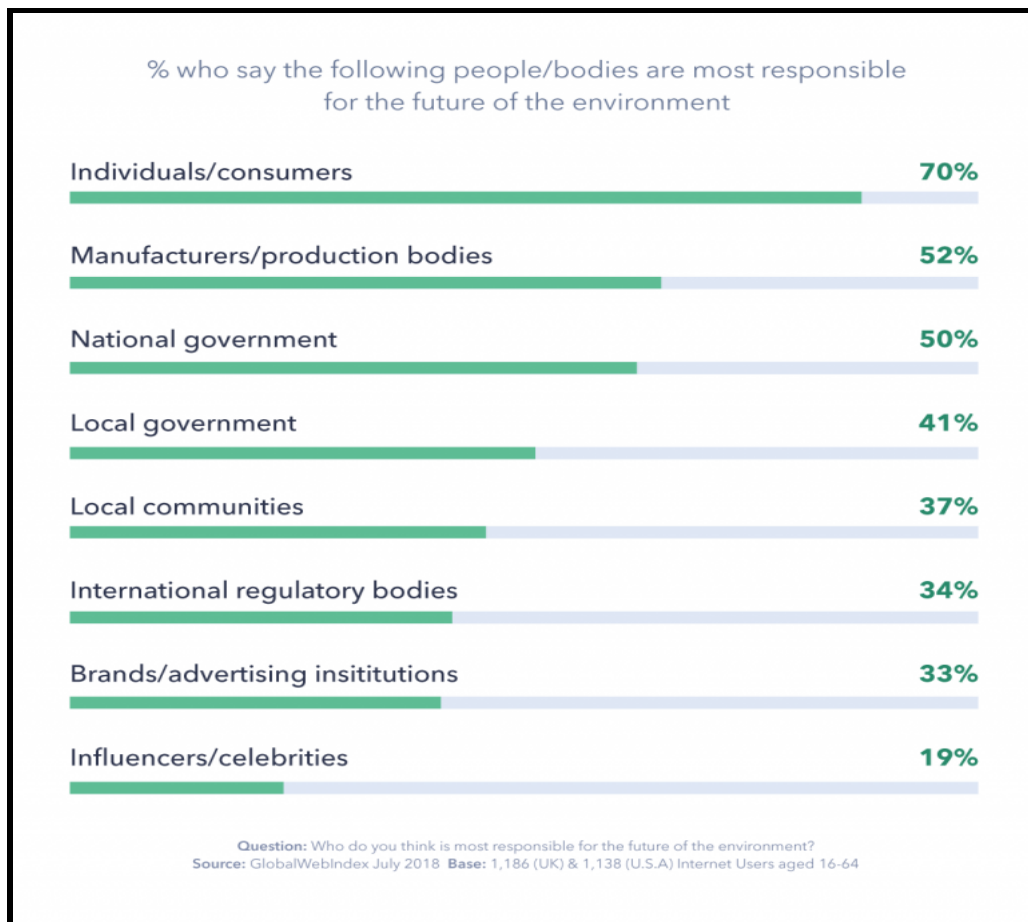

Figure 1: Young, K. From GlobalWebIndex Blog, 27 November 2019. Viewed 23 April 2020.

The popular environmental movement revolves around two things: marketing and consuming. A movement that was originally deployed by countercultural and grassroots groups to challenge the status quo has now gone corporate (Greenberg 2013). We can see 'sustainability' being used as a marketing tool by car companies, clothing brands, real estate firms, entertainment industries, restaurants, colleges, and politicians (Brisman 2009). Plant-based products, hybrid cars, recycled shoes are advertised as the simple way to do our part (Maniates 2001). Take, for example, the introduction of reusable straws in an effort to save sea turtles and help clean the ocean. The widespread plastic straw ban addressed less than one percent of ocean pollution, but because banning straws does not require any major lifestyle change for most people, the anti-straw campaign took off (Ivanova 2019). People find comfort in buying these supposedly sustainable products because they believe that they're helping the cause and making a difference.

(2) Relationships Between Class and Environmentalism

While there is a substantial amount of scholarship surrounding the relationship between poverty and environmentalism in the Global South, this essay aims to analyze the effects that

class difference within the United States has on environmental impact and awareness. There is a misconception that the urban poor are less aware of their environmental impact, resulting in them leading less sustainable lifestyles (Moser 2018). One study published in the *Journal of Environment & Behavior* found that higher income is associated with a greater environmental self-identity, or a self-proclaimed 'eco-consciousness' (Moser 2018). While this may seem to reinforce the misconception about a lack of environmental consciousness in poor communities, it is very important to make the distinction between intent and impact. The same study that found a positive correlation between income and consciousness found that actual impacts did not follow this pattern. It states, 'people high in environmental self-identity in our sample used slightly more energy and had a slightly bigger carbon footprint than those indicating less environmental awareness' (Moser 2018). This goes to show that while people may readily identify with the environmental movement, their lifestyles do not always reflect this, suggesting that mainstream environmentalism is largely symbolic. This underrepresentation of low-income people who self-identify as environmentally aware can be attributed to the commercialization of the movement.

Grassroots Sustainable Lifestyles

Statistics continually show that despite having a pro-environmental stance, middle and upper-class households have a greater environmental impact than lower-class households. Larger houses use more energy and water because of average household activities and a higher maintenance demand. More affluent families emit more greenhouse gases via multiple cars and more frequent air travel (Moser 2018). While it may be economically motivated rather than environmentally, poor people engage in sustainability practices such as public transportation, limited travel, second-hand shopping, and less unnecessary consumption (Satterthwaite 2003). Low-income folks may purchase reused products such as cell-phones and cars, and while these consumption behaviors are not explicitly labelled 'eco-conscious,' they are still more sustainable than buying brand new products. If more goods were able to pass through multiple consumers before they are disposed of, there would be less demand for new products, lessening the environmental impact of the manufacturing industry (Zink 2016).

Consumption patterns are a major indicator of differences in environmental impacts between higher or lower income households. 'In urban areas, it is overwhelmingly the consumption patterns of non-poor groups (especially high-income groups) and the production and distribution systems that serve them that are responsible for most environmental degradation' (Satterthwaite 2003). There is a major paradox here: middle and upper-class people feel as though participating in consumption-based environmentalism is making a positive impact, but it is the consumption patterns in general that make the difference. While some eco-friendly products may actually be more sustainable than their counterparts, they encourage consumption nonetheless. Virtually all products have an adverse impact on the environment, requiring natural resource extraction and releasing waste and emissions (Zink 2016). In fact, an article published in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* raises an interesting point: 'Maybe the advertised greenness of the energy-efficient gadget even encouraged the consumer to purchase it instead of not buying anything' (Stanford). For those who can afford to change their consumption patterns, it may be more effective to 'foster the capacity for restraint' that lower-income people practice unwillingly (Maniates 2001).

(3) Why Current Mainstream Environmental Thought is Harmful

There is an abundance of evidence that low-income people tend to have more sustainable lifestyles, yet they are less present in the environmental movement. This is largely due to the fact that membership in the movement relies on one's ability to participate in green consumerism. By basing allegiance to a social movement on consumerism, the movement becomes divided by class differences. Products that are advertised as environmentally friendly are usually more expensive than their conventional counterparts, creating an 'environmental elitism' (Ivanova 2019). Environmental elitism is the outcome when lower-income people are underrepresented in the leadership, participation and politics of the environmental movement, oftentimes because of its consumer-driven nature (Brisman 2009).

The indicators of being environmentally 'woke' are eco-friendly products and technologies such as hybrid cars and organic food. In a journal article published by *The North Dakota Law Review*, green criminologist Avi Brisman says, 'Goods have symbolic meanings in all societies' (Brisman 2009). Eco-friendly products that appeal to the wealthier consumer are becoming a status symbol, as they reflect not only a person's environmental 'wokeness' but also the numbers in their bank account (Ivanova 2019). One study from *The North Dakota Law Review* surveyed hybrid car owners and found that 57% of them said they bought it to make a statement about themselves (Brisman 2009). While wanting to display environmental commitment may send the message of 'I am greener than thou,' it also conveys 'I am richer than thou' because of the current state of mainstream environmentalism (Brisman 2009). Many Americans cannot afford to shop their consciousness, and rather than excluding them from the movement, we must create alternative entryways to mainstream environmental activism.

(4) Looking Forward: An Effective and Inclusive Movement

Commercialized activism does not account for the substantial amount of people who cannot afford the commodity of being green. The issue is not the green products crowding store shelves, but rather the hegemony of green consumerism in the movement. As long as individual consumer choice is at the crux of environmental activism, the movement will remain exclusionary and largely ineffective. Consumption practices reflect and reinforce class hierarchies and systems of power. If people primarily express environmental concern by partaking in 'ritual displays' and 'feel-good' activities such as investing in sustainable technologies and products, green consumerism will remain synonymous with environmental activism (Brisman 2009). In order to cultivate a more inclusive and effective movement, there must first be a recalibration of the core values.

Greed, materialism and excessive consumption fuel the United States' economy, but for the sake of the planet, we must transition to a 'post-materialistic' society (Fairbrother 2013). Whether eco-friendly or not, Americans spend about $1.2 trillion a year on non-essential items (Whitehouse 2011). Production and manufacturing require immense amounts of natural resources and energy, often dispelling air and water pollution in pursuit of profit. A study in the *Journal of Environment & Behavior* found that 'significant numbers of people exhibit both high environmental concerns and high materialistic values' (Moser 2018). The current state of environmentalism suggests that materialism and environmental consciousness can coexist by introducing eco-friendly consumption. However, these values frequently contradict each other in practice and impact level. It is no coincidence that poor people have a smaller carbon footprint since they often cannot afford to indulge in overconsumption.

It is by focusing on the 'consumption problem' as a whole that the environmental movement can appeal to a wider audience and more effectively mobilize its constituents (Maniates 2001).

We are made to believe that materialism and consumption are essential components of American life. Too often, humans become accustomed to their ways, finding consistency in concrete values and routines. Through commercializing activism, the capitalist system allows people to feel like pioneers of social change without disrupting American life. When we truly become pioneers of social change, we will welcome disruption and face our fear of change. If the well-being of our planet was a priority, individuals would make the conscious choice to conserve more and consume less. Politicians and activists would push for a revolution of consciousness rather than advertising consumerism as activism.

A critical shift in ideals also calls for the relinquishment of the individualism that currently restrains environmental action. According to Maniates, 'New Age Environmentalism fixes responsibility upon all of us equally and, in the process, cloaks important dimensions of power and culpability' (Manitates 2001). Through an emphasis on individual action, market-oriented environmentalism pacifies people and, in turn, relieves governments and corporations of the responsibility that is rightfully theirs. Environmentalism is a cause that should unite people of all backgrounds to take collective action against the economic and political systems that impact our earth the most. We are better off investing time and resources into helping educate people, engaging in dialogue, taking to the streets, petitioning policy decisions, actively supporting pro-environmental politicians, and above all, holding corporations accountable for their actions.

An important factor in cultivating support for environmental activism is widespread and accessible education on environmental issues. While climate science curriculum is being adopted by more public schools, it is still being filtered through a partisan lens. Information on environmental issues should be presented as objective and science-based, rather than framing human-caused climate change as a leftist theory (Czajka 2019). An education campaign would also require accessible information for marginalized groups that are too often excluded from activism and mainstream society in general. In his article 'It Takes Green to be Green,' Avi Brisman states:

'While core environmentalists are well above average in socioeconomic level, public support for the environmental movement is drawn fairly broadly from the full range of socioeconomic data. Supporters of environmentalism do not constitute a socioeconomic elite, rather, support for environmentalism is diffuse in the population as a whole; it is only moderately related to socioeconomic level, and most to education at that' (Brisman 2009).

While low-income people continue to be underrepresented in activist circles, there is evidence that support is widespread and education may be the gateway to participation in these communities.

Effective environmental activism is not selective, exclusive and elite, but rather bridges the gaps of difference to create a diverse body of participants. It bases allegiance not on consumer choice, but on genuine concern, and willingness to make difficult changes. It does not always turn to future technologies, but learns from grassroots sustainable lifestyles. It does not put responsibility in the hands of individuals, but in the hands of politicians and corporations. It does not comply with capitalism, but rather challenges the institutions that commodify social change. It does not value money and materialism, but rather values education, curiosity and discovery. Effective environmental activism does not continue on its current path, but looks to future generations for creative, inclusive and imaginative solutions.

Jezza Hutto is from a small town in north Idaho called Sandpoint. She is planning on majoring in Sociology/ Anthropology with a minor in Environmental Studies. She hopes to travel after her time at Lewis and Clark and gain first-hand knowledge and experience before going back to school to get her master's degree. Jezza wants to use her education to further study and understand social ideas and attitudes surrounding climate change and environmental activism.

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Shelby Lee Adams and Poverty in American Documentary Photography

By Ashleen Smith

I was about nine years old when I first came across the photographic work of Shelby Lee Adams. I was sitting in my Papa's attic office, browsing his extensive collection of photography books, when I saw her staring back at me—a young woman with freckled skin and luminous eyes, photographed in black and white. She was *Rosa Lee* (figure 1), the frontispiece of *Appalachian Legacy*, Adams' second collection of photographs of poor families living in isolated portions of the Appalachian region of the U.S. I was captivated, and went through the entire book, reading every story and studying each photograph. To me, these people were almost realer than real, their lives depicted in shadowy, intense frames.
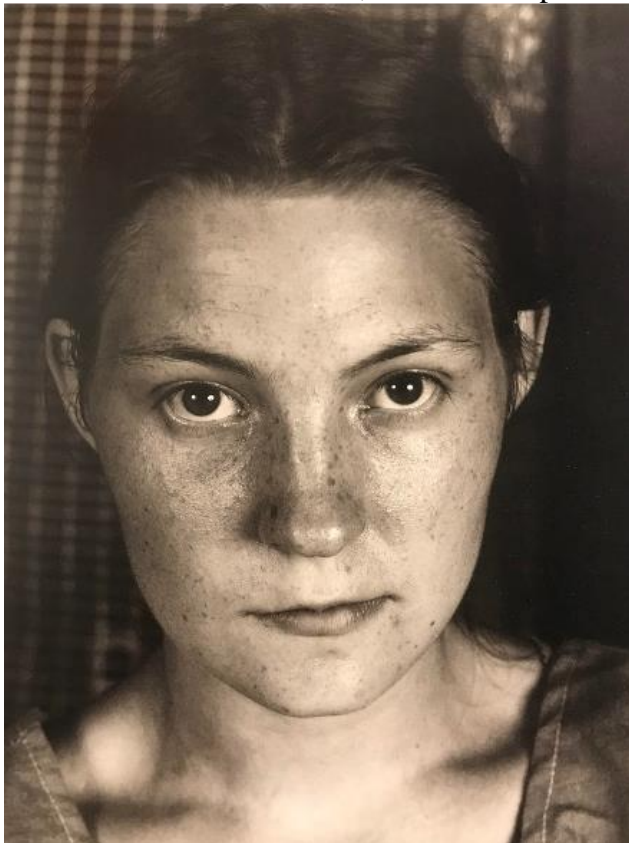

Figure 1: Shelby Lee Adams, *Rosa Lee* (1986).
Retrieved from Appalachian Legacy, 14 June 2020.

In this essay, I will examine the supposed 'truthful' representation in 'documentary' photographs, when the subject is a community that is heavily stereotyped and faces the added preconceived misconceptions that come with poverty. I will also consider aspects of Shelby

Lee Adams' photographic process— how he perceives both audience and subjects, his consideration of stereotypes (or lack thereof), his use of aesthetics and framing, and his personally stated intentions— and how they shape the ethics of his work. Through this close analysis, I will attempt to answer the question, is there really such a thing as a true documentary photograph?

Perhaps the most notable large-scale example of documentary photography in the United States is the FSA Photographs. The FSA photographs were part of a public relations project funded by the Farm Security Administration that took place from 1935 to 1944, with the aim of documenting American life as affected by the Great Depression ('About'). It focused on two low-income groups, sharecroppers in the south and migrant agricultural workers in the midwest ('About'). Photographers such as Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans were involved in the project, and from it came some of the most iconic images in American photographic history. These photographs helped establish a sort of visual language, 'an artfully constructed authenticity effect,' that can be seen in documentary photography today, including that of Adams (Fluck 2010, p. 65). The work of Walker Evans, in particular, creates an aesthetic that Adams clearly emulates in his work. Evans' photograph *Bud Fields, Cotton Sharecropper, Hale County, Alabama* (figure 2, 1935), where the subject is posed looking directly at the camera, is a solid example of his use of shadowy portraits. Evans also intentionally posed his subjects, moving items in their homes in an effort to 'achieve a certain balance,' for artistic purposes (Fluck 2010, p. 65).
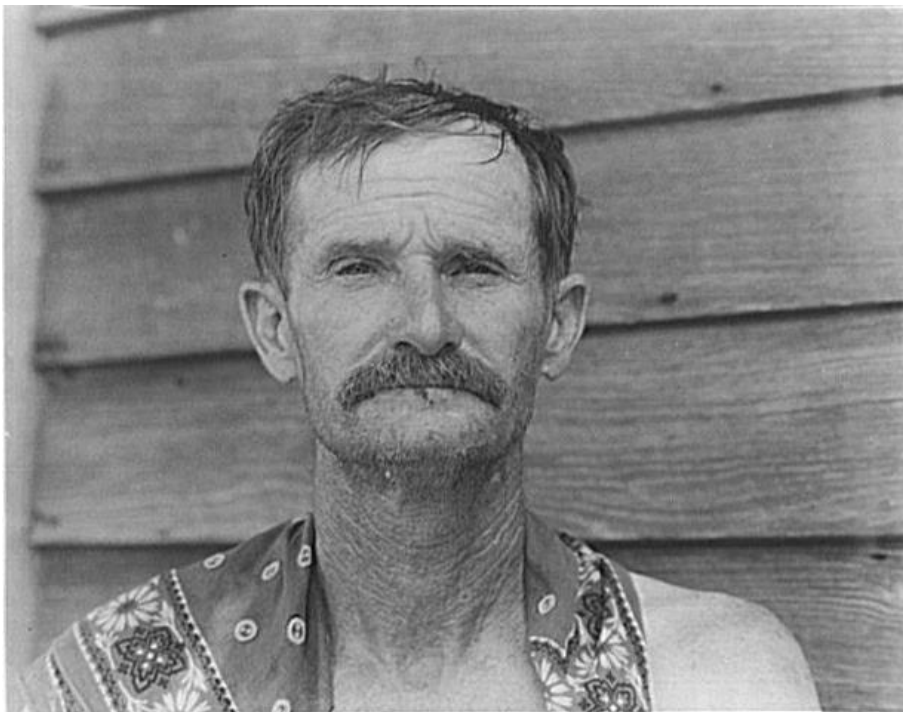

Figure 2: Shelby Lee Adams, *Bud Fields, Cotton Sharecropper, Hale County, Alabama* (1935). Retrieved from Library of Congress, 13 June 2020.

This specific framing and 'authenticity effect' contradicts my own early idea of Adams' photographs as 'real,' an idea that seems to be shared by many of those who have purchased Adams' books and viewed his art in galleries over the past forty years. The wide appeal of Adams' work is based on the idea that it is documentary, that it 'avoid[s] the pictorial, the sensational, the sentimental, but [speaks] with feeling in the idiom of truth,' as Grace Mayer

described the work of the Farm Security Administration photographers (Fluck 2010, p. 64). But how documentary is Adams' work, truly? In an attempt to answer this query, filmmaker Jennifer Baichwal directed *The True Meaning of Pictures,* a 2002 documentary film featuring interviews with Adams' subjects, art critics and sociologists, fellow photographers, and Adams himself.

Early in the documentary, Adams hints at his intentions for his work when he speaks to what he feels is the indignity of early journalist coverage of Appalachia in the 60s, during the 'War on Poverty': 'Maybe I wasn't so pleased with how everything was portrayed either… it wasn't portrayed honestly. The irony is, I'm accused of exploiting my own culture… I'm trying to make right what the media has done wrong' (Baichwal). But are his subjects really 'his culture'? Adams is not a complete outsider to the communities he photographs. He was born and raised in Hazard, Kentucky, near the 'hollers' where many of his subjects reside. But he openly acknowledges that he was never of the same economic status as they were. He 'was – and remains – middle class' (Goddard 2002, p. 26). He became 'like regular kin-people' to some of the families he worked with, in the words of Corinne Zabalda, but Adams does not live in a holler, and he is not subject to negative parts of the Appalachian way of life (Baichwal). He can return to his middle-class home at the end of the day, when his photographs are made.

Adams himself does not consider his photographs to be truly documentary and unbiased: 'I'm photographing from a culture I'm from, I know about… It's not an objective document. It's me, it's life, and it's my subjects' lives, who are my friends, who I love, and care about.' (Baichwal). Multiple conflicts are created by this statement: How is it 'him,' Shelby Lee, but also his 'subjects' lives' when they do not share his social status and living conditions? How do his photographs show 'life' if they are intentionally posed? In further conflict with this sentiment is the title of Adams' most recently published book *Salt & Truth.* The use of the word 'truth' produces an idea that any depictions within must be honest, and 'salt' brings to mind phrases such as 'salt of the earth.' This evokes ideas of reliability, and holds up the Appalachian people as a hardworking ideal; appealing to American nostalgia and ideas of a lost past, but also placing the Appalachian people in a bygone time period.

Any discussion of artistic depictions of Appalachians necessitates a look at the stereotypes that have long defined Appalachian people to the larger United States. Dwight Billings, a sociologist at the University of Kentucky, explains some of the common stereotypes surrounding Appalachians, referencing the 1972 film *Deliverance*: 'The hillbilly is typically male, typically bearded, ignorant, shiftless, drinks moonshine, is involved in petty, violent disputes…' (Baichwal). *Deliverance* solidified the American perception of the 'hillbilly,' which was further reinforced by the popularity of the 'hillbilly horror' subgenre, as seen in films like *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977) and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974). 'Laden with vulgar stereotypes, rural-set films often appear to emphasize the depravity, danger, and monstrosity of white rural people and places,' Emily Satterwhite asserts in 'The Politics of Hillbilly Horror' (Satterwhite 2007, p. 227). These films are often the primary form of contact that Americans have, or more accurately, believe they have, with the people of Appalachia, and the stereotypes depicted in them are still accepted commonly.

When using such a heavily stereotyped group as the subject of one's work, especially a group that may not have access to the education and worldview that enables the same levels of artistic understanding enjoyed by those viewing their photographs in a gallery, one must display a level of sensitivity. An examination of Adams' aesthetic choices, in framing, lighting, and

other aspects, shows that he may not be as considerate of this ethical conflict as is needed to accurately portray a group surrounded by such misconceptions.

In an essay for German academic journal *Amerikastudien*, Professor Winfried Fluck discusses the widely held opinion that 'aesthetic disorientations' are largely not present in the FSA photographs. He argues that those distortions are not only very much present, but also that 'an 'objective' documentary mode possesses an aesthetics of its own which presents merely another way of transforming the poor into aesthetic objects' (Fluck 2010, p. 63). Beyond simply lacking objectivity, documentary photographs, particularly those of the poor, have their own unique set of aesthetics that serve to *objectify* the subjects, while also making the photographs appear more 'gritty' and therefore be perceived as more realistic. The work of Adams can be analyzed according to this same conclusion. As previously mentioned, many of the aesthetic choices Adams' makes in his photography of the poor, including his choice to photograph exclusively in monochrome, are similar to those used in the FSA photographs, and have the same objectifying effect. They also contribute to the 'authenticity effect' that causes the photographs to be perceived as more true to everyday life and less staged than they are in fact.

Returning to Baichwal's documentary, photography critic A.D Coleman comments critically on the staging of Adams' photographs: 'We can look at some of [Adams'] pictures and see a certain theatrical quality, a sense of the image as a kind of narrative, with events that have been in some ways set up… ' (Baichwal). When it comes to the choices of subjects and framing in his work, Adams seems to focus on somewhat macabre themes as part of this 'theatrical quality', photographing broken toys (*The Doll Bed*, 1995) and a smiling man holding the severed head of a pig (*Sherman with Hog's Head,* 1992) (Adams). Photographs such as *Appalachian Dracula with Granny* (figure 3, 1993)*,* and *Jimmy Layne, Halloween Day* (1993), make use of the wide-angle lens, which creates a distorted effect that serves to convey discomfort, and lends the subject a menacing aura (Adams). These subjects, combined with shadowy lighting and looming, ominous poses, could highlight the stereotype of the 'violent streak,' or what Coleman refers to as the 'spooky' aspect of Adams' photos (Baichwal). As to why Adams chooses to portray his subjects in a menacing light, one answer comes in looking back to 'hillbilly horror'- the stereotype of the violent Appalachian seems to have a lasting appeal to morbid curiosity.

Figure 3: *Appalachian Dracula with Granny* (1993).
Retrieved from Shelby Lee Adams Blogspot, 13 June 2020.

Another example of Adams' use of framing can be found in one of his most controversial photographs, *The Childers' Kitchen, Neeley Branch (*figure 4, 1986). In *The True Meaning of Pictures,* Adams tells us that he arranged the photograph as a religious tableau. The diaper worn by Homer, Burley Childers' developmentally disabled son, is envisioned as a kind of drapery, similar to the garment that Christ often wears in artistic renderings of the passion and crucifixion. Burley, holding his new knife in his hand, is seen as one of the Roman soldiers involved in Christ's death (Baichwal). Adams was not looking to capture the preparation of a meal in an Appalachian home; he was looking to express a more artistically complex agenda. Author Larry Vonalt, in a journal article that defends Adams, calls *The Childers Kitchen* 'a collaborative effort,' as 'those photographed are aware of their involvement in making the photograph,' because the photograph is not taken candidly (Vonalt 2006, p. 119).

But how much of a collaborative effort can it really be if the subjects are not aware of the end artistic aim? Adams' 1990 photograph *The Hog Killing* (figure 5) is another oft-referenced example. This photograph shows the Napier family, frequent subjects of Adams' photographs, smilingly posed around the strung-up body of a dead hog. The body is hung on an archaic-looking wood frame, and the hog's decapitated head is placed in a pan. The Napier family patriarch is holding a shotgun. At first glance, *The Hog Killing* appears to be a document of everyday holler life. But the photo is completely staged. The method of 'traditional' butchery depicted in the image had not been commonly practiced for a century. Adams gave a friend the money to purchase the pig, and then the Napiers butchered it. Adams says, 'It was like a picture in my mind that we just put together, and everyone had a good time doing it' (Baichwal). Adam's 'picture' was a preconceived notion of a fictional narrative that he desired to communicate to an audience.
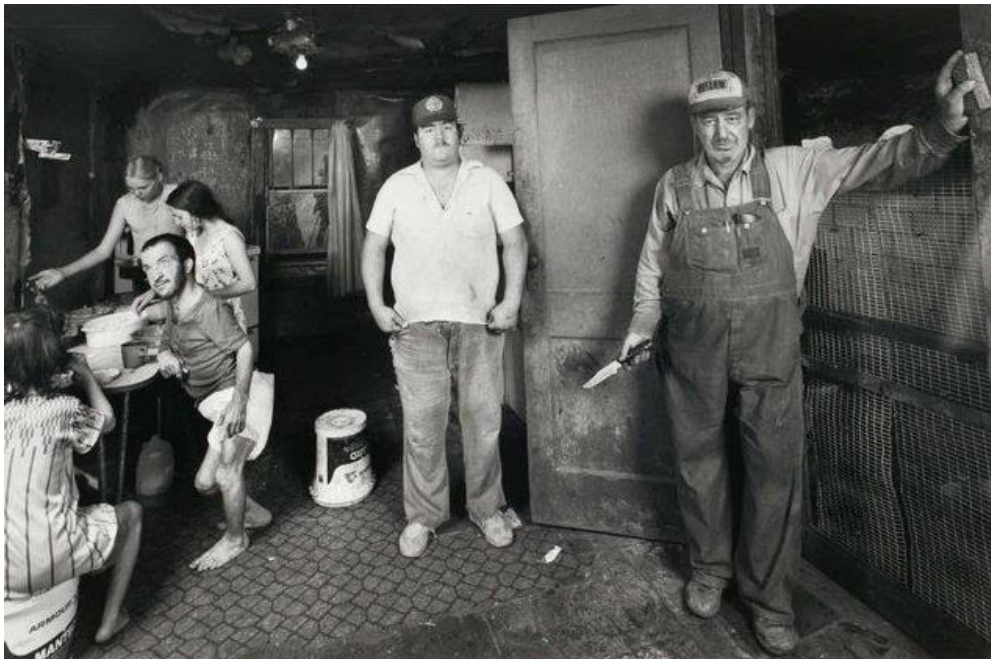

Figure 4: *The Childers' Kitchen, Neeley Branch* (1986).
Retrieved from International Center of Photography Archive, 14 June 2020.

Figure 5: *The Hog Killing* (1990). Retrieved from PNDB Gallery, 14 June 2020.

Although it does seem, from the footage shown in the documentary, that it was a 'good time,' the photograph is troubling for multiple reasons. With its graphicly slaughtered animal and Mr. Napier holding the shotgun, the photo has an element of violence and the grotesque that is both shocking and promotes stereotypes. The reproduction of an antiquated practice places the Appalachian subjects in the past, and exaggerates the perceived primitiveness of their way of life. The photo also recalls the aforementioned way of posing that was utilized by Walker Evans. Of the photo, historian and photography critic Vicki Goldberg says that 'it is presented as an occasion that happened, and not a representation of something that used to happen' (Baichwal). Author Peter Goddard says that the Napiers 'became actors in the rural drama Adams staged of what he *remembered* of a ritual hog slaughtering' (Goddard 2002, p. 27). The 'authenticity effect' is clearly displayed in this instance. In sociologist Dwight Billings' opinion, the photos 'certainly are telling stories, but the stories are … left to the viewer to imagine. And we know what the reader is imbued with to imagine: a hundred years of stereotypes.' (Baichwal)

A.D Coleman puts it well when he says Adams' photographs are his 'southern gothic poetry' (Baichwal). The harm may not be so much in Adams' intentions, but in how he uses his subjects to express something within himself. When he speaks of the Childers family, with whom he has an especially close relationship, he says that 'they're the most self-expressive way I can communicate *my own* feelings and intuition and vision as a photographer. It's far beyond documenting a family in Appalachia' (Baichwal). This *use* is troubling.

In a journal article written on the likely staging of historical photographs taken in the aftermath of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fires of 1911, Tina Margolis describes how tragic events are 'processed through mythmaking- therefore becoming constructed realities to satisfy the human need to distill and encompass experience' (Margolis 2011). Appalachian life is not inherently 'tragic,' but the points that Margolis makes in regard to documentary photography are applicable. Through his artistic choices, Adams is perpetuating an inaccurate myth of Appalachia, forming a 'constructed reality.' This construction fits with the narrative and perception of Appalachia that is personally valuable to Adams—for reasons of nostalgia, storytelling or otherwise—and that 'distills and encompasses' his own experiences, to use Margolis' wording.

Returning to the question of the subjects' understanding is another essential part of examining the authenticity and purpose of Adams' work. Coleman expresses his feelings, saying 'These are photographs… with a great deal of visual sophistication to them, and I think they call for a very sophisticated kind of reading… I'm not sure that the people he's photographing have… the visual educational background to understand how these pictures read' (Baichwal). In *The True Meaning of Pictures,* Appalachian Louise Hall tells the interviewer that she's 'worked her way up,' continuing, 'I'm so glad that no one came along and took pictures of me and showed them all over the United States, I'm so glad they didn't.' Ms. Hall's reaction contrasts with that of two other women in the documentary, Rachel Riddle, the wife of a serpent-handling preacher, and Corinne Zabalda (nee Napier). Riddle says, 'I don't think that Shelby would take a picture of nobody to make fun of them or to do anything like that.' And in Zabalda's opinion, Adams' work is 'just showing how people in Kentucky really live' (Baichwal). There's a dramatic difference between the feelings of Hall and those of Riddle and Zabalda, and it raises the question: does gaining exposure to the outside world affect the way an Appalachian views how their community is depicted in photography? It appears that most of the people Adams photographs, especially those who remain in Appalachia for most of their lives, are under the impression that the purpose of his work is to show them how they are. Importantly, Adams' work is not meant for his subjects—he shares prints and polaroids and copies of his books with them, but his photographs are clearly aimed towards publication outside of the world of Appalachia.

Out of fairness to Adams, it is notable that in his books his photos are usually accompanied by a written passage that provides some biographical information on the subjects. However, the photograph, with all the biases of its arrangement, is the main focus of each page, and the written accounts are told from Adams' point of view, although they do sometimes contain quotes from the subjects they describe. His descriptions often focus less on the biography of the subjects and more on the story of photographing them: 'In 1992 a friend told me about an old woman who lived in the head of a holler,' he begins one descriptive passage, and many of the other descriptions follow suit in explaining Adams' connection with families and how he began his relationships with them ('Adams'). Once again, these stories seem to be less those of the subjects, and more of Adams' own experiences with them.

In the words of Walker Evans, 'Art is never a document, but it can adopt that documentary style' (Goddard 2002, p. 27). There is no such thing as a truly documentary photograph, as insertion of the artist's intent is unavoidable in any kind of art. True objectivity involves an absence of emotion and motive, and what makes something worth documenting in photographic form usually arises from a motive or emotion. However, the artist does have control over how open they are about the extent to which their work values the artistic over the objective. In the case of Adams, his work exists on ground between the documentary and fine

art, encompassing and moving beyond documentary photography's uniquely formed aesthetic, but continuing to make objects of the poor.

Objectifying a heavily stereotyped and impoverished group of people and using them to express one's own artistic vision, especially when one is not a member of that group, is inherently unethical, and this is exactly what Adams does. His works may appear to tell the story of the Appalachian people, but in reality, it is Adams' own story being told. But a photograph can still be ethical, even if it is not purely objective. The most ethical way to produce documentary photographs is to put the camera in the hands of the subject being documented. Any insertion of artistic intent will become part of their story, and part of the document being produced, allowing them to share their own truth, and tell the stories that belong to them.

Ashleen Smith is an English major from Madras, Oregon. Her plans include studying abroad and obtaining her MFA in English. In the future, she would like to travel the world, teach high school, and read as many books as possible.

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The Nuances of Sex Work

By Georgia Langer

A poem by Carol Leigh, from *Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry* (1987)

'Telling a Woman/Driving at Night'

I tell a woman
What work I do for money
Don't you ever feel afraid?
She asks, staring into the headlights
Through a curtain of long, brown hair
Which obscures half her face
Like Veronica Lake
Yes, I'm afraid
Sometimes I try not to feel afraid
Four months ago I was raped
I was afraid of being tortured or killed
I answer, driving my dark green Vega
Wearing a turquoise angora sweater
Dark, red lipstick, new hairdo, good pants
I'm stronger, won't quit
And they're not going to stop me
She laughs and pushes the hair behind her ear
Bars of light drift upward, over our eyes

If you made jewelry, how much would you sell a set of earrings for? To determine the price, you would likely add the money spent on the materials and combine it with the labor and time spent on crafting it. If you still feel stuck, you could compare it to similar products and price your set of earrings in the same range as others. However, how much would you charge for your body? How do you decide how much your legs are worth? What about your shoulders?

Your chest? Your pussy? In the 1960s, rising feminist movements saw sex work as contributing to the patriarchy, excluding these workers from feminist circles. In the book *Sex Workers Unite*, Melinda Chateauvert addressed this, questioning how 'women of all classes were expected to attract men. So why were women who traded sex for marriage respected, but women who traded sex for money shunned? (Chateauvert 2014, p. 22). Sex work is a form of exchange. In this essay, I analyze the experiences of sex workers to help explain the nuances of the sex industry. The struggles of sex workers give a voice to their stories of gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual assault in and out of the workplace. I will be addressing the following questions: What makes the job rewarding, and what makes it tough? How do gender identity and sexuality affect someone's role in sex work? What strategies are used to assert boundaries for clients? Does sex work connect or disconnect workers from their sexuality and bodies? Do sex workers find dignity in their work?

I will focus on the stories of six sex workers. To acquire participants for my research, I put out a call on my social media accounts—primarily Twitter and Instagram—asking to set up an interview with anyone who has experience in the sex industry. In the article 'Sexual Assault Survivors Who Exchange Sex,' sex work is defined as, but not limited to, 'street-based sex work, escort services, call-in/call-out work, brothel work, stripping or exotic dancing, sex trades (for food, money, drugs, housing, etc.), bondage, discipline, sadomasochism, webcam, Internet/phone sex, and pornography' (Shepp, O'callaghan, Kirkner, Lorenz, & Ullman 2020). The six workers I interviewed do not know each other, and I did not know most of them were sex workers until they replied to my request. If the reader takes away anything from this project, I hope it is the fact that, without a doubt, someone you know and love is a sex worker. Someone you care about and see on a regular basis is in this industry, and for the safety of sex workers, it is our responsibility to respect and protect them.

In late August 2019, a crowd leaked into a busy city council room in Minneapolis, Minnesota to deliberate details of a new bill proposal that sought to enforce safer working conditions in area clubs. When the available seats were filled, many sat on the floor, filed in like sardines in the back, or sat and listened in the hallway outside. This was a typical city hall meeting, except one of the women in the audience was wearing stilettos paired with a red faux leather bodysuit, while other women were wearing wigs, long sleeves, and huge sunglasses. Who were the audience members? Sex workers of different genders, sexual orientations, and ethnicities, who all carried fierce opinions about their work.

The council meeting lasted two hours. Sex workers came up to the podium one by one, sharing their needs as participants in the legal sex industry. Some mentioned loose and/or raised nails on the dance stages. Some wanted VIP areas to install video cameras, and some were extremely opposed to this. Others wanted full control over their money, asking for an end to mandatory tipping of the managers in order to keep their names on the schedule. Some addressed the racist rules that dictated only one Black dancer was allowed to be on stage at a time. Some introduced themselves with their full names, looked directly into the camera and said they felt empowered and safe when they go to work; others hid behind their costumes and spoke in timid voices about the countless sexual assaults and violent encounters they had faced in the industry, and how scary it was to come to the city council meeting.

I went to this meeting with Luna, a sex worker interviewed in this project. It was difficult for us to tell if the women in support of their clubs were covering up their bad experiences due to intimidation from their boss, or if they genuinely felt like they were being treated well. Of course, we were hopeful that they truly felt supported at work, but because the legal sex

industry is filled with independent contracts that excludes many from taking sick days and having job security, we remained hesitant. However, everyone's experiences in sex work are different, and like any other job, different workers have varying desires and expectations in the workplace.

In her book *Toward A Feminist Theory of the State,* Catharine MacKinnon, a feminist scholar and activist, infamously argued that pornography 'turns a woman into a thing to be acquired and used,' insinuating that sex work is not an empowering job (Mackinnon 1989, p. 199). When I read this quote to one of the interviewed sex workers named Jane, she laughed and declared, 'The society already turned me into a thing to be acquired and used. They have done that since the day I was born with a vagina ('Jane,' telephone communication, 2 April 2020). According to Jane, her experience with sex work has given her power within the patriarchy. Nina Hartley, a porn star, activist and feminist feels similarly, saying, 'A woman can choose a job in the sex industry and not be a victim. She may become stronger, more self-actualized' (Query & Montoya 2001, 44:00). These mixed perspectives are brought forth, agreed with and refuted during my interviews with these six sex workers. Several interviewees highlight the intersection of patriarchal oppression with the reclamation of self, to find empowerment or simply cope with trauma. Additionally, all of the interviewed sex workers discuss the incentive of money that enticed them to do sex work in the first place.

Although their sex work experiences are very different, every person I interviewed also identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, every person had experienced sexual assault at some point in their lives, and most talk about how these factors have played a significant role in their sex work. Janice Ristock's 2011 book *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ+ Lives* suggests that LGBTQ+ folks experience partner violence, including sexual violence, at strikingly high rates. Ristock notes that after experiencing partner violence, LGBTQ+ folks have increased rates of being in high risk situations, which include 'trading sex, depressive symptoms, and lifetime alcohol abuse' (Ristock 2011, p. 184). The sex workers interviewed in this project range from ages 18-23, and most come from lower and middle-class backgrounds. However, the demographics of the people I interviewed represent just a sliver of an entire industry. Particularly, five out of the six people interviewed are white, and the other is Latinx. Sex work comes in many forms, and these are the stories of a few, not all. Please know that these interviews will contain explicit language and detailed descriptions of sexual violence.

My first interviewer goes by the name Jane. She is a white pansexual woman who found sex work as a way to use the patriarchy to her advantage. When I asked her to explain how she found herself in the sex industry, she shared:

> I was thirteen years old and I had just developed breasts. The neighbor boy down the street was about sixteen or seventeen. My hormones were crazy with my newly pubescent body and it was weird, and scary, and all I wanted to do was try it out. I was molested as a young girl, and when the older neighbor boy eventually touched me, as most men like to do, I understood that men viewed my body as a toy.

> When I was five years old, my uncle did not ever pay me after grabbing my pussy and masturbating to it. The neighborhood boy didn't pay me when he decided to fuck me before I knew how sex worked. He didn't pay after he literally tore apart my vagina; he didn't even pay for the pictures he took of the bloody aftermath.

> As a sex worker, I have the control. I get the money, and I get to present a persona of a strong woman who has never, ever in her life let a man touch her without consent. I almost believe the persona myself! I dress up, and my body becomes the safety I never had. I am giving myself power by monetizing the patriarchy (Jane).

The persona that Jane uses to alter her internal mindset is one used by many sex workers. In the documentary *Live Nude Girls Unite!*, two dancers who worked at a peep-show club called the Lusty Lady shared that putting on makeup 'is like a mask' for them (Query et. al. 2001, 2:48). One commented that 'it's kind of a disguise' to separate their personal lives from their performances (Query et. al. 2001, 3:00). Jane describes putting on her makeup as 'war paint,' and paints her face in dark shades with rosy cheeks. Some sex workers feel empowered when using their sexuality and bodies as a way to profit, and some feel empowered using their identity in a way in which they do not typically present themselves.

Luna is a sex worker who uses his knowledge of the patriarchy to both profit and empower himself, capitalizing on the 'deep' parts of social media. He is a Latinx cis queer man and works with a cis queer female partner in their online sex work platforms. His partner is the face of their business, but Luna does nearly all of the communication with clients. Luna's partner does not enjoy the job because their clients often say disgusting things, and Luna mostly likes the job because of the money. However, both have felt empowered by sex work, from the support of their other sex worker friends and from the swarm of compliments they receive from customers. Luna explains how he eats, sleeps, and dreams sex work:

> On our account, we have over 2,000 followers. To put it in perspective, we are on pace to make $75,000 this year... I am awake until 3am every night because I am making hundreds of dollars. Sex work was definitely a choice for me. Now, part of me is stuck in it, especially because nothing is guaranteed for us with this generation. Even if I go to college it doesn't mean I will get a career, or money. It is something I am stuck in for sure ('Luna,' telephone communication, 3 April 2020).

Luna enjoys his job enough to continue, and like others, does it primarily for the monetary gain. He says it can be fun, but it is also very exhausting. Luna's college switched to online school due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed his online sex work to be more of a full-time job.

Riley, a trans and asexual sex worker, says he has also found more opportunities to do online sex work since COVID-19. He finds empowerment through sex work, but also genuinely enjoys the job. Riley uses his preferred pronouns (he/they) when doing sex work, but doesn't always correct cisgendered/hetrosexual male clients when they use the wrong ones. When I asked why, he responded, 'because they pay. That is my only slight issue with it [sex work]. It makes me feel a little disassociated ('Riley,' telephone communication, 5 April 2020). However, Riley says he typically feels more connected to his body while doing sex work:

> I have already disassociated myself from a large amount of my body, so this way I can have a connection to it that isn't personal. I am asexual, so it means I am much more tuned to whatever the other person is into hearing or saying because it is much less about me (Riley).

Although he knows that sex work is potentially dangerous, Riley says protecting himself is not high on his priority list. This, he suggests, is due to his marginalized gender identity as a trans

person and his multiple experiences with sexual assault. Riley's experiences with sexual assault were statistically more likely to happen to him than to a cisgendered counterpart.

According to data collected by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), 26 percent of gay men and 37 percent of bisexual men report having experienced 'rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner,' compared to 29 percent of straight men. More drastic differences are seen with women-identifying individuals, where 44 percent of lesbian women and 61 percent of bisexual women report having experienced 'rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner,' compared to 35 percent of straight women. Additionally, 47% of trans people will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime (HRC 2020). Although trans sexual assault statistics have been recorded, there is a history of trans identity erasure in sex work. Because of this, limited research has been done about trans individuals and the role they play in sex work.

Claudia, an online sex worker, says her clientele 'unfortunately does not match' her sexuality ('Claudia,' personal communication, 3 April 2020). She works alone at home selling videos, pictures, objects, and chatting with clients. She makes about $100 a week when she is regularly active online. She has found her experience to be validating and very rewarding:

> I decided to do sex work because I needed money and I knew people would pay. It makes me feel good, and so I thought, why not do it for money? I am in a relationship and my partner is not the most sexual person, so we do not have sex all the time. For me, because I am more sexual, this is a way for me to do things that maybe my partner doesn't want to do in a way that is fair for our relationship. I feel more connected to my body when doing sex work (Claudia).

Claudia has never met a client in person, and says she cannot see herself engaging in penetrative sex with a client in the future. She feels very safe doing sex work, and also has the privilege of doing it online.

As stated earlier, there is a lot of controversy around sex work, especially among the smaller circles of activists. Monica O'Connor wrote a book entitled *The Sex Economy*, which highlights the negative aspects of sex work, including 'pimping, coercion, violence, sexual child exploitation and trafficking' as significant issues. She did write that there could be potential social benefits to legalizing sex work, but 'that in no other occupation is the body of the person the commodity itself,' which ultimately hinders the claim that sex work is good (O'Connor 2019, p. 2). Here, O'Connor makes a valuable point. When people are selling things like earrings they have crafted, it is an extension of what their body can make, not selling the body itself. However, it is totally possible, but not always the case, for people feel that their body is still theirs after performing sex work. In the article *Sexual Assault Survivors Who Exchange Sex,* the authors found that '23.5% of sexual assault survivors engaged in sex work following their assault' (Shepp et al. 2020). Additionally, they pointed out how, for sex workers, 'engaging in sex work was related to regaining control over both their lives and bodies post-assault,' and that 'child sexual abuse and sexual assault in adolescence or adulthood may also serve as a pathway to engaging in sex work, through running away from abuse at home... and/or making it difficult to set boundaries and develop healthy sexuality later in life (Shepp et al. 2020).

Andy had her first experience doing sex work at age 14 when she needed money to run away from home to escape her abusive parents. Andy is a trans woman, but she grew up most of her life identifying as a gay man, and still identifies as a gay man during sex work. Growing up in

the rural south, the first gay man she met was older and online. She describes how older men were 'grooming' her, and other gay boys, into sex work:

> For me, and for a lot of young gay men, the way they get into sex work is by not being exposed to other gay people. Being very isolated, we turn to questions online, go on places such as Grinder or Craigslist, and then are preyed upon by older men. It's not like you go on there searching for money. You go on there searching for other young gay kids and then some old man offers you money, and you're fourteen and poor. I don't think anyone really wants to be in sex work, it's more of a grooming process (Andy).

The act of grooming is defined as 'a process by which an individual prepares the child and their environment for abuse to take place, including gaining access to the child, creating compliance and trust, and ensuring secrecy to avoid disclosure' (Williams, Elliott, & Beech 2013). Andy talks about how grooming tactics are extremely common for gay boys, and this harmful narrative is continued with the normalization of this in the media.

Jane has faced similar issues and talks about the 'foot-in-the-door' psychology approach that a male client uses to guilt her into doing things she feels uncomfortable with. Psychologist Saul McLeod defines this as when 'initially you make a small request and once the person agrees to this they find it more difficult to refuse a bigger one' (McLeod). This tactic can be seen during the grooming process as well, as Jane shares:

> My sugar daddy first said that all he wanted to do is chat with me and take some pictures of me, primarily my face. But before I knew it, I took off my clothes and he took pictures of me in lingerie, having me turning around and lifting up my top and panties for him. He also promised that he wouldn't touch me, but after I let him take pictures of me he gave me a big hug. Now, he is asking me if he can take pictures of me masturbating in his home. He thinks that because I complied with one of his requests, he now has wiggle room to ask for things I specifically told him I wouldn't do (Jane).

Jane's experience is not an outlier for the sex industry. Lisa, a cis bisexual woman, shared memories of similar compliance tactics, with heart-wrenching results. Lisa was underage when she did sex work—but her clients, who were all over 30, thought she was 18. She discusses how difficult it was for her to set boundaries:

> I didn't really set boundaries. Looking back, I should have, but I didn't. I wanted it to be more of a relationship, not penetration, but it was more often than not penetration. For a while, I wondered if it was sexual assault. [*Long pause*.] Currently, I do not have a good relationship with my body, but I don't know if that is a direct relation to sex work. I do not look down upon myself for doing sex work. I do not feel attached to romantic sexual partners either, but I think that has to do with my initial experience with sex in my life. I don't think I have the most positive experiences with sex and I think my first time doing anything sexual was... not ideal. I disassociated it from my body. It definitely had an impact (Lisa).

When I asked if she enjoyed performing sex work, Andy confidently said no. She says, 'I do not like my job because I constantly have to be in contact with disgusting, sleazy men.' Luna and his partner have to deal with similar 'disgusting' male clientele. To combat this, Luna uses his past sexual assault experience as a way to 'gain a better understanding of how [his] clients

potentially think.' He says his clients have repulsive thoughts, and explains, 'due to my past experience [with sexual assault], I know how to give my clients what they desire. At times my beliefs, morals, and who I am have been put aside to please the client.' Like many others, Luna's main goal in sex work is to gain money. According to him, his sexual assault experience actually aided him in navigating his sex work profession.

When I asked Andy if she thought sex work should be legalized, she paused for a long time before responding: 'I do not want it[sex work] to be legalized, but that is not because I think being a sex worker is undignified. I think it should be decriminalized. But I do not think it should be a market because it opens up for even more avenues for sexual abuse to take place.' By contrast, Riley said, 'I think sex work should definitely be legalized. There should also be extreme repercussions for the abuse of sex workers' (Riley). Most sex work is not legal, and the industry is so stigmatized that most sex workers never report sexual assaults, and the secretive atmosphere takes away support for many workers.

The stigma around sex work, LGBTQ+ identities, and sexual assault makes it difficult for victims to receive aid. One study found that 44 percent of street-based sex workers have been sexually assaulted by the police (Shepp et al. 2020). According to the Washington Post, the statistic for U.S. rapist felony convictions is about 0.7%. In *Playing the Whore*, Melissa Gira Grant discusses cases where police refused to help rape victims after learning that they were sex workers, adding that 'this isn't about policing sex. It's about profiling and policing people whose sexuality and gender are considered suspect' (Grant 2014, p. 9). These intersecting minority groups are homeless at higher rates, and often report using sex work as a form of survival.

Sex workers have very little systematic power in America. LGBTQ+ people are affected by sexual assault at very high rates. Sex work is a way some people gain power in a society that leaves them powerless. Sex work can be a job of reclamation. When we support sex workers, we are supporting members of the LGBTQ+ community, and victims of sexual assault. At the end of her interview, Jane said, 'If you want to give respect to us [sex workers], the first step is believing all sexual assault claims. Maybe if sex workers actually got help from our communities, we wouldn't have to be working so hard simply to have a voice.' Jane's comment helps explain how sex work discussions often ignore the transparent truth that sex workers are targeted at all facets of their identity. All of these interviews help explain that sex workers are deserving of respect and love.

Sex work brings forth many opposing views, both from outside perspectives and the sex workers themselves. The decision to do sex work, according to these six sex workers, was primarily for money and validation, and subconsciously stemmed from parts of their past sexual trauma, or from their LBGTQ+ identity. Some of these sex workers are very successful at their jobs, and others do it on a less regular basis, only when they need the cash. Overall, these sex workers treat their jobs similar to how other working-class people treat their jobs: like they are jobs. This research has found substantial connections between sex work, sexual assault, and LGBTQ+ identity, but this does not undermine the validity of doing sex work for any reason, and the effect it has on the lives of the sex workers. Someone you know is a sex worker, and they should be treated with respect.

Georgia Langer was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, and her family now lives in Minneapolis. She comes from a family of union activists, and is excited about pursuing the activism work that her family has been doing. She is majoring in political science, and is planning to help

design and promote comprehensive sexual health curriculum to be taught in schools, and also to distribute menstrual products in countries that lack resources.

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Public Transportation: A Vehicle for the Reduction of Social Inequalities

By Josie Graydon

Public transportation has the potential to be a great equalizer. Throughout the stages of an individual's life, opportunities to interact with those from a different social class are limited; people grow up going to different schools, playing different sports, shopping at different stores, and working different jobs, all contingent on one's social class. However, transportation is a part of everyone's life, and there are significantly fewer options for transportation compared to schools or stores or jobs. In most major cities, especially within Western society, public transportation systems are a service that is both accessible and extensive (Fleetwood 2004, p. 35). Hypothetically, because it is public and available to anyone who can pay the fare, public transportation 'brings people from different backgrounds together in one place' (Elkin 2015, p. 3). Therefore, because of limited options for transportation, one would think different classes would have the opportunity to interact, or at least coexist with one another within transportation spaces. In reality, this is not the case. Intentional city planning, the idolization of the car, as well as attitudes and stereotypes surrounding public transportation and its users perpetuate and exacerbate class divides.

Although there are not necessarily rules mandating a certain class take a specific mode of transportation, societal norms and expectations act in a way that permits these distinctions to exist. Because of the disparity in mobility between individuals, the upper and middle classes are especially guilty of 'cocooning in homogeneous residential, workplace, and mobility spaces,' with car transport used as a means of middle and upper-class disaffiliation (Boterman and Musterd 2016, pp. 1-4). Ultimately, one must ask, why exactly do such associations with different social classes and specific modes of transportation exist? How does dependency on public transportation for physical mobility affect the lifestyles of those from lower social classes, as opposed to those who do not depend on such systems? How can these systems improve to become more appealing to those from higher social classes, in order to close the mobility gap? There are many ideas to explore when investigating why public transportation is not used as a means to bring those from different social classes together in practice.

When thinking about the role public transportation plays for those living in an urban center, one must consider the structure of the city and its surrounding communities. The level of efficiency and competitiveness within the mobility market in public transportation is dependent upon the structural organization of the city, favoring more central and compact areas (Camagni et al. 2002, p. 214). In Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, those from higher social classes typically live outside of the main city center, in areas served poorly by public transportation (Flórez 2000, p. 3). This can be seen in many Western countries, especially with the construction of suburbs on the outskirts of main urban centers (Flórez 2000, p. 5). Roberto Camagni et al. define urban sprawl as 'low density development, extending to the extreme edge of the metropolitan region and located in a random, 'leapfrog' fashion, segregated in specialised mono-functional land uses, and largely dependent on the car' (2002, p. 201). Typically, newly built, spread-out residential areas outside the city center favor those with increasing incomes, which 'undermine[s] certain traditional features [of the city], such as its

compactness and diversity' (Camagni et al. 2002, pp. 200-1). Since only basic facilities are within walking distance, it is assumed each suburbanite owns a car (Wickham and Lohan 1999, p. 4).

With higher-income areas being poorly served by public transportation, the private automobile tends to be the primary mode of transportation (Flórez 2000, p. 3). In a study conducted in four major cities in Europe, inner-city areas always had the lowest rate of car ownership (Wickham and Lohan 1999, p. 10). Due to the possession of a car, individuals from higher social classes can enter and exit city centers whenever they please. However, many lower-class individuals are dependent upon public transportation to enter and exit suburban areas. The extreme car dependency by those from upper classes living within suburban areas outside of the city center affects everyone, even and especially those without cars. Car dependency leads to social exclusion, where members of society are left out of the mainstream due to lack of resources, a private automobile being an especially significant resource (Wickham and Lohan 1999, pp. 2-4).

A phenomenon known as spatial mismatch also impacts the disparity in mobility for those from different social classes. Spatial mismatch acknowledges that wealthier, white populations typically live within peripheral communities in the suburbs, while poorer, minority populations remain in the city center. Then, with the segregation of these distinct populations, the lower-wage jobs created for the lower social classes are also suburbanized (Boterman and Mustard 2016, p.3; Giuliano 2005, p. 64). However, poorer inner-city populations are not able to get to the jobs available to them in the suburbs. With this, less job accessibility and fewer opportunities lead to longer commutes and higher unemployment for lower classes within the city, and thus lower net wages (Giuliano 2005, p. 64). It is incredibly clear that the transit-dependent are becoming increasingly disadvantaged and isolated as facilities adapt to the contemporary car-dominated world (Steg 2003, p. 27).

Moreover, many upper-class individuals living in the suburbs are quite aware of the limited mobility of the lower class and purposely attempt to bar the transit-dependent from entering the suburbs. In Atlanta, Georgia, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) was proposed to combat issues surrounding traffic and pollution within the city, but 'some suburban areas resisted MARTA for fear it would bring Blacks and the poor from the city to outlying suburbs' (Bullard and Johnson 1997, p. 15). The opinions held by the upper-class regarding minorities, individuals of lower-classes, and users of public transportation are strong and rather unfavorable.

For former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, cars represent individual success and autonomy, and therefore, in regards to public transportation, 'Her model of self-reliance is incompatible with the infrastructure of the city' (Elkin 2015, p. 3). Upon reflection, this seems to be the standard view regarding the private automobile. Originally, the idea of universal car ownership in the Fordist society meant every family had their own car, but now, it is expected that every person has their own car (Wickham and Lohan 1999, p. 4). On the contemporary significance of the car, Wickham and Lohan assert that 'passing a driving test is a far more important social ritual today than exercising the vote for the first time!' (1999, p. 2). Many young children dream of the day they get their license and are able to release themselves from the chains of having their parents as chauffeurs. However, this dream is not realistic for everyone. Many adults, including those who possess a valid driver's license, do not have their own personal automobile. In 'Low Income, Public Transit, and Mobility,' Genevieve Giuliano shares statistics on car ownership in the United States: '7.7% of all households have no private

vehicle, but 17% percent of low-income households and 30% of poor households have no private vehicle. Fully three-fourths of poor households have one or zero vehicles, indicating limited car access' (2005, p. 64). Many individuals of lower socioeconomic status simply cannot afford to purchase and keep a car (Yeganeh et al. 2018, p. 1040). Then, by Margaret Thatcher's standards, are individuals without private transportation considered unsuccessful, inferior members of society?

As the car has evolved to become a status symbol, C. Wright and J. Egan assert that 'anyone who owns a car is perceived as being well-off compared with someone who does not, and can look down on pedestrians as in some sense deprived' (2000, p. 289). Driving allows car users to feel in control, or even more superior to others, specifically to those who do not own cars (Steg 2003, p. 34). Similarly, Wickham and Lohan put it perfectly, arguing that when public transportation is 'abandoned as soon as people have access to the car... public transport users may well be seen as an inferior group' (1999, p. 15). With the increased emphasis placed upon the car in modern society, class divides are reinforced through means of transportation.

Although a person may have a car, they are still able to make use of public transportation if they so desire or require, but they are typically 'assumed to make fewer trips by public transport' (Holmgren 2013, p. 106). In Caracas, Venezuela, it has been shown that members of the higher classes exhibit a willingness to take public transportation; however, as Flórez also concludes, 'higher income users, particularly those owning a car, are very sensitive to quality of service' (p. 1, 13). Along with this sensitivity, regular car users are even less likely to utilize public transportation (and use their cars less) if they view their car as being a significant part of their identity (Steg 2003, p. 34). In other words, members of higher social classes are not completely opposed to using public transportation, but strongly prefer to make use of their private automobiles instead.

Due to the prioritization of funding for building infrastructure that benefits the upper classes, the public transportation systems most commonly used in Los Angeles have increased fares and decreased service (Mann 1997, pp. 70-71). This has decreased the quality of public transportation as well as ridership. This decreased ridership is due to the systems not meeting the standards of individuals that may have the privilege to choose whether or not to use public transportation, as opposed to citizens who depend on it. Therefore, public transportation is seen as an 'avenue of last resort' for many marginalized members of society (Mann 1997, p. 69). Many transit-dependent members of society do not favor their mode of transportation, but have no choice but to use it due to income levels and job accessibility. It has been found that such individuals often find their journeys on public transportation to be depressing, stressful, and boring, the main reasoning being long wait times, unpredictability, delays, and longer travel times compared to those of car users (Gatersleben and Uzzell 2007, p. 427). Because of the predominance of car culture, the transit-dependent exhibit class-based feelings of shame, further perpetuating class divides.

Although public transportation systems more specifically serve those from lower social classes, one could argue the system is actively working against these primary users. For example, residents of Los Angeles expressed concerns over the prices of monthly bus passes, as well as infrequent bus schedules (Mann 1997, p. 75). In this case, users within the main demographic of the public transportation systems of Los Angeles provided the city with an opportunity to improve the conditions of the service to make it more user-friendly. However, users were met with the opposite response they were looking for: monthly bus passes were eliminated, making travel even more expensive, and service was reduced on bus lines (Mann 1997, p. 76). With

the price of the bus pass already being so high, and the fact that lower-income individuals have to pay a higher fare to use public transportation due to it being a higher proportion of their after-tax income (Giuliano 2005, p. 64), low-income individuals dependent upon public transportation are at a complete disadvantage. Unfortunately, many low-income riders believe that 'public transit is such a poor substitute for the automobile that the poor incur the expense of car ownership to obtain the mobility that a car provides' (Giuliano 2005, p. 64). In Jobstown, Dublin, it has been shown that 'poverty and unemployment are exacerbated by poor public transport' (Wickham and Lohan 1999, p. 8). This statement holds true for most cities that do not commit to improving public transportation systems.

In addition to cities ignoring the requests of transit-dependent users, biases and stereotypes are systematically perpetuated, creating divides amongst communities dependent on public transportation. In San Francisco, 'the fear factor is so strong that most urban centers have special police forces specifically assigned to the transit system,' which target youth of color (Fleetwood 2004, p. 33). Public transportation is a site in which the imagery of youth of color found in media and popular culture is interpreted and carried out in real life. In 'Busing It' in the City: Black Youth, Performance, and Public Transit,' Nicole Fleetwood notes, 'Since its inception, urban public transportation has been a site of racial and class tensions and confrontation in the USA' (2004, p. 36). Because of the extensive history of racism, the media and popular culture pit youth of color against the typically white adults riding public transportation alongside them. Therefore, not only do the perceptions and misconceptions surrounding public transportation and its users create class divides, but they also split the lower class that depends on public transportation systems.

Eric Mann asserts: 'There is a causal relationship between mobility and a potential escape from poverty' (1997, p. 69). Given this information, what can people do to change the narrative and perpetuation of class divisions due to attitudes surrounding public transportation systems? According to Bullard and Johnson, in some counties surrounding Atlanta, taxpayers have subsidized citizens using the park-and-ride system, which increased ridership (1997, p. 15). With increased ridership comes increased capacity, and with increased capacity comes increased quality of service and increased numbers of vehicles in use for bus lines, which in turn decreases wait times (Holmgren 2013, p. 102). If long wait times were originally a concern for those using public transportation, increased ridership will solve that problem. This would decrease the likelihood of the unreliable bus schedules described by transit-dependent users.

There are a variety of solutions that could work to combat the underlying dilemmas and forces surrounding transportation that perpetuate and exacerbate class divides. As put by Boterman and Musterd, it is important to note that exposure to diversity will not immediately bring people of different backgrounds together, but rather provide them with more opportunities to meet (2016, p. 2). At the very least, exposure to diversity through increased ridership by the upper classes will help society stray away from the class associations linked with specific modes of transportation. For example, in Norway, a country that 'has strong socio-democratic political traditions aiming to minimize differences in socio-economic status,' there is less of a correlation between social class and transportation modes (Nordfjærn et al. 2014, p. 97). If such trends began to be observed by other countries with large social inequalities, they could mend the modal split.

Further, the modern significance of the private automobile must be diminished. Measures discouraging car usage, such as taxation of fuel, parking controls, and road pricing, can be implemented to encourage using public transportation alternatives (Wright and Egan 2000, p.

288). Structural interventions that 'offer benefits for using alternatives, such as bus or carpool priority lanes or reduced bus fare' are proposed by Heath and Gifford in order to decrease and discourage the use of cars (2002, pp. 2154-5). If measures and interventions are used to promote the use of public transportation as an alternative to the private automobile, the car will be less important to members of society. Once driving becomes more of an inconvenience and public transportation becomes more rewarding, public transportation will be viewed as a more acceptable alternative to cars.

Similarly, as seen in Caracas, Venezuela, 'improved supply and user-oriented policy' makes public transportation services more appealing to those of different classes than the typical transit-dependent users. Thus, if more individuals used public transportation, especially those from the upper classes, more public funding would be devoted to improving public transportation systems. High-quality public transportation makes car ownership less significant, and people are more likely to leave their cars at home, as seen in Helsinki, Finland (Wickham and Lohan 1999, pp. 18-20). With more people willing to ride, this would help make significant strides to improving the attitudes of transit-dependent riders. As far as general welfare, a perpetual cycle of improved public services and decreasing class divisions is much more appealing than a perpetual cycle of low-quality public services and ever-widening class divides. In fact, Linda Steg argues improved public transportation and reduced car use 'will very likely improve their [non-drivers] quality of life, not only because the personal and societal significance of public transport for them, but also because environmental and urban qualities will probably significantly improve in this case' (2003, p. 34). Taking advantage of such benefits could lead to a happier, more balanced society.

Ultimately, many factors contribute to specific class associations with different means of transportation. With intentional city planning, the extreme significance of the car to society, and attitudes and stereotypes surrounding public transportation and its users, class divides will continue to be perpetuated and exacerbated. Public transportation has the potential to bring people of all different backgrounds together into the same space to live amongst and learn from one another. However, many things need to be done to improve the attitudes surrounding public transportation systems, as well as the condition of the travel spaces many low-income people have no choice but to be dependent upon. It is up to us to look past the narrative about public transportation perpetuated by popular culture and the media, for the greater good and the ability to unify as a society against unjust systems that actively work against the marginalized.

Josie Graydon is originally from Bend, Oregon. As a rising sophomore, she is interested in pursuing a degree in Biology, and hopes to work in the field of conservation. She openly shares her class background with others, hoping to empower individuals and bring awareness to the struggles people from lower classes face.

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Reviews by Owen Clayton

For many, the idea of working-class culture is an oxymoron. Being working class is understood to be a trap to be suffered or, if possible, escaped. These two volumes set out to challenge such ideas. *Know Your Place: Essays on the Working Class by the Working Class* examines what it is like to be working class in the United Kingdom, with essays focusing on leisure, place, culture, class barriers, and the ways in which ethnicity, gender and sexuality overlap in the experience of being working class. *Common People: an Anthology of Working Class Writers* has, as its title indicates, a more literary focus, providing a series of short memoirs and vignettes from established and emerging authors. Both volumes highlight the broad and diverse experience of being working class. More than this, they depict the real and lasting barriers faced by working-class people, while also celebrating working-class culture as something more than a burden to be overcome. Taken together, these volumes are extremely welcome additions.

Despite the trendiness of the term 'white working class', the working class is not, and never has been, white. *Know Your Place* in particular explores the difference that race makes to the experience of being working class, as when Sylvia Arthur describes being given the more physical tasks in her supermarket job because, as her manager tells her, 'It's a lot easier for you than it is for us' (*Know Your Place*, p.56). The legacy of slavery marks black bodies as beasts of burden, or as Arthur puts it, 'Our blackness is indivisible from the perception of us as proletarian' (*Know Your Place*, p.57). In a different way, being from an immigrant family affects the way that language can mark class, as in Rym Kechacha's memory of his father, who learned two different Englishes on his arrival from Algeria: one that was 'cool, clear and slightly old fashioned, each syllable enunciated, never using any slang' to be used with representatives of officialdom, such as teachers and doctors, and 'the common English…the one he would use with the bloke behind the counter in the petrol station' (*Know Your Place*, pp.227-8). This highlights the way that Received Pronunciation, or RP, has been used more generally as a tool of class domination. As Kechacha asks, 'Should a Receiver of Pronunciation go forth in the world a changed being, their tongue transformed from base lead into an eloquent gold, forever elevated from their working class status by this new accent?' (*Know Your Place*, p.229).

The answer, of course, is no, but the question highlights the way that cultural markers stand as indicators of class. A middle-class person's ability to control the conditions of their labour might be almost the same as those of a working-class person, but a posh accent and a knowledge of French wine are useful ideological tools to allow one exploited worker to assume superiority over another. And thankfully both volumes emphasise the arbitrary and even comic nature of class identity markers. For Jenny Knight, for example, a desire to become middle class was summed up by the act of drinking 'Mat-oose Row-say' (Mateus Rosé) wine (*Common People*, p.205), while Louise Doughty describes the trivial differences that symbolise the cultural class divide: 'we didn't have a sitting room; we had a lounge. In the lounge we sat not on a sofa but on a settee. We had dinner at lunchtime and the evening meal was called tea.' (*Common People*, p.134). A particular absurdity, as Kath McKay notes, is the way that the term 'professional' is used to divide middle-class from working-class jobs: 'if you are working class you can't be professional', she states, even though the term denotes someone doing a particular job for a living (*Know your Place*, p.180). No one would call a cleaner a professional, yet she is. Indeed, as Cath Bore writes, in Britain a cleaner is more likely to be called a 'scrubber', just one more in a long line of class-based insults (*Know your Place*, p.151).

While race, gender and sexuality are protected characteristics in the UK, class is not. And as both volumes show, class barriers remain. Trying to break into scriptwriting, for instance, Wally Jiagoo asks and answers a question posed by every working-class person who has attempted to make it in a middle-class industry: 'why was I so terrible at schmoozing…? The reason is: cliques' (*Know your Place*, p.104). Oxbridge networks dominate, and even when a working-class person does manage to sit down at the same dinner table as the scions of the upper crust, as in Riley Rockford's wonderful vignette, they are discouraged from participating by conversations about backpacking holidays and prestigious (unpaid) internships at tech companies (*Common People*, p.106). In a brilliant essay, Kate Fox describes how her Northern accent prevented her from being considered for a role as a national TV news presenter: 'British people would rather be invaded by Hitler than have a Northerner reading the news', she quips (*Know your Place*, p.192). Essays in both volumes describe the chippiness (defensiveness) that results from working-class people internalising shame about their origins.

As a result of this shame, confidence (and its lack) becomes another indicator of class: Durre Shahwar Mughal argues that 'the working classes are constantly riddled with self-doubt and imposter syndrome' (*Know Your Place*, p.72), while Cathy Rentzenbrink says 'What I envy most about posh people is their confidence' (*Common People*, p.79). What enables such confidence, of course, is a lack of worry: a breezy sense of having always been taken of, that everything will always be OK, even if Mummy and Daddy have to step in on occasion. In contrast, as Rebecca Winson rightly notes, 'When you're working class, worry is just there, a constant background hum everyone can hear' (*Know Your Place*, p.132). The permanent stress caused by a lack of money means that working-class people know that tomorrow will not be OK, because today was not OK.

Both volumes also focus on the class implications of leisure. Many working-class activities are frowned upon by the middle classes, such as eating processed food. Suffering the thousands of micro stresses that affect working-class life means that Laura Wadell has come to associate 'bad food with free time', a connection that many middle-class people would fail to understand (*Know Your Place*, p.26). For Yvonne Singh, who grew up brown seeing 'PAKS [sic] OUT' and 'NF' slogans graffitied on walls near her home, it was not eating but going to the seaside that meant experiencing 'a magical landscape unlike anything I'd known', a place where she could imagine a better world (*Know Your Place*, pp.35-37). Similarly, for Anitha Sethi, a trip

to the Lake District during her childhood gave her a 'new perspective…The heart has opened up huge enough to be filled with those deep lakes and mountains' (*Common People*, pp.215-217). I think we can all enjoy the image of William Wordsworth, who opposed the London & North Western rail line to Kendell and Windermere on the grounds that the working classes would 'contaminate' his beloved Lake District, spinning in his grave.

In poetry, novels, films and television programmes, stereotypes abound: misery, poverty, abuse, drugs, and violence are the standard ways of representing working-class life in each of these forms. When not exploiting these limited stereotypes, literature tends to push the working classes to the margins. Kit De Waal, who appears in both volumes, asks who she would be in the novel *Jane Eyre*, concluding that the most likely candidate would be 'Leah, the maid of whom we are given few details and no sense of her life and passions' (*Know your Place*, p.65). Working-class cultural pursuits are similarly excluded from novels: as Cathy Rentzenbrink puts it in her excellent essay, 'You don't get much about darts in literature' (*Common People*, p.73).

Despite these exclusions, both volumes describe the pride that contributors feel about growing up working class, and about the positive aspects of working-class culture. Gena-mour Barrett writes about living on an estate where 'everyone knew everyone' and where people would say hello in the street, providing at least a modicum of collective identity (*Know your Place*, p.158). In a beautiful moment, Stuart Maconie describes looking at a photograph of his former tower block in Wigan, taken by a photographer to represent modernist alienation, commenting that the image 'works as a symbol of a depersonalised urban aesthetic, but it was also home' (*Common People*, p.43). And one of the most touching moments in either volume is the end of Damian Barr's piece, in which his grumpy 'Granny Mac' uses all of her savings stamps, collected over many years, to pay for his school uniform, such is her pride and selfless love for her grandson (*Common People*, p.154).

Both volumes, which were published thanks to fundraising efforts on Unbound and Kickstarter respectively (itself quite a telling fact), have much to teach us about the diversity and gradations of British working-class experience. Of the two volumes, *Common People* is more formally adventurous, which is unsurprising given that it is written by established and up-and-coming authors (though in truth the submissions from the more established writers feel throwaway). Some of the articles in *Knowing Your Place* read like newspaper opinion pieces and are bound to date quite quickly; in fact, some already have. But both volumes are of value to anyone with a personal or 'professional' interest in working-class culture, particularly in working-class life writing. Both are compellingly and clearly written, eschewing academic language for the most part. I recommend both volumes to every member of the Working-Class Studies Association.

Reviewer Bio

Dr. Owen Clayton is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Lincoln (UK). His current research focuses on representations of vagrancy and homelessness. He is working on his second book, provisionally entitled *Vagabonds, Tramps, and Hobos: the Literature and Culture of American Transiency*. His first monograph, *Literature and Photography in Transition,* came out with Palgrave MacMillan in 2015.

Silva, Jennifer (2019) *We're Still Here: Pain and Politics in the Heart of America,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Review by Jennifer Sherman

In *We're Still Here*, Jennifer Silva compellingly explores the personal pain and political understandings – including both engagement and disengagement – of working-class adults in the anthracite coal region of rural Pennsylvania. Her research utilizes in-depth interviews and life histories to reveal individuals' personal struggles and hardships, and then to link them to their political ideologies and voting behaviors. 'Working class' is defined broadly to include anyone without a 4-year college degree and with a history of work in unskilled or semiskilled jobs, although many of Silva's participants are not employed at the time of the interview. She describes social class as interactional and created through social relations that cross generations. The coal region and its industrial legacy is the identity category which comes closest to uniting her sample, although most of the non-white participants are more recent in-migrants to the area who do not share this history. Her research includes men and women of both white and nonwhite race, and the book treats gender and race separately in substantive chapters that focus on white men, white women, men of color, and women of color.

Silva's book is well written and easy to read, although dark, filled with stories of abuse, addiction, violence, incarceration, and physical and emotional pain. It goes beyond the recent spate of books that have attempted to explain the political conservatism of rural voters, providing what many others are lacking: an in-depth exploration of the emotional, physical, and economic devastation caused by deindustrialization and the loss of blue-collar jobs. Silva's strength is the amount of empathy that she shows for her participants, and the respect with which she treats their deeply troubled stories and lives. Throughout the book she allows the participants to narrate their own experiences, providing limited commentary and seldom challenging their understandings or worldviews. In this way her book is a shining star within its genre, which too often focuses instead on uncovering the rage, resentment, racism, and illogic of rural and working-class populations. Silva shows none of the tendency for condescension or judgment that is common in this subfield, and instead demonstrates deep compassion for her working-class participants while still gently illustrating through their own words the contradictions inherent in their political and personal choices and understandings. As she explains in her appendix, the author's own working-class roots inform much of her sympathetic approach to her participants.

The book focuses almost exclusively on the individual stories, which are presented from chapter to chapter, one after another, organized by the categories of race and gender. Silva's aim is mostly descriptive, examining 'how different groups within the working class narrate their suffering and imagine strategies for healing' (p. 41). Each of the first four substantive chapters follows the same format: brief introductions to the subgroups, and then back-to-back extended vignettes, each several pages long, which present an individual or family's story. At the end of each story is a paragraph or two that addresses their political thoughts, which are often disjointed and inconsistent with their earlier statements, illustrating the complexity of political understandings and their interactions with personal beliefs and experiences. While this

format allows the reader to really access the depth of adversity and pain faced by the participants, its weakness is that the descriptive content of Silva's book is not matched by theoretical analysis and insight, and thus it is a struggle throughout to grasp the larger take-away. Silva seems to get lost in presenting the harsh and intense life stories, without analyzing them sufficiently or clearly digesting their meanings for the reader.

In part the lack of big-picture understanding is due to the inconsistency between the participants themselves. Pain is a theme throughout all of the narratives, but pain takes multiple forms, including emotional pain, interpersonal violence, and chronic physical pain. Similarly, healing takes multiple forms, including self-help, religious faith, anger, and even empowerment through belief in conspiracy theories. Political interests are also inconsistent throughout the book and throughout each sub-category, ranging from liberal to conservative to multiple forms of disinterest and apathy. Furthermore, most participants do not make a conscious connection between their pain and their politics, and Silva asserts this connection without truly demonstrating its existence, or more importantly, explaining how it operates. There is no process uncovered by which personal pain translates directly into specific political outcomes. None of the sub-groups speak with a common voice or to a common experience, suggesting either that something else (perhaps beyond pain and healing) is influencing political outcomes, or that the subcategories of race and gender are not the most salient sources of division or commonality for this population.

The book's sixth chapter focuses more closely on politics, and Silva finally begins to impose some order on the chaotic collection of lives and worldviews, arguing that what unites her participants is alienation and disenchantment. The theme of social isolation is one that underlies almost every story in the book, and this chapter is vital to highlighting and clarifying the pattern. As with the previous chapters, this chapter presents extended vignettes, which further illustrate the extent of individuals' alienation and loss of faith in social and government institutions. In the end, it's still unclear how or why alienation and apathy became this widespread or what the results of this trend will be, but the theme becomes evident as the underlying connection between most of the earlier stories.

The book's conclusion unfolds in a similar way, again presenting more data and new stories that focus on the participants' experiences. Here Silva also makes prescriptive suggestions for leveraging collective pain into political action, proposing that a coalition of community organizers 'could help working-class people tie the pain and inequalities that they experience… to the experiences of others' (p. 173). It is a hopeful ending after a long collection of disheartening stories, and ties the book's chapters together in a positive, if somewhat unconvincing way.

Overall, *We're Still Here* does the important work of describing in great depth the painful experiences and political (dis)engagement common amongst working-class adults in postindustrial rural Pennsylvania. It provides vital and compassionate insight into the types and depth of difficulties and challenges that plague working-class Pennsylvanians. Beyond these heart-wrenching descriptions and life stories, it also offers a brief glimpse of potential for transformative action to be built from the ruins of working-class lives.

Reviewer Bio

Jennifer Sherman is Associate Professor of Sociology at Washington State University. She is author of *Those Who Work, Those Who Don't: Poverty, Morality and Family in Rural America*

(University of Minnesota Press, 2009) and the forthcoming *Dividing Paradise: Rural Inequality and the Diminishing American Dream* (University of California Press, 2021), as well as co-editor of *Rural Poverty in the United States* (Columbia University Press, 2017).

Kristof, Nicholas, and WuDunn, Sheryl (2020) *Tightrope: Americans Reaching for Hope*, Knopf, NY.

Review by Allison L. Hurst

In many ways, *Tightrope* is a counter-telling to Tara Westover's *Educated* (2018) and J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* (2016), books that made a huge impact on the national scene as distraught liberals everywhere tried to understand the rise of Trump. Both of those books were autobiographical accounts of moving 'up' and out of poverty, with a tendency towards eliding structural inequalities in favor of individualistic accounts of fighting the odds and bemoaning working-class culture. Kristof and WuDunn attempt something different here, telling stories about real peoples' struggles (many of whom are personally known to them) to push all of us to recognize 'our collective irresponsibility' towards those in need.

Our escalators of social mobility are broken. Our safety nets are full of holes. For too many years, we have watched our nation's leaders destroy the foundations of the American Dream. Thus, we are all complicit to some degree with what has resulted – a sadder and sicker polity. Kristof and WuDunn passionately argue, 'we need economic change but also cultural change, and ours would be a richer nation if it were more infused with empathy, above all for children' (251). They argue that while poverty *is* a choice, it is a choice not made by individuals, but by the country as a whole. 'The United States has chosen policies over the last half century that have resulted in higher levels of homelessness, overdose deaths, crime and inequality – and now it's time to make a different choice' (253).

JWCS readers may be aware of other accounts out there that, to my mind also reject the individualistic 'escape from poverty' discourse in favor of a more structural telling of what has been happening to the working class over the years. I would recommend anything by Joe Bageant, but particularly *Deer Hunting with Jesus*, Christine Walley's *Exit Zero* (2013) and two relatively recent books out of the UK – *Poverty Safari* (2018) by Darren McGarvey and Diane Reay's excellent 2017 memoir/critique *Miseducation*. The difference here is that *Tightrope* is not an autobiographical account, as are all of my above recommendations. Kristof and WuDunn are a rather privileged pair, and, despite their great empathy and concern for friends, neighbors, and perfect strangers, the story they tell remains at arms' length. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is to be noted. There is a certain level of privileged liberal hand-wringing that may turn some readers off to their message. I hope that isn't the case, as their message of collective responsibility is an important one to hear.

The book is full of stories – hard stories to hear, hard stories to bear, hard stories to forget. Many of these stories are of people Kristof knows from his hometown of Yamhill, Oregon – a town only 30 miles from the hipster metropolis of Portland but quite different culturally. Rural, conservative (a majority of the county went to Trump in 2016), and far from prosperous, Yamhill may best be known as the hometown of Kristof (and Beverly Cleary, I must add). *Tightrope* begins with a clever and heart-breaking chapter titled 'The Kids on the Number Six School Bus,' which kids included Kristof and several others whose lives were either ended prematurely or thoroughly stunted through addiction, poverty, and violence. Their lives

resemble a tightrope walk, possible to get to the other side but not easy at all, despite good intentions. The sometimes-gory stories of the falls off the tightrope are peppered throughout the book.

Kristof and WuDunn attempt, and often succeed, in exploding the Left/Right partisan default setting we seem to be operating under today. You want us to consider individual responsibility when explaining poverty? Sure, but let's not forget collective irresponsibility as well. We should make America great again? Let's do it. Bring back good jobs, raise the minimum wage, repair the safety net. Throughout they chide both liberals and conservatives for their short-sightedness and partisan doubling-down. For example, when liberals denounced Moynihan 'as an out-of-touch racist', they failed to give heed to his warnings about family stressors in poor communities. Of course, some of their attempts here are less successful than others, and their arguments are not always as strong as they could have been with some social science to back them up, but the attempt has value. I think they are right that we need a new collective understanding of what has happened to us as a nation in the last several decades. I don't think anyone living through the American response to the global pandemic would argue with that.

Perhaps it was because I read this during quarantine that I found the chapter on healthcare one of the strongest. Chapter 11 ('Universal Healthcare: One Day, One Town') begins with a story, as does every one of the twenty chapters in the book. Remote Area Medical, known for providing free dental services in poor nations around the globe, began servicing Americans in the last decade. The first day Stan Brock pulled up to Sneedville, Tennessee with his dental office in a pickup truck, 150 people lined up for help. Many had never been able to afford a dentist before. On the day Kristof and WuDunn visited, one man was having 18 teeth pulled. Remote Area Medical now puts on more than seventy 'health fairs' around the US each year. That this is necessary is appalling. Is it any surprise that we have an opioids epidemic when there is so much physical pain out there in the 'heartland' -- can you imagine walking around every day of your life with 18 rotting and rotten teeth? Other stories and facts presented in this chapter are similarly outrageous. For example, two women, on average, are still dying *every day* in this country from pregnancy complications (153). The conservative campaign to limit poor women's knowledge of and access to contraception, and reproductive healthcare more generally, has resulted in a literal bloodbath.

This is a gut-wrenching book. It is not without its faults, but being overly shy with the perilous state of our fellow Americans is not one of them. At first, I found phrases such as 'as pain seeped across America' (20) a bit too much. After reading the entire book, and looking around me as we scramble to find masks and tests and basic protective gear for our healthcare workers, and hearing a President suggest we ingest bleach to cure ourselves, I think perhaps it is just about right.

Reviewer Bio

Allison L. Hurst has been a proud member of the Working-Class Studies Association for many years and currently serves as its President-Elect. She is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Oregon State University, where she teaches courses on theory, qualitative research methods, and class and inequality. Her publications include *The Burden of Academic Success: Loyalists, Renegades and Double Agents* (2010)*, College and the Working Class* (2012). *Working in Class: Recognizing How Social Class Shapes Our Academic Work* (2016, co-editor with Sandi Nenga), and *Amplified Advantage: Going to a 'Good' School in an Era of Inequality* (2019).

Case, Anne, and Deaton, Angus (2020) *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*, Princeton University Press, NJ.

Review by Jack Metzgar

If we did not have the most wastefully expensive health care system in the world, each American household could have an additional $8,500 a year in net income. And, if national income was divided between labor and capital now as it was 50 years ago, each household would have another $10,000 or so. As a result, there would be much less despair and many fewer deaths of despair.

That in essence is the powerful argument that is buried within the rambling discussion of *Deaths of Despair.* The authors, Princeton economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton, unpack a wide range of statistical data that explain underlying causes of the horrendous increase in suicides, drug overdoses, and alcohol-related deaths, which they were the first to notice and label 'deaths of despair.' While they don't always follow their analysis to its logical conclusion, they provide powerful evidence for how important decent wages are for our mental and physical health. And though not given to slogans, Case and Deaton provide compelling empirical support for a bumper sticker that would read 'Low Wages Are Killing Us.'

Case and Deaton track an increase of pain and despair in the U.S. over the past half-century, finding it primarily among working people who do not have at least a bachelor's degree – namely, the vast majority (68%) of American adults. Though they pay special attention to the increase of pain and despair among middle-aged white men without college, since the increase is greatest there, despair is growing among all racial, ethnic, and gender groups among the so-called 'poorly educated,' even if at different rates in different timeframes. It's simple: Increasing deaths of despair are caused by decades-long increases in despair. What is causing increased despair?

Startlingly for mainstream academic economists, Case and Deaton draw a causal chain from reduced life expectancy back to increased despair and then to the corporate 'use of market power to bring about upward redistribution.'   '[R]un out over half a century, [this upward redistribution] has slowly eaten away at the foundations of working-class life, high wages and good jobs, and has been central in causing deaths of despair. . . If we are to stop deaths of despair, we must somehow stop or reverse the decline of wages for less educated Americans.'

I found *Deaths of Despair* difficult reading because Case and Deaton move awkwardly between specific micro analyses and the larger macro picture in a way that buries the clarity of each. But within this awkwardness, the book advances several compelling arguments that are interrelated.

They have a great chapter on the opioid epidemic, for example, tracking down the systemic causes of more than 70,000 drug-overdose deaths in 2017 to not only corrupt doctors and the pharmaceutical industry, but to government indifference that amounts to collusion. 'The opioid epidemic did not happen in other countries both because they had not destroyed their working class and because their pharmaceutical companies are better controlled and their governments are less easily influenced by corporations seeking profits.'

Case and Deaton also have a devastating broader critique of the American health industry – not just the insurance companies, but doctors, hospitals, pharma, and medical equipment manufacturers too – as interrelated oligopolies that can manipulate and fix prices. These exorbitant prices drain workers' wages, not just in the premiums, co-pays, and deductibles that workers pay directly, but also with the tariffs the health care industry imposes on employers, thereby reducing the money available for workers' overall compensation. Case and Deaton calculate the degree of waste in our health care system and the minimum amount that would be available to workers and their households if we had a system similar not to the average of rich countries, but simply to the next most expensive system in Switzerland. They hardly mention the millions of Americans without health insurance, but instead show how millions more are driven to despair by having incomes that are not close to – or are too close to – meeting their living expenses. Again, though their analysis often wanders, in the end they speak clearly: 'The organization of the American healthcare system is a disaster for the harm it does to health, but even more because it is draining the livelihoods of Americans in order to make a rich minority richer.'

Case and Deaton are not wild-eyed radicals, but well-established advocates of free-market capitalism (Deaton is a Noble Prize winner). They see oligarchic corporations and corrupted government institutions as undermining the free functioning of markets. In general, they are more inclined to trust-busting solutions than to social-democratic programs to enhance social wages and to strengthen labor unions and social safety nets. And they explicitly argue against more severely progressive taxation as a redistributive solution. Their larger point is that 'large parts of the American economy have been captured to serve the wealthy with the consent and connivance of government. . . Upward redistribution is not an inherent feature of capitalism [as Thomas Piketty has argued] . . . The problem with inequality is that so much of the wealth and income at the top is ill-gotten.'

Though I'm with Piketty, on both the nature of capitalism and the importance of steeply progressive taxes, including on wealth, Case and Deaton have a point, too. If you've been watching the Netflix docuseries *Dirty Money*, you will be aware of the importance of greatly improving our policing of ill-gotten gains. It is unbelievable what already rich people will do to get richer! So, just because capitalism has an inherent tendency, even when operating 'properly,' to redistribute income and wealth upwards, does not mean we should not go after the crooks and con men that proliferate within that system, starting with the health care industry, as Case and Deaton suggest. But Case and Deaton do not recognize that so much wealth and power has already been transferred to our American oligarchs that it is now crucial to claw back at least a trillion dollars a year in taxes without trying to determine what was ill and what was well gotten.

Deaths of Despair is an especially important book precisely because Case and Deaton are not ideological, but rather the epitome of 'data-driven' social scientists. As a result, it has received a lot of attention in mainstream media, which has tended to focus too much on the so-called white working class and on policies unrelated to wages, taxes, and redistribution. In discussing possible solutions, Case and Deaton are themselves vague and indeterminate – sort of like fussy eaters examining a menu with few items precisely to their liking. But the core of the book's analysis of the causal relation between inadequate wages, despair, and death is a clarion call for action. Though whole-hearted believers in the power of markets, without drastic action they see the future of capitalism as a continuation of 'a slowly unfolding calamity for the working class.'

As I write, a debate rages about when and how to reopen our economies after the Covid-19 curve has been flattened. Opening too quickly could lead to increased infections and Covid deaths.   But with some 40 million people unemployed in the U.S., opening too slowly will undoubtedly lead to many more deaths of despair, this time disproportionately among people of color. Millions more people have been pushed to the edge, while more millions already on that edge have been and will be falling.   However we get to the other side of this pandemic, the calamity for the working class will be worse. And even more drastic action will be required than is in Case and Deaton's philosophy.

Reviewer Bio

Jack Metzgar is Emeritus Professor of Humanities at Roosevelt University in Chicago, a WCSA past president, and author of *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered* (Temple U. Press 2000).

Cole, Peter (2018) *Dockworker Power: Race and Activism in Durban and the San Francisco Bay Area*, University of Illinois Press, Champaign, IL.

Review by Gary Jones

In the midst of today's global capitalist crisis, Peter Cole's important new study of dockworkers in Durban, South Africa and the San Francisco Bay Area, which received the 2019 Philip Taft Labor History Book Award from the Labor and Working-Class History Association and Cornell ILR School, will almost certainly be of great interest, relevance, and inspiration to those engaged in the interdisciplinary field of working-class studies.

Peter Cole is a professor of history at Western Illinois University and a Research Associate in the Society, Work and Development Institute (SWOP), University of Witwatersrand. He is the author of a number of books and scholarly articles including *Wobblies on the Waterfront: Interracial Unionism in Progressive Era Philadelphia* (2007) and 'Durban Dockers, Labor Internationalism, and Pan-Africanism' from *Choke Points: Logistics Workers and Solidarity Movements Disrupting the Global Capitalist Supply Chain* (2018), for which he received the 2019 John Russo & Sherry Linkon Award for Published Article or Essay for Academic or General Audiences from the Working-Class Studies Association.

Dockworker Power is a comparative labor history of dockworkers in Durban, South Africa and the San Francisco Bay Area, two of the world's great port cities, over much of the last century. Though one is located in the northern hemisphere and the other in the southern hemisphere, the differences between these locations should not obscure the strong similarities among such dockworkers. Indeed, Peter Cole's ample research demonstrates that both Durban and San Francisco Bay Area dockworkers have exhibited remarkable solidarity, power, and activism since the 1930s and 1940s. The sources of that solidarity were the collective nature of their work loading and unloading ships' cargoes, and organizing by militant dockworkers, mostly leftists, whether syndicalist, socialist, communist, or Trotskyite. It was therefore no accident, as Marxists are wont to say, that despite shifting fortunes, both Bay Area and Durban dockworkers have demonstrated such remarkable power and activism in their fight against exploitation and oppression in their workplaces, cities, nations, and the world.

Dockworker power and activism emerged in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1930s. After the 'Big Strike' of 1934, San Francisco dockworkers, led by Harry Bridges, an Australian-born working-class radical, organized the International Longshoreman and Warehouse Workers Union (ILWU). The newly-formed union decasualized their work by replacing the notorious 'shape up' with a union hiring hall, and began the racial integration of both their membership and leadership. Nor did their activism stop at the San Francisco waterfront or the East Bay, as San Francisco dockworkers protested the Japanese invasion of mainland China in 1937.

In Durban, South Africa, dockworker power and activism emerged during the 1940s, despite the fact that Zulu and Pondo dockworkers were officially denied the status of permanent

workers, the right to organize unions, and the right to strike. Nevertheless, dockworkers led by Zulu Phungula, a working-class radical, used their status as casual laborers and their right to 'stay away' from work to 'down tools' (strike) against their exploitative employers and engage in anti-apartheid activism. Nor, like their fellow dockworkers in the San Francisco Bay Area, did their activism stop at the waterfront, in their case the Indian Ocean, as Durban dockworkers protested fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.

From the 1960s onwards, however, dockworkers in the Bay Area and Durban began to experience shifting fortunes as shipping interests and the state acted to uproot dockworker solidarity and eliminate their power and activism. Beginning in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1960s, the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) began the introduction of shipping containers to transport cargo, loaded and unloaded by cranes, for greater profit and control. Without the introduction of shipping containers, Cole rightly points out, the subsequent and unprecedented increase in the volume of world trade, which is the basis of today's global economy, would have been all but impossible.

In the Bay Area, longtime ILWU president Harry Bridges made the crucial - but controversial - decision to negotiate with the PMA over containerization rather than resist it per se. By doing so, Bridges bought higher wages and job protections for the generation of '34 at the expense of future jobs and dockworker power. Whereas in Durban, in 1959, shipping companies and the South African state introduced decasualization to simultaneously repress dockworker strikes and dangerous anti-apartheid activism for years to come. Additionally, the belated introduction of containerization to the port of Durban in 1977, which in the continued absence of a union was followed by half of all dockworkers being 'retrenched' (laid-off), further diminished dockworker power and activism.

Yet containerization and decasualization failed to uproot dockworker solidarity and completely eliminate their power and activism. The ILWU – especially the rank and file - continued to resist the ongoing impact of containerization in the Bay Area and other West coast ports including by strike action. Furthermore, Bay Area dockworkers – majority black by the 1960s - also continued their support for the civil rights movement and the South African anti-apartheid movement. Bay Area dockworkers' support for civil rights and the anti-apartheid movement explains why both Paul Robeson and Martin Luther King were honorary members of the ILWU and Nelson Mandela publicly thanked the union for its support of the anti-apartheid movement when he visited Oakland in 1990. More recently, Bay Area dockworkers have protested Israeli treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Likewise, in Durban, decasualization failed to uproot dockworker solidarity and eliminate their power and activism. Most importantly, dockworker strikes in 1969 and 1972 ended the 'quiet decade' and directly contributed to the revival of the national anti-apartheid movement in 1973. As if such a direct contribution to the end of apartheid in 1994 were not enough, by 2000 Durban's dockworkers had become members of the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union (SATAWU), and by 2008-9 they had resumed their tradition of overseas protest and activism – emanating from their labor/left and black internationalism - by refusing to unload arms going to Robert Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe and boycotting an Israeli ship to protest the bombing of Gaza.

Peter Cole's historical analysis of Durban and San Francisco Bay dockworker's remarkable solidarity and power, antifascist and antiracist activism, and resistance to containerization, is both persuasive and compelling. Moreover, a close reading of *Dockworker Power* strongly

suggests that today's Durban and Bay Area dockworkers – class conscious, antiracist, members of unions with militant, left traditions – now labor at strategic choke points in global capitalist supply chains that are vulnerable to their – and other logistical workers - collective action.

In sum, at this time of global capitalist crisis, the publication of *Dockworker Power* makes an important contribution to the development of the interdisciplinary field of working-class studies. Peter Cole is to be heartily congratulated for providing readers with such an interesting, relevant, and inspiring case study of working-class solidarity, power, and activism. For Durban and Bay Area dockworkers and their unions, SATAWU and the ILWU, not to mention other logistical workers in today's global economy, embrace of the motto 'an injury to one is an injury to all' remains as important, if not more important, than ever before.

Reviewer Bio

Gary Jones, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of History at American International College, Springfield, Massachusetts. He teaches courses on each of the major eras of the American past and themes such as labor, race, ethnicity, and radicalism. His research focuses on Gilded Age and Progressive Era Pennsylvania, the state, and labor.

Haltinner, K. and Hormel, L. (eds.) (2018) *Teaching Economic Inequality and Capitalism in Contemporary America*, Springer, Cham, Switzerland.

Carter, G.M. and Thelin, W.H. (eds.) (2017) *Class in the Composition Classroom: Pedagogy and the Working Class*, Utah State University Press, Logan, Utah.

Reviews by Lisa A. Kirby

In many disciplines, the gap between theory and praxis is wide; luckily, in the field of working-class studies, that is typically not the case, and most scholars in the field see the necessity and value of real-world and pedagogical applications of theoretical concepts. Two recent books, *Teaching Economic Inequality and Capitalism in Contemporary America* and *Class in the Composition Classroom: Pedagogy and the Working Class*, are perfect examples of how theory and pedagogy can intersect in complementary and valuable ways.

Kristin Haltinner and Leontina Hormel are sociology professors at the University of Idaho and co-editors of *Teaching Economic Inequality and Capitalism in Contemporary America.* Their collection offers a variety of essays on both the theory and practice of teaching inequality in the contemporary economic environment. The book is divided into five parts: 'Making the Personal Political: The Stories of Capitalism,' 'Making Marxist Theory Real,' 'Applied Pedagogical Strategies for Course Development,' 'Intersections: Global and Local,' and 'Capitalism and Higher Education: Constraints and Opportunities,' and contains essays from a variety of scholars who share the editors' passion for 'liberatory pedagogy and transformative sociology' (Haltinner and Hormel, 2018, 1). Published in 2018, just two years into the Trump presidency, the editors realize 'we are living in profoundly dangerous and volatile times' (Haltinner and Hormel, 2018, 1). As such, the book is meant as an opportunity to promote 'understanding and teaching about economic inequality within capitalism,' and the editors make clear the impetus to do so has perhaps never been more important (Haltinner and Hormel, 2018, 1).

The chapters that follow are all organized in a way that demonstrates the intersection of the public and private spheres. Each chapter begins with an 'Author's Reflexive Statement,' written in personal narrative style, that explains the writers' backgrounds, research, and sometimes their own complex experiences with social class. These statements provide context for the chapters, and it is clear how personal experience directly impacts these scholars' pedagogical practices. The editors make clear that they sought to represent a diversity of voices:

they 'worked hard to be inclusive and to cast as broad a net as possible when seeking contributors so that the themes and angles of inquiry regarding economic inequalities and American capitalism would be represented' (Hormel, 2018, 324). The contributors focus on issues as varied as the high cost of textbooks, using Marxist theory in first-year courses, problem-based learning, and inequalities in capital punishment. However, what unites them all is a consideration of how important it is that students 'be able to personally connect to the subject of class inequality, no matter their particular social class membership' (Hormel, 2018, 324). The juncture of personal and professional is a recurring theme throughout the collection, whether in narrating the experiences of faculty or students.

The chapters in Haltinner and Hormel's collection provide a variety of approaches to teaching inequality and capitalism. At the end of the volume, there are appendices that contain additional learning activities, model assignments, and sample syllabi. This sourcebook provides ready-to-use resources for those teaching sociology or working-class studies. The practical approach of this book, coupled with the useful activities and examples, provide scholars and teachers a compelling resource to use when teaching the complexity of economic inequality.

Genesea M. Carter and William H. Thelin's *Class in the Composition Classroom: Pedagogy and the Working Class* does for composition studies what Haltinner and Hormel's book does for sociology in that it seeks to provide practical advice and pedagogical strategies. Carter and Thelin teach at Colorado State University and the University of Akron respectively, and both have extensive experience teaching and writing about composition studies. *Class in the Composition Classroom* focuses on the specific issues working-class students encounter in writing courses. Recognizing that 'composition studies' current scholarship regarding social class has not focused enough on the application of class understanding to first-year writing instruction,' editors Thelin and Carter seek to remedy that situation (Carter and Thelin, 2017, 9). As they suggest, their collection 'gives concrete evidence for what a working-class ethos can produce in terms of practice and scholarship' (9). It is also important to note that this ethos can enrich the fields of both working-class studies and composition studies. They continue, 'we look at this collection of essays as a start of a broader conversation about the importance of valuing the class component of marginalized student populations' (Carter and Thelin, 2017, 14). Very much a call for change in English studies, this collection makes clear that working-class students are often being left behind, but also emphasizes how essential it is 'to respond to our students' identities and our students' needs' (Carter and Thelin, 2017, 14). The chapters included seek to do this in ways that will empower both faculty and students.

The collection begins with a definition of the working-class student, being careful not to cast the student as one-dimensional or stereotypical. Gathering ideas from a variety of scholars, including Michael Zweig, Ira Shor, Michael Parenti, and others, the editors make clear that defining the working-class student is complicated. Rather than settling on just one idea, they instead mention multiple characteristics of this student, such as they 'believe[e] education is done to them [. . .] not something they actively do,' 'are first-generation college students,' and 'don't see their parents reading as much' (Carter and Thelin, 2017, 7-8). This is just a sampling of the traits that many working-class students share, and the collection explores practical ways to help this student population succeed. Whether considering the role of working-class literacy narratives on academic identities, the importance of classroom community in first-year students' experience, or the literacy development of working-class women, to mention just a few chapters, the collection suggests important ways to encourage working-class students to find their voices. While they make clear there are 'no easy answers,' the editors also stress that it is important 'to complicate Lynn Z. Bloom's claim [. . .] that

freshman composition is a middle-class enterprise'; instead, as James T. Zebroski suggests, 'freshman composition is a social class enterprise where ruling class meets working class, where discourse contests discourse' (Zebroski, 2017, 322). The first-year composition course offers a unique space to interrogate, complicate, and empower social class identities.

The volume is organized into three different sections: 'Part 1: The Working-Class Student's Region, Education, and Culture'; 'Part 2: Pedagogy in the Composition Classroom'; and 'Part 3: 'What Our Students Say' 'to allow for variations in our understanding of 'working class' while highlighting real students in real situations concerning the teaching and learning of writing' (Carter and Thelin, 2017, 9). In each, there are a diversity of voices—faculty from state institutions, community colleges, private universities—that demonstrate how working-class students really do inhabit a variety of spheres. The collection also focuses on students from a range of demographics: adult learners, trade unionists, and women, among others. Regardless of these differences, though, it is clear that working-class pedagogy is at the center of these essays.

Both *Teaching Economic Inequality in Contemporary America* and *Class in the Composition Classroom* offer practical strategies, advice, and resources when considering both teaching to and about the working class. Working-class studies has always put great emphasis on not just research but pedagogy, and these two collections add to that important conversation. Though they focus on specific disciplines, the strategies and perspectives in both are also very applicable to any who teach social class, writing, or wish to place working-class students at the center of the academic narrative. Notably, both books also issue a call to action. For Haltinner and Hormel's collection, they argue, 'understanding and teaching about economic inequality within capitalism [. . .] is one of the burning pedagogical imperatives of this age' (Carter and Thelin, 2017, 1). In Thelin and Carter's book, they make clear faculty 'can make a difference' in the way our students perceive the working class and how working-class students themselves see their place in the academy (Carter and Thelin, 2017, 9). By demonstrating the important intersections of praxis and theory, these two collections provide vital ways that our pedagogy and conversations about social class can be enriched for the benefit of both our students and institutions.

Reviewer Bio

Lisa A. Kirby is Professor of English and Director of The Texas Center for Working-Class Studies at Collin College, where she teaches writing and American literature. Along with Dr. Laura Hapke, she is co-editor of *A Class of Its Own: Re-envisioning American Labor Fiction* (2008). Her work has also appeared in *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *Philip Roth Studies*, *The Journal of Popular Culture*, and *Academic Exchange Quarterly*. Dr. Kirby was recently awarded the 2020 Two-Year College Teaching and Mentoring Excellence Award from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues for her work with The Texas Center for Working-Class Studies.

Hurst, Allison L. (2020) *Amplified Advantage: Going to a 'Good' College in an Era of Inequality*, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD.

Review by Amy E. Stich

As a particularly privileged faction of US higher education, the small liberal arts college (SLAC) takes up only a small corner of a vast and differentiated system. Such relative privilege provides students attending these institutions with a number of distinct advantages. For the 'modal' student –'an elite white female, a third-generation college student, whose parents were involved in professional fields and cultural activities' (Hurst, 2019, p. 231), the SLAC provides a familiar space to seize upon opportunities that will serve to 'amplify' their cultural and financial advantage. For Allison Hurst, 'The small liberal arts college has actually been very good at amplifying the pre-existing advantages of its core constituency. Even as these colleges help all students make social connections, build cultural capital, and develop both personally and intellectually, those who began the journey with more end the journey with even more' (p. 234).

In *Amplified Advantage*, Hurst provides an ambitious, original mixed-methods account of how students from varying class backgrounds move in and through the same SLAC 'bubble.' Although Hurst herself reasons that some will argue that an emphasis on SLACs may be too narrow in scope, readers will be quickly convinced of its instrumental value. In other words, as an incredibly nuanced and theoretically sophisticated (though accessible) text, *Amplified Advantage* constitutes a book about the complicated ways class works.

Using a Bourdieusian framework, Hurst provides a relational understanding of students' differentiated experiences and pathways through SLACs using rich and compelling composite cases of students 'who represent key populations of interest, whose stories provide perspective on important aspects that emerge from the data' (p. 21). Among the many strengths of the research that informs this book, Hurst's definition of social class aligns with her chosen theoretical framework, departing from more dominant economically-driven classifications. For Hurst, social class is multidimensional and includes various forms of capital (economic, cultural, social) that together determine one's social position within the field of higher education and the larger social world.

Throughout the book's ten well-supported chapters, we follow ten students' trajectories in and through two fictional SLACs, 'Greystone' and 'Redbrick.' Hurst's diverse composite characters, introduced in chapter 3, provide significant nuance to our understanding of student 'choice' of college, major, extracurricular involvement and decisions relative to their time spent off campus (work, socializing), all of which lead students toward differential outcomes. Hurst provides us with a compelling case of great breadth and depth that includes interesting new insights. Students largely choose to attend a SLAC to receive a 'good' education, and generally speaking, students benefit from graduating from these types of institutions, including low-income, working-class, first-generation college students, and students of color. However, Hurst captures familiar patterns of social class reproduction (e.g., privilege begets greater

privilege) and the role of education in reproducing those patterns through less familiar examples of how class works within these particular privileged institutional bubbles. For example, despite having a wealth of extracurricular opportunities and broad participation across social class backgrounds, 'class dispositions and resources intervene to produce class-differentiating patterns of participation that amplify pre-existing advantages' (p. 181). For working-class students (and students of color), engagement in extracurricular activities serve as a 'relief from more serious scholastic activities' (p. 179) while upper-middle class students participate to 'build their skillsets and thus distinguish themselves from competitors after graduation' (p. 180). For upper-middle class students, the strategic and intentional accumulation of cultural and social capital is likely to bring about greater opportunities and advantages, while working-class students are less likely to benefit in the same ways from extracurricular engagement that is not driven by the desire to socially position oneself. By contrast, without financial concerns, the most economically privileged students are largely driven by personal interests and are more willing to take risks or try something new. It is perhaps not surprising then that these students are overrepresented in Greek Life[2] and study abroad (wherein participation costs the most and opportunities for accumulating social capital are high). Although upper-class students' choices and trajectories indicate greater risk and less investment in academic pursuits, these students tend to have the best future outcomes, even over their upper-middle class peers who have the most distinguished academic records and engage in strategic resume-building. Importantly, these findings lead Hurst to conclude that 'the value of cultural capital is declining relative to the value of economic capital. It is harder and harder to advance without money' (p. 244).

One of the things I like most about *Amplified Advantage* is the powerful and honest take on what can (and perhaps can't) be done about persistent inequalities in higher education. Hurst argues against providing a prescriptive set of solutions, an approach I admire. Too often it seems authors feel pressure to provide targeted recommendations, many of which, when applied to the existing system, have the potential to further mask or even exacerbate inequalities. To Hurst's point, 'There are no easy solutions here, for the entire class system is implicated' (p. 241). Instead, Hurst's final chapter asks whether we want to continue playing this game at all?

In many ways, this book is timely. As we find ourselves swallowed up in a global pandemic and what many argue will be a prolonged recession, the inequalities Hurst brings to light in *Amplified Advantage* will continue to be exacerbated and magnified. These inequalities will not only be exacerbated and magnified between institutions of higher education but also within them. Consider again Hurst's modal student, who 'is not concerned about the relative high cost of tuition, as she has received significant financial assistance both from the school (in terms of merit aid) and family members' (p. 231). Like privileged institutions, students from more privileged backgrounds will experience COVID-19 and navigate its consequences very differently. Take for example students at Kenyon College, one of the SLACs referenced in *Amplified Advantage*. In May 2020, a heartwarming story was written about its students raising COVID-relief money for local workers (May, 2020). After reading *Amplified Advantage*, it is hard not to imagine that Kenyon students are raising money for the families of some of their low-income and working-class peers, and it is hard not to imagine that some of those students will experience additional financial burdens or responsibilities that will preclude them from starting or returning in the fall. If Hurst is right about shifts in the valuation of capitals, and I think she is, we need to start asking very different questions. We can start where Hurst ends:

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[2] US. college fraternities and sororities.

'Let us stop asking how we can get more people into college and start asking why it matters' (p. 246).

Reviewer Bio

Amy E. Stich is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia and a National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellow. As a sociologist of education, Stich studies issues of inequality of educational opportunities, experiences and outcomes. Stich is the author of *Access to Inequality*: *Reconsidering Class, Knowledge, and Capital in Higher Education* (Lexington Press, 2012) and co-editor of *The Working Classes in Higher Education* (Routledge, 2015). Her current work examines academic tracking in higher education.