

SPRING 2024 ISSUE

A minimalist line art illustration of two hands, one above the other, holding a pair of glasses. The hands are drawn with simple black outlines, and the glasses are also drawn with simple black outlines. The background is a solid olive green color. There are also faint, light green line art illustrations of butterflies in the corners of the page.

THE PHENOMENA

PHENOMENA || SOCIOLOGY DSC

**PUBLISHED BY SOCIOLOGY STUDENTS OF QUEENS UNIVERSITY,
KINGSTON, ON.**

**WEBSITE: QUEENSOCIOLOGYJOURNAL.COM
EMAIL: PHENOMENA.QUEENSU@GMAIL.CA**

**THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE SOLELY THOSE OF THE
INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS.**

**PHENOMENA IS A PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL PUBLISHED SEMI-
ANNUALLY AND OUR MANDATE IS TO PROVIDE A VENUE FOR THE
PUBLICATION OF OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADUATE WRITING.
SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTED THROUGHOUT FALL AND WINTER
SEMESTERS OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR.
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SUBMISSIONS OR ANY GENERAL
QUESTIONS/CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT,
PHENOMENA.QUEENSU@GMAIL.CA**

**PHENOMENA SPRING ISSUE 2024
VOLUME 05**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

00 Behind Phenomena

ARTICLES

- 01 A Comprehensive Analysis of Gender Differences in Youth Crime
- 09 Unveiling Snapchat's Modern Panopticon and Normalization of Surveillance Culture
- 14 Gender as a Colonial Creation
- 16 Investigating Bonila-Silva's Theory of Colour-Blind Racism in the Context of Healthcare Disparities: A Theoretical Analysis of New Racisms and Healthcare Inequality
- 22 The Degrowth Movement and Media Ecology: Consuming Ourselves to Death
- 29 Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: An Analysis of Gender Exclusion in Figure Skating
- 39 Bureaucracy, Globalization, and Technology Impacting Professions
- 46 "If you Have Nothing to Hide you Have Nothing to Fear": Critiquing the Experiences of Data Collection Practices for the LGBTQ+ Community
- 50 A Reform Proposal for Medical Assistance in Dying Where the Sole Underlying Condition is a Mental Disorder
- 58 "Breaking the Mold: Exploring the Stigmatization of Voluntarily Childfree Women in North America"?
- 64 How the Pornographic Industry Condone Gender Inequality and Violence: A Sociological Analysis of Gender
- 71 Letter 2 My Mama: A Critical Media Analysis
- 74 Road Safety and Cannabis: Canada's Questionable Use of a 'Per Se' Limit
- 83 Where are You Going, Where Have You Been? Placing Approaches to the Aging Process in Context Through Whole-Life Review
- 88 Fraternity Culture and Sexual Assault: Examining the Factors Contributing to a Pervasive Issue on College Campuses
- 95 Racism, Classism and the Thin Ideal: How are TikTok and Instagram's Popular Beauty Trends Hurting the Advancement of Women?
- 105 The Environmental Repercussions of Barbie: A Current Events Analysis
- 107 The Illusion of Safety: Examining Police Strength's Impact on Crime Reduction

EXTERNAL

- 112 Which Famous Sociologist are You? [Quiz]
- 113 Message from the Editor & Thank you to Our Contributors

SOCIOLOGY DSC

BEHIND PHENOMENA

Bryn Sultana

Journal Editor for The Phenomena,
Sociology DSC



PROGRAM:

4th year Sociology and Concurrent Education (PJ)

ABOUT ME:

My past three years as a part of the Sociology Student Council as Journal Editor for The Phenomena have been the least unforgettable. I feel so grateful to have spent the last four years of my undergraduate studies here at Queens, where I will be entering and earning my degree in education next year. My pathway in sociology has been able to prepare me with unforgettable skills that I have been able to apply not only in my everyday life but also in becoming a future educator.

WORD OF WISDOM:

The past four years have taught me that as a sociology student, you will subconsciously adopt the ability to articulate and analyze the world around you in ways that your friends and family might not. Never neglect what you actually know!

A Comprehensive Analysis of Gender Differences in Youth Crime

By: Avery O'Farrell

The topic of youth crime and young offenders has been an ongoing discussion amongst scholars for many years as they attempt to determine which key factors commonly lead adolescents to become offenders or victims of crime. Scholars must continue to study this topic as age is a constant predictor of crime across countries, groups, and historical periods (Ulmer and Steffensmeier 2014:393). Studies suggest that crime peaks in adolescence and declines with age, with recent data indicating a shift towards younger age-crime distributions in modern day society (Ulmer and Steffensmeier 2014:377). Although age is one of the most vital factors associated with criminal behaviour, gender also plays a crucial role in determining the likelihood of an adolescent engaging in delinquent activities (Kruttschnitt 2013:292). Research shows that females are beginning to commit more crimes than they did in the past, however, males continue to commit crimes at a much higher rate than females (Kruttschnitt 2013:294). Despite the narrowing of the gender gap in crime, there remain a number of gender differences that are important to recognize in order to target specific groups of offenders and reduce crime among youth as a whole (Kruttschnitt 2013:294). This paper will serve as an analysis of these differences, exploring Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi's self-control theory as well as Robert Agnew's general strain theory in relation to relevant research findings. It will become evident that the subsequent recommended policies must be implemented to address the ongoing issues.

REVIEW OF THEORIES

Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi's Self-Control Theory

Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory is a longstanding and widely referenced theoretical perspective highlighting the factors associated with increased criminal behaviour. This theory explains how people build attachment, develop social bonds, gain morals, and learn self-control and self-regulation (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990:88). Gottfredson and Hirschi (2000) suggest that early-childhood socialization is one of the most critical factors in determining delinquency and future criminal tendencies, as self-control and self-regulation are typically learned by ages 7 or 8 (56). They argue that the majority of crimes are committed by repeat offenders who have failed to learn this basic level of self-control in childhood, often committing crimes on impulse without any logical thought process (Gottfredson and Hirschi 2000:56). Self-control theory also explains how social bonds and attachment can result in higher levels of self-control (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990:89). People who lack self-control tend to have unstable relationships, ultimately corrupting their morals as an individual and contributing to their increased likelihood of committing crimes (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990:89).

Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory further highlights several behaviours, attitudes, and values that cause individuals with low self-control and self-regulation to become crime-prone. Some characteristics include a lack of diligence and persistence in a course of action, a lack of commitment to a job, marriage, and children, as well as the tendency to drink excessively, use illegal drugs, or gamble (Boyd and Kay 2019:223).

Self-control theory also suggests that criminal acts seem particularly appealing to these individuals because crime provides immediate and easy gratification of desires, requires little skill or planning, and results in relief from momentary irritation (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990:89-90). Once a person lacks self-control, self-regulation, social bonds, and human morals, their likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior increases (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990:89). In their pursuit of success, they may resort to unconventional methods, often disregarding potential long-term consequences (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990:89). Gottfredson and Hirschi's (2000) theory is also quite applicable to youth offending as they study criminality amongst young offenders, explaining the differences between 'adolescence limited' or 'late starting' offenders and 'life-course-persistent' offenders (60). They argue that adolescent limited or late-starting delinquents lack any personal propensity to commit crime, which helps to explain both why crime is so prevalent amongst adolescents as well as which crimes they are more likely to commit (Gottfredson and Hirschi 2000:60).

Self-control theory does not explicitly focus on gender but instead criminality in its entirety, however, countless empirical studies have explored the application of this theory in order to understand gender differences in young offenders and crime as a whole. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that low self-control tends to be associated with the absence of nurturance, discipline, or training from parents or guardians in childhood (95). They explain that children who are not socialized sufficiently by familial institutions must then learn self-control through the operation of other sanctioning systems or institutions (Gottfredson and

Hirschi 1990:105). Applications of this theory suggest that females display higher levels of self-control because they experience socialization differently than their male counterparts (Muftić and Updegrave 2017:3059). Because young females are often more closely monitored by their parents compared to males in the same families, they experience an increase in parental control as well as self-control, which could, in turn, help to explain the ongoing gender gap in offending (Muftić and Updegrave 2017:3059). Furthermore, the types of offences associated with low self-control may vary between genders, with males experiencing significantly higher levels of aggression and impulsivity (Perez, Jennings, and Baglivio 2016:12-14). Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory is a valuable theoretical perspective that can explain criminality, youth crime, and gender differences in deviance.

Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory

Agnew's general strain theory also plays a fundamental role in understanding the reasonings behind criminal behaviour. This theory explains how different strains and stressors can lead to an increased likelihood of an individual engaging in delinquent activities (Agnew 1992:47). It identifies three types of strain that most commonly lead to crime: failure to achieve culturally valued goals, loss of positively valued stimuli, and the presentation of noxious or negatively valued stimuli (Agnew 1992:50). Strain can manifest through the inability to achieve culturally valued goals which can depend on a variety of factors such as social class, intelligence, physical attractiveness, personality, and athletic ability (Agnew 1992:51). When an individual believes that they lack the traits or skills necessary to achieve their goals, they commonly resort to illegitimate channels of goal achievement, resulting in

delinquency and crime (Agnew 1992:51). Strain can also result from the removal of positively valued stimuli from the individual including the loss of a partner, the death of a friend, moving to a new school, divorce or separation of one's parent, or suspension from school (Agnew 1992:57). As the individual attempts to cope with this loss, they might try to prevent the loss, retrieve the lost stimuli, seek revenge for those responsible for the loss, or manage the negative affect through the use of illicit drugs (Agnew 1992:57-58). Additionally, the presentation of negative stimuli such as child abuse or neglect, criminal victimization, hostile relations with peers or family, or adverse school experiences can cause strain (Agnew 1992:58). General strain theory suggests that just one of these strains or a combination of them can lead to delinquent behaviours.

Throughout his theory, Agnew (1992) studies how these strains impact youth in specific because the available data at the time of this article involved surveys of adolescents (48). However, adolescence is a time of significant social and emotional development that coincides with increased societal expectations, peer pressures, and academic pressures, meaning general strain theory is a functional theoretical perspective to apply when studying youth crime and young offenders. General strain theory argues that adolescents are pressured into delinquency by negative affective states such as anger, depression, fear, anxiety, and other emotions that often result from harmful relationships and strain (Agnew 1992:49). These affective states often create pressure for corrective action and may lead youth to make use of illegitimate channels of goal achievement, attack or escape from the source of their adversity, or manage their emotions through the use of illicit drugs or alcohol (Agnew 1992:49). It is evident that

adolescents hold a greater chance of engaging in criminal activities because of the unique strains and stressors outlined by Agnew in his general strain theory.

Similarly to Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory, general strain theory does not explicitly focus on gender differences within crime, delinquency, or strain. Many scholars blame this on the frequent testing of behaviours commonly associated with males, using gender as a control variable (Sharp, Brewster, and Love 2005:133). This provides very little information about female deviance or the gender gap in crime, therefore, many recent studies have extended upon general strain theory to explain these differences (Sharp et al. 2005:133). Scholars argue that it is not the strain itself that produces deviance but how an individual responds to it (Sharp et al. 2005:134). They attribute the gender gap in crime to these differences in responses, arguing that the ways in which people cope with strain may predict different outcomes in terms of delinquency (Sharp et al. 2005:134). Because general strain theory can explain such a wide range of deviant behaviours as well as why deviance does not always occur even when strain is present, it is considered to be ideally suited for exploring gender differences in crime.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Studies on Self-Control Theory

Countless studies have expanded upon Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory in order to explain gender differences in youth crime. For instance, Tittle, Ward, and Grasmick (2003) analyzed the relationship between self-control and crime, particularly emphasizing gender and age variations (426). Using the 16th annual Oklahoma City Survey, the authors selected 350 respondents through random methods, hypothesizing that self-control significantly

influences differences in deviant behaviour amongst various demographic groups and across different circumstances (Tittle et al. 2003:433-434). They applied both a cognitive scale of self-control as well as two behaviourally based measures of self-control, ultimately leading them to their final results (Tittle et al. 2003:438). Consistent with previous research on the topic, their data showed that for every crime index in their study, males scored significantly higher than females (Tittle et al. 2003:441). They also found that whether or not self-control varies between males and females actually depends on how self-control is measured (Tittle et al. 2003:443). The cognitive self-control scale showed no significant gender difference while the behavioural scale and the behavioural variety index both showed a significant relationship between gender and self-control (Tittle et al. 2003:443). This means that their study contributes somewhat to supporting self-control theory, however, the authors emphasized the importance of choosing outcomes based on specific measures of self-control and deviance to support the theory's strongest implications (Tittle et al. 2003:450).

Scholars Turner, Piquero, and Pratt (2005) also studied this theory and youth involvement in crime, specifically examining the role of the school context in shaping self-control (327). Although the family, school and teachers socialize many children have the ability to further monitor behaviour, recognize deviant behaviour, and punish deviant behaviour, proving that this study helps to expand on previous knowledge on self-control theory (Turner et al. 2005:330). The authors used information gathered from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child-Mother data, oversampling traditionally

disadvantaged populations to gather a richer understanding on this group of individuals (Turner et al. 2005:331). They used measures of several parenting practices that aligned with the theory as well as a behavioural problem index to measure self-control amongst respondents (Turner et al. 2005:332). Consistent with the predictions made by Gottfredson and Hirschi, the authors found that children of parents who did not supervise well or who exhibited negative discipline and punishment tended to have lower self-control (Turner et al. 2005:333). They found that measures of school socialization emerged as significant in an individual's level of self-control as well (Turner et al. 2005:335). Turner et al. (2005) furthered the connection between gender and self-control, stating that females were likelier than males to have higher self-control (333). According to these findings, the gender differences in youth crime can be attributed to the varying ways in which males and females experience socialization, in turn impacting self-control.

Muftić and Updegrave (2017) further built upon existing findings, examining the relationships between parenting techniques, low self-control, and juvenile delinquency in relation to Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory (3058). The scholars used a large-scale intersectional sample of 31 countries with data from the International Self-Reported Delinquency Study, including measures of delinquency, victimization, and various criminological concepts (Muftić and Updegrave 2017:3063). Their results indicated that parenting has a direct impact on whether or not youth engage in violence or property offenses, with self-control weakening the strength of this relationship but not fully mediating it (Muftić and Updegrave 2017:3067). They also found that males reported lower levels of self-control, exposure to poorer parenting

techniques, and higher rates of delinquency (Muftić and Updegrave 2017:3067-3069). These findings support Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory that females should display higher levels of self-control, helping to explain the well-documented gender gap in offending (Muftić and Updegrave 2017:3059).

Studies on General Strain Theory

Numerous studies utilized Agnew's general strain theory to further analyze the differences in youth crime based on gender, examining how strain and stressors impact adolescents and their delinquent behaviour. For example, Baron (2004) studied general strain and crime amongst homeless street youth, looking how specific types of strain lead to crime and drug use (457). He further explored how strain manifests differently when interacting with conditioning variables such as deviant peers, deviant attitudes, external attributions, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Baron 2004:457). Following four sampling criteria, Baron (2004) collected self-reported data from four hundred street youth who resided in Vancouver, Canada (465). Consistent with general strain theory, the results suggested that strain leads to anger, with anger being a significant predictor of total crime (Baron 2004:470). Data also showed that total crime is related to deviant peers, deviant attitudes, and self-esteem, indicating that those with higher self-esteem were more likely to be involved in a greater number of offences (Baron 2004:472). Baron (2004) further analyzed strain and its relationship to gender, summarizing Agnew's argument that gender differences in crime are due to the differences in the types of strain that males and females experience rather than the result of the differences in strain levels (475). That said, Baron (2004) found that gender was a significant predictor of crime, however, he suggested that more data must be collected

in order to fully explore the influence of gender differences in strain, affect, and coping mechanisms as well as their impact on youth crime as a whole (475).

Scholars Sharp et al. (2005) conducted a gendered analysis on general strain theory, attempting to understand female deviance better as they tend to be underrepresented in such research (133). Using data collected from 705 youth, separate analyses for males and females, as well as two different measures of deviance, the study provided insight into the gendered nature of strain and crime (Sharp et al. 2005:138-142). The author's preliminary findings indicated both similarities and differences in how males and females respond to strain, with females reporting less criminal activity overall (Sharp et al. 2005:150). Their findings also suggested that there is a complex relationship between emotional responses and criminal behaviour for females (Sharp et al. 2005:153). The authors found that both males and females responded to strain with anger, however, females also reacted with other negative emotional responses (Sharp et al. 2005:153). They found that while female anger was associated with criminal behaviour, other negative emotions had the opposite effect, suggesting that female crime might be lower because females are more likely to respond with multiple emotions (Sharp et al. 2005:153). They further explained that females are less likely to engage in crime but more likely to respond to strain with self-directed deviance such as eating disorders (Sharp et al. 2005:153). Sharp et al. (2005) concluded that only females benefited from social support, helping to reduce their negative emotional responses, highlighting the importance of implementing extra support for female youth (152).

Czerwińska-Jakimiuk (2011) further tested general strain theory on youth crime,

focusing on explaining the factors contributing to the unlawful actions of juvenile individuals (114). The data was collected through questionnaires and self-reports from 179 young prisoners as well as 145 pupils from one vocational school and one vocational technical high school in Poland (Czerwińska-Jakimiuk 2011:117). The respondents were selected based on their age and sex as the author attempted to highlight how young males experience strain (Czerwińska-Jakimiuk 2011:117). The results validated Agnew's general strain theory, finding that the higher the level of general strain, the more frequent the criminal behaviour on average (Czerwińska-Jakimiuk 2011:117). Strains identified by the author such as financial problems in the examined person's family, a pessimistic assessment of own life perspectives, and social reality of the country, corresponds on average to a higher intensity of criminal behaviours (Czerwińska-Jakimiuk 2011:119). Furthermore, the lower the self-esteem and the stronger the tendency to blame the environment for one's failures resulted in more frequent criminal behaviours on average (Czerwińska-Jakimiuk 2011:119). These results suggest that general strain theory has the potential to serve as a useful explanation for youth crime (Czerwińska-Jakimiuk 2011:114). The author concluded by highlighting the importance of using therapy, rehabilitation, as well as criminal and social policy when preventing criminal behaviour amongst youth (Czerwińska-Jakimiuk 2011:119).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout this paper, it has become evident that youth crime is a large issue within society, as adolescents are more likely to engage in delinquent activities compared to their counterparts (Ulmer and Steffensmeier 2014:377). It has also been

proven that gender differences within youth crime are an issue, with males engaging in crime at a much higher rate than females (Kruttschnitt 2013:294). However, these issues can be solved by implementing several policies targeting this specific group of offenders. Some of these policy recommendations target youth offenders as a whole, and others target offenders based on their gender differences. That said, they are all recommendations grounded in both the theoretical perspectives and research findings.

Consistent with the findings on self-control theory, free parenting programs could help to educate parents on positive discipline techniques and strategies, teaching them how to promote self-control within the home. Through workshops or home visitation programs, trained professionals could teach parents about positive reinforcement, helping to shift the focus from punitive measures. They could also provide training on conflict resolution techniques to equip parents with the skills needed to positively address conflicts in the home. This would help children to experience positive role models in their own families, learning how to treat others properly with kindness and respect. Parents could even receive access to additional support services such as mental health resources, financial assistance, and other community programs in order to alleviate the common stressors that prohibit parents from socializing their children adequately. While being useful to all young offenders, this policy recommendation would be extremely beneficial for males since they tend to experience less parental control, resulting in lower self-control (Muftić and Updegrave 2017:3059).

Per general strain theory, increased mental health support would be useful in reducing the strains and stressors

experienced by adolescents. This could be done by providing mental health resources within the school and by integrating mental health education into the school curriculum. Children might not actively search for help when experiencing strains or stressors. However, mental health services within the school system would provide easy access for students who are not aware they need the assistance. School boards could focus on employing extra counsellors, psychologists, and social workers who can offer support and counselling to those in need. These trained professionals can teach students how to cope with their strains using methods such as journaling, breathing exercises, positive thinking, and meditation. Furthermore, by adding a mental health component into the curriculum, students can learn about why they are feeling the way they do which could in turn help them to solve the issues they are experiencing on their own. Learning about mental health in school could further eliminate the stigmas that often keep youth from speaking out about their struggles. This policy recommendation would be useful for youth offenders as a whole, but specifically female offenders who tend to respond better to social support (Sharp et al. 2005:152).

Both self-control theory and general strain theory prove that increased community engagement could help to reduce youth crime as a whole. Communities could implement free after-school activities for adolescents that involve physical activity and relationship building. There could be community leaders and mentors present throughout these activities to provide youth with a positive adult figure. This would be highly beneficial for those who might need a role model in their own home. Moreover, children could learn how to properly engage with their peers through fun games and activities. This positive

atmosphere helps reduce strains and stressors while also teaching children self-control. By providing an engaging after-school program that adults constantly monitor, youth might be less likely to associate with deviant peers and participate in deviant activities within the community. This policy recommendation would clearly help to reduce crime amongst all young offenders.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of youth crime and the factors influencing adolescents to become offenders or victims of crime is a complex and evolving field of study. With both age and gender being a common predictor of criminal behaviour, the acknowledgement of its pivotal role remains fundamental to sociological learning and growth (Ulmer and Steffensmeier 2014:393; Kruttschnitt 2013:292). Although females continue to commit crimes at a much higher rate than in the past, there remains a gender gap in crime due to some significant gender differences (Kruttschnitt 2013:294). This paper delves into Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory and Agnew's general strain theory, exploring their implications in understanding youth crime and gender differences amongst young offenders. These theories, along with relevant research findings, have ultimately highlighted the importance of implementing the recommended policies to reduce youth crime.

REFERENCES

- Agnew, Robert. 1992. "Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency." *Criminology (Beverly Hills)* 30(1):47-88.
- Baron, Stephen W. 2004. "General Strain, Street Youth and Crime: A Test of Agnew's Revised Theory."

- Criminology (Beverly Hills)* 42(2):457–84.
- Boyd, Neil and Fiona M. Kay. 2019. "Gender and Crime." Pp. 217–36 in *Understanding crime in Canada: An introduction to criminology*. Toronto, Canada: Emond.
- Czerwińska-Jakimiuk, Ewa. 2011. "Youth Crime. An Empirical Test of Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory." *Problems of Forensic Sciences* 86:114–26.
- Gottfredson, Michael R. and Travis Hirschi. 1990. "The Nature of Criminality: Low Self-Control." Pp. 87–120 in *A General Theory of Crime*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gottfredson, Michael R. and Travis Hirschi. 2000. "In Defense of Self-Control." *Theoretical Criminology* 4(1):55–69.
- Kruttschnitt, Candace. 2013. "Gender and Crime." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39(1):291–308.
- Muftić, Lisa R. and Alexander H. Updegrave. 2017. "The Mediating Effect of Self-Control on Parenting and Delinquency: A Gendered Approach with a Multinational Sample." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 62(10):3058–76.
- Perez, Nicholas M., Wesley G. Jennings, and Michael T. Baglivio. 2016. "A Path to Serious, Violent, Chronic Delinquency: The Harmful Aftermath of Adverse Childhood Experiences." *Crime & Delinquency* 64(1):3–25.
- Sharp, Susan F., Dennis Brewster, and Sharon RedHawk Love. 2005. "Disentangling Strain, Personal Attributes, Affective Response and Deviance: A Gendered Analysis." *Deviant Behavior* 26(2):133–57.
- Tittle, Charles R., David A. Ward, and Harold G. Grasmick. 2003. "Gender, Age, and Crime/Deviance: A Challenge to Self-Control Theory." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 40(4):426–53.
- Turner, Michael G., Alex R. Piquero, and Travis C. Pratt. 2005. "The School Context as a Source of Self-Control." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 33(4):327–39.
- Ulmer, Jeffery T. and Darrell Steffensmeier. 2014. "The Age and Crime Relationship: Social Variation, Social Explanations." *The Nurture Versus Biosocial Debate in Criminology: On the Origins of Criminal Behavior and Criminality* 377–96.

Unveiling Snapchat's Modern Panopticon and Normalization of Surveillance Culture

By: Jocelyn Ehlers

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, with many of our social relationships existing online, it is necessary to understand how our digital data is employed. Snapchat is a trendy social media site among teenagers (Parker, 2022). It is an application that allows users to communicate by sending photos and videos to one another, and it is known for its ephemeral nature. Snapchat's short-lasting nature invites users as it appears low stakes, but rather, it is not short-lasting as the application engages in extensive data surveillance (Parker 2022). First, I will engage with my data, highlighting how Snapchat utilizes my data to personalize my experiences with the application and promote further engagement. Then, I will discuss how Snapchat models a modern panopticon system and how surveillance culture has normalized location sharing, creating consequences for those who unquestioningly engage with surveillance. In contemporary society, Snapchat's establishment of a modern panopticon through location sharing highlights the need for users to be attentive to their digital footprints while raising concerns about privacy and the normalization of surveillance culture due to the potential consequences for vulnerable stakeholders.

PART 1

Snapchat's data gathering, which includes personal information like birthdays, provides insights into user's identities and creates personalized experiences. Snapchat requires all users to enter their birthdates and unique information used on their

birthdays to help celebrate their birthdays with friends (Privacy and Safety Hub 2023). On my birthday, a specific filter is always available for me personalized with my name, and my avatar icon is equipped with a party hat. This personalization is automatic for all users and allows their experience on their birthday to be catered to them, signifying to other users that it is their birthday. When it is my birthday, my friends can also use customized filters generated by the app when sending me messages to help further customize my birthday experience. While this information is not particularly revealing, it exemplifies how Snapchat employs my data to customize my experience to promote further engagement.

Furthermore, Snapchat employs location data collected on users to curate a personalized catalogue of other users an individual may know. The "Quick Ad" feature on Snapchat enables users to connect with individuals they may have in their contacts list but have not yet added to Snapchat (Privacy and Safety Hub 2023). Snapchat also curates the "Quick Ad" list based on users' location relative to other users. For example, over the summer, my "Quick Ad" list consisted exclusively of my co-workers for my summer job, who I did not have on the application. Now my "Quick Ad" list consists of various classmates I do not have on the application. This list was successfully curated as it is aligned with my present interests and creates a personalized experience. This list demonstrates that Snapchat is utilizing my location data relative to other users to curate a personalized list based on the individuals I am proximal to the most. This data trail reveals users' changing social dynamics, giving insight into users' social behaviour based on the locations they are in the most. Snapchat leverages this social data to encourage user engagement and connection

by tailoring personalized catalogues of people that may align with their interests.

Additionally, location tracking features on Snapchat allow the platform to use a multifaceted lens to see users' geographical patterns. Snapchat's "Snap Map" feature is specifically designed to enable users to see their friends' locations either live or when they were last active on the app (Privacy and Safety Hub 2023). "Snap Maps" alerts users when others travel long distances, reporting the distance under the "Recent Moves" function of "Snap Maps" (Privacy and Safety Hub 2023). This feature highlights long-distance travel for a prolonged period, enabling users' friends to track their movements. For example, I travel far to go home for reading week, thus my movement is tracked under the "Recent Moves" function. This produces an accurate data trail that is traceable to my friends on the application, allowing them insight into my routines.

Similarly, Snapchat gains insight into users' habits by collecting location data through Wi-Fi positioning, cell tower triangulation, and GPS. The app tracks where, when, and how frequently I visit specific locations and indicates places I see the most through "heat maps" shown on the "Snap Maps" feature (Privacy and Safety Hub 2023). For example, my student house in Kingston is highlighted on my "Snap Map" along with my parents' house, restaurants I frequently visit and Stauffer Library. The times that I often go to these places are also tracked, so I can get recommendations to visit these places around the times that I typically do. From this extensive information, Snapchat gains insight into my daily patterns, such as frequently visit the library late at night, demonstrating my nocturnal tendencies. Location data is highly revealing as it offers insight into various aspects of an

individual's habits, social connections, and interests. This exercise has revealed that while location data may be used to enhance my experience with the app, it also allows the app extensive insight into my personal life. Should this data be improperly controlled, there could be significant consequences. Thus, in the future, this knowledge will inform my engagement with surveillance, particularly location data, which appears the most revealing.

PART 2

Snapchat's Snap Map feature functions like a modern panopticon, redefining control and social order ideas. The Panopticon is a concept and architectural design developed to maximize surveillance and control over inmates (Bentham 2018). In Snap Maps, users can share their location, allowing others to monitor their whereabouts (ABC News 2017). Users' locations are updated every time they open the app, and other users can see different locations invisibly (ABC News 2017). This is similar to Bentham's (2018) hypothetical prison, where a central watch tower ensures constant monitoring without inmates knowing when they are being observed. In this system, the observer maintains power, by watching and scrutinizing the observed, while the observed is the subject of surveillance (Foucault 2018). This visibility shapes behaviour as users are unaware of when they are being watched, encouraging them to conform to social norms to avoid repercussions. For example, users may abstain from using the app in improper locations to prevent others' scrutiny as they are unaware of who may be watching. Thus, Snap Maps models a contemporary panopticon where users play the roles of both the observer and the observed,

influencing social behaviour through the uncertainty of being watched.

Moreover, Snap Maps has recently introduced live location tracking, further exemplifying Bentham's panopticon in everyday life. Live location tracking on Snapchat is more specific and highly detailed, allowing users to share their active location with other users of their choosing (Hutchinson 2022). Bentham (2018) posits that the more closely a person can be watched and the higher the chance an individual is being watched, the stronger the persuasion that an object is being analyzed, influencing the object's behaviour. Live location tracking increases the observer's power as the observer cannot prevent monitoring by abstaining from the app. Instead, observers have continuous access to the observed location data, and the observed can be watched more closely and have a greater chance of being observed (Hutchinson 2022). Potential observation encourages the observed to monitor their behaviours appropriately, and the threat of constant surveillance encourages continued behaviour modification. For example, observers can constantly check the marked location, potentially dissuading the observed from engaging in undesirable activities. The implementation of Snapchat's live location tracking feature increases the likelihood of behaviour modification as the observed can be monitored more closely, forcing users to conform to social norms to prevent possible repercussions continuously.

In contemporary society, surveillance has become frequently integrated into citizens' lives, with features such as Snapchat's Snap Maps serving as a prime example of how surveillance has become part of our culture. Surveillance culture encompasses the normalization of monitoring, where individuals actively participate in and enable surveillance (Lyon

2020). Surveillance is no longer an external force that seeks to monitor our lives. Instead, it has evolved into something that is willingly used and engaged with by everyday citizens (Lyon 2017). Snap Maps allows users to share their location with other users, but to engage with the feature, users must be active, knowledgeable participants. Upon downloading the app, Snapchat automatically turns off location services, preventing other users from accessing an individual's location (ABC News 2017). To engage with this feature, users must engage with the app and navigate through settings and privacy options, making a conscious decision to enable location sharing. This process also requires users to indicate their desired level of privacy, whether their location is shared with a specific group of people or is visible to all their contacts (ABC News 2017). This exemplifies the agency that engages with surveillance culture. Social media users play an active role in facilitating their surveillance and the surveillance of others, contributing to the persistence of mass surveillance in the digital age.

The persistence of surveillance due to active user engagement has raised privacy concerns, which have implications for the safety of social media users. Although individuals actively facilitate surveillance through location sharing, surveillance culture has normalized surveillance practices, diminishing their weight (Lyon 2020). Some users may attempt to resist surveillance, but surveillance is often implemented unquestioned because of the normalization of surveillance (Albrechtslund 2008). Due to its normalcy, users may knowingly or unknowingly overlook privacy settings, and display behaviours from indifference to ignorance which can have safety implications (Albrechtslund 2008). Snapchat's primary stakeholders are

teenagers who tend to follow social norms, and enable location sharing, as it appears normalized (Stathis 2022). This can have consequences for teenagers, who do not understand the significance of location sharing. For example, a group of boys employed Snap Maps to locate a party in Melbourne, Australia (Stathis, 2022). They located someone's party, and a 16-year-old girl was allegedly assaulted by one of the boys at the party (Stathis 2022). The normalization of location sharing in surveillance culture, which has led users to overlook privacy settings, renders users vulnerable and potential targets for dire consequences.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Snapchat illustrates how personal data is exploited for personalization while simultaneously redefining modern understandings of privacy and surveillance culture. Snapchat's Snap Map feature highlights how users are both subjects and agents of surveillance, creating a modern panopticon that encourages behaviour modification through observing peers. Exploring my data has underlined the need for users to remain vigilant about understanding their digital footprints, as the normalization of surveillance has encouraged ignorance, which can have dire consequences. In a society where surveillance is becoming increasingly normalized, it is essential to understand the extent of data collection and maintain an active role in surveillance to protect our digital well-being and privacy.

REFERENCES

- ABC News. 2017. "Snapchat's New Snap Map Feature Raises Privacy Concerns." Retrieved Nov. 1, 2023(<https://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/snapchats-snap-map-feature-raises-privacy-concerns/story?id=48271889>).
- Albrechtslund, Anders. 2018. "Online Social Networking as Participatory Surveillance" Pp. 317-320 in *Surveillance Studies A Reader*, edited by T. Monahan and D. Murakami Wood. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bentham, Jeremy. 2018. "The Panopticon." Excerpt Pp. 31-35 in *Surveillance Studies A Reader*, edited by T. Monahan and D. Murakami Wood. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 2018. "Discipline and Punish." Pp. 36-41 in *Surveillance Studies A Reader*, edited by T. Monahan and D. Murakami Wood. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hutchinson, Andrew. 2018. "Snapchat Adds Two New Location-Based Ad Options." *Social Media Today*. Retrieved Nov. 1, 2023(<https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/snapchat-adds-two-new-location-based-ad-options/519795/>).
- Lyon, David. 2017. "Surveillance Culture: Exposure, Engagement and Ethics in Digital Modernity." *International Journal of Communication*. 11: 824-842.
- Lyon, David. 2020. "Surveillance Capitalism, Surveillance Culture and Data Politics." Pp. 1-14 in *Data Politics: Worlds, Subjects, Rights*, D. Bigo, E. Isin, and E. Ruppert (eds). Routledge.
- Parker, Wayne. 2022. "The Risks and Danger of Snapchat for Teens." VeryWell Family. Retrieved Nov. 1, 2023(<https://www.verywellfamily.com/what-is-snapchat-and-its-use-1270338>).

Privacy and Safety Hub. 2023. "Privacy Policy." Retrieved Oct. 30, 2023(<https://values.snap.com/privacy/privacy-policy>).

Privacy and Safety Hub. 2023. "How We Use Your Information." Retrieved Oct. 30, 2023 (<https://values.snap.com/privacy/your-information>).

Stathis, Carina. 2022. "Urgent snapchat warning for parents as young kids and teens accidentally give away their exact address on a map to strangers after new update." Daily Mail. Retrieved Nov. 3, 2023(<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/real-life/article-10981973/Snapchat-update-Warning-parents-kids-accidentally-away-EXACT-location.html>).

Gender as a Colonial Creation

By: Beth Smith

Colonialism has invaded and transformed many elements of life, notably in the West, including capitalism, the environment, society, culture, and more. This refers to gender and gender norms, which colonizers imposed to create a standardized social framework for their benefit, ignoring Indigenous communities' diverse gender spectrums and roles until they were destroyed. Maria Lugones (2010) developed the term "coloniality of gender" to describe the dichotomous rule over Indigenous peoples in North America, which has shaped gender roles throughout history. The themes of dehumanization, colonial conformity, and intersectionality and both authors' arguments show this.

The themes within these readings share the commonality that they are an outcome or pairing of colonialism of indigenous peoples. Firstly, the theme of invasion and dehumanization. The process of colonization included the invasion and assimilation of Indigenous populations, driven by the pursuit of power and capital. The power system was characterized by wealthy people who were white, Catholic, and male occupying the highest positions, while those who were colonized were perceived as non-human (Lugones 743). This dichotomous structure of the colonialist society view is not only about power but also about the reduction and dehumanization of individuals who were not the powerful (Lugones 745). This was accomplished by unequal classification, specifically the dehumanization and animal comparison to Indigenous women, which we see through the personal stories of Maracle and her journey of her culture being a transformed woman (Maracle 37).

Furthermore, the modern issue of gender divides in the Western world can be attributed to the themes of colonial conformity and the reproduction of gender norms. The arrival of colonists introduced their perspectives on binary gender norms, which entailed the assignment of particular tasks and responsibilities to people based on their sex, establishing an inseparable association between sex and gender (Lugones 744). Throughout history, there has been a general awareness that white women were not considered equal to males, but instead were essentially valued for their ability to reproduce and perform obligations at home (Lugones). Maracle presents an objection to gender norms by "questioning what is genitalia," asserting that they do not determine your characteristics or role, hence suggesting that sex does not inherently impose a valid societal responsibility to allocate specific roles and responsibilities (Maracle 36).

The theme of intersectionality is a prominent subject throughout the course material and the written works of both Lugones and Maracle. The phenomenon being discussed here pertains to the simultaneous appearance of several forms of oppression, which impact an individual and further alienate them from other marginalized groups (Lugones 754). In the Western world, indigenous women experience higher levels of oppression compared to white women. Individuals who do not conform to a particular gender identity or identify as a "transformed woman," in addition to being a racial or cultural minority, encounter challenges that surpass white privileged women; despite the overall dichotomous gender structure of North America, all women are not equal, some are below others (Maracle 42). In the work by Lugones (2010), the concept of colonialist gender is presented,

shedding light on colonialism's influence on our understanding of gender and feminism, both historically and in contemporary times. She explores the concept of gender colonialism and its influence on our understanding of gender within the framework of colonialist ideals, such as family and societal structure norms and the gender binary (Lugones 743-745). She discusses the prevailing belief that heterosexuality is the default sexual orientation, clarifying the complexity of decolonizing gender by highlighting that the very notion of gender is contingent upon colonization. Consequently, to effectively address intersectional oppression, it is essential to deconstruct our understanding of colonization (Lugones 745-752). Maracle's writing supports Lugones, she continues to build on the coloniality of gender through her perspective.

In her work, Maracle (2000) examines the perspective of indigenous communities and their cultural past concerning gender binaries and the absence of heterosexual classifications. She describes how the suppression and hiding of "special people" shaped these societies' culture. Indigenous trans woman Maracle explains the intersectional argument of colonialism and gender in her viewpoint. Her life experiences help her overcome the lesbian or transexual label the West has imposed on her. She claims transformation. Western transgender persons were traditionally two-soul people in indigenous cultures. These people were held in esteem in their communities for their wisdom and unique role in the world (Maracle 40-41). Colonizers imposed Western social structures and gender standards on indigenous culture, destroying its sacredness for power. This is one example of imperialist societies' intersecting oppression

of non-binary or changed indigenous women.

My challenge with these writings was the prevalent colonialist framework and societal norms that shape our culture. The inadvertent perpetuation of gender stereotypes is inherent in every educational institution, as they are rooted in colonialist principles that have shaped our world. Acquiring knowledge about the historical perspectives on gender in colonialist societies and indigenous cultures, which reject the notion of gender binary, has expanded my comprehension of the range of gender identities. The dichotomous control over Indigenous peoples in North America has affected gender norms throughout history, which Maria Lugones (2010) called the "coloniality of gender." Both Lugones and Maracle's ideas demonstrate dehumanization, colonial conformity, and intersectionality to convey this point.

References

- Lugones, María C. "Toward a Decolonial Feminism." *Hypatia*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2010, pp. 742- 759.
- Maracle, Aiyana. "A Journey in Gender." *Torquere: Journal of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies Association*, vol. 2, 2000, pp. 36-57.

**Investigating Bonilla-Silva's
Theory of Colour-Blind Racism in
the Context of Healthcare
Disparities:
A Theoretical Analysis of New
Racisms and Healthcare
Inequality By: Chloe Fraser**

Inadequacies and inequalities in healthcare spheres are problems that are deeply entrenched in greater social mechanisms and structures, which directly leads to the marginalization and racialization of individuals, thus causing disproportionate exposure to inadequate and unsafe healthcare services. These inequalities within healthcare systems can be directly tied back to new racism, that being forms of racism that are covert and hidden in broader social systems, thus making them highly pervasive in societal structures, practices, and unwritten policies. A theoretical perspective that can be applied to these disparities within healthcare spheres is Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism. According to Bonilla-Silva, colour-blind racism assumes that new racial structures work in covert ways, as there are dominant practices that reproduce and reinforce racial inequality through normalizing, rationalizing, and perpetuating hidden and unconscious forms of racism within social structures, practices, institutions, and ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Colour-blind racism aims to investigate and understand dominant forms of thought that frame modern societal systems as 'post-racial' by highlighting and acknowledging systematic and institutionalized mechanisms that maintain racial order and racial hierarchies within our societies. Colour blind racism assumes that it is through the denial of racism, minimization of racism, claiming that racism

is an issue of the past, and using frameworks of cultural racism to explain away racial inequalities, that covert racism persists in pervasive and institutionalized ways. Thus, Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism can be applied to the evident disparities within healthcare spheres, such that it directly highlights how racialized groups face significantly more challenges when trying to gain access to safe and dependable healthcare services. Racial structures that uphold these systems of disadvantage are hidden within institutionalized mechanisms of racial order that are disguised as post-racial through processes of denial, minimization, rationalization, and justification. Therefore, there are systematic and standardized mechanisms that maintain racial order within healthcare spheres in our societies, which create adverse medical experiences for racialized individuals while simultaneously silencing racialized voices as a means of preserving the status quo.

In Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism, four central frameworks are highlighted, which seek to explain how colour-blind racism is reproduced and reinforced in overarching social spheres. These frameworks include narratives of merit or abstract liberalism, essentialism and naturalization, cultural racism, as well as minimization (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Narratives of merit refer to ideological notions of liberalism that are used to deny the existence of racism by claiming that racial inequality is intertwined with individual choice (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Through the use of narratives of merit, dominant racial groups can covertly reinforce racial structures, meaning that abstract liberalism rests on the foundation of meritocracy and economic liberalism. In other words, narratives of merit reinforce and perpetuate racial order by denying the

existence of institutionalized racism and instilling the notion that all individuals have equal opportunities, meaning that individual choice facilitates racial hierarchies or inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Further, narratives of essentialism refer to ideologies that seek to justify racism as a naturally occurring phenomenon within societies, meaning that by claiming racism is an inherent process, dominant racial groups are able to normalize, rationalize, and justify its occurrence (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Narratives of essentialism reinforce social hierarchies of race by framing both racism and racial inequality as fixed and unchangeable issues, meaning that covert forms of racism, in its entirety, are perpetuated by the normalization of dominant ideologies that perceive it as a natural occurrence that cannot be resolved. Therefore, naturalization reinforces and reproduces systems of institutional racism in such a way that racial inequality is extenuated, which silences racialized voices and experiences.

Additionally, narratives of cultural racism strengthen covert forms of racism, such that these discourses draw on prejudicial racial stereotypes to explain why racial minorities face disproportionate amounts of systemic barriers within society (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). It is through the process of placing the blame on racialized individuals for the perpetuation of these disadvantages that racial order is strengthened. Thus, narratives of cultural deficiency narratives of cultural deficiency uphold racial hierarchies by using negative cultural stereotypes to claim that cultural or racial groups are inferior and therefore responsible for the perpetuation of racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Consequently, this process ignores covert forms of racism in such a way that perpetuates and reinforces racial structures

in terms of disproportionately targeting racialized groups and sustaining racial hierarchies that place racialized groups in subordinate social positions. Lastly, narratives of minimization reinforce and normalize the idea that the current social climate is post-racial by highlighting the decrease in overt forms of racism and ignoring racism in its covert forms (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Consequently, this systematically normalizes, justifies, and rationalizes covert forms of racism that create institutional barriers for racialized individuals through silencing and ignoring racialized voices and struggles. Therefore, narratives of minimization seek to exclude racialized voices from conversations regarding racial inequality, such that the existence of racial structures and institutional forms of racism are ignored. Overall, the four core frameworks found within the theory of colour-blind racism, those being narratives of merit, essentialism, cultural deficiency, and minimization, directly explain the mechanisms, practices, and ideologies that reinforce institutional racism, such that covert forms of racism are denied, normalized, justified, and rationalized. As a result, dominant ideologies, policies, and practices that uphold structures of white privilege and white power are institutionalized, thus systematically perpetuating covert forms of racism that disproportionately target racialized individuals in virtually all social spheres.

Subsequently, it is crucial to draw on relevant literature to highlight the pervasive nature of covert and institutionalized racism, as this reveals how racialized individuals are disproportionately affected by disparities within healthcare sectors. Across academic literature, common themes that can be identified center around the idea that structural and institutional forms of racism

perpetuate healthcare disparities, such that people of colour are disproportionately exposed to structures of disadvantage and oppression that lead to adverse health outcomes. Healthcare disparities are perpetuated by colour-blind racism, such that there are underlying mechanisms that reproduce ideological notions of white superiority and white power. This means that social structures and institutions are systematically designed to benefit and privilege whiteness in economic, political, educational, social, and especially healthcare spheres (Phillips-Beck et al., 2020). Therefore, common themes found throughout scholarly literature focusing on colour-blind racism and healthcare disparities surround the notion that racism is highly pervasive and institutionalized, meaning that through the denial, rationalization, justification, and normalization of racialized practices, policies, and ideologies, covert racism perpetuates the persistence of racial order and inequality within healthcare spheres.

Moreover, it is also crucial to acknowledge how relevant literature can be mapped onto Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism, as this directly highlights the structures and mechanisms that reinforce, reproduce, and strengthen healthcare disparities in racial contexts. For example, in Brooke Cunningham's article, she highlights how colour-blind racism both informs and is informed by healthcare practices, such that covert forms of racism contribute to the ways in which racialized individuals are treated and diagnosed (Cunningham et al., 2018). Thus, it is through rationalizing and denying racism that racial hierarchies are upheld, meaning that institutionalized forms of racism work in pervasive ways to reinforce racial inequality by denying its existence entirely, thus impacting patient experience and care.

These ideas presented by Cunningham mirror the arguments presented in Elizabeth Dayo's article, as it mentioned how post-racial ideological notions are found at the foundation of healthcare spheres, meaning that there are deeply entrenched mechanisms that seek to deny, minimize, and disregard structures of racial order (Dayo et al., 2023). Further, Dayo discusses how colour-blind racism reinforces frameworks that idealize whiteness, meaning that within healthcare spheres, whiteness is considered the norm. Consequently, these frameworks and ideologies of white superiority suppress, silence, and negate racialized voices and experiences by framing healthcare systems as post-racial while simultaneously targeting racialized groups with medicalized forms of racism.

Furthermore, these assertions can be connected to the arguments found within Wanda Phillips-Beck's article, as she states how structural inequalities, primarily as it relates to race, are rationalized by dominant ideologies that deny the existence of racial disparities by instilling claims that current social, political, and economic spheres are post-racial (Phillips-Beck et al., 2020). As a result, dominant racial groups gain institutional power over racialized groups, which maintains, reinforces, and strengthens white privilege across all social structures and spheres. Paula Braveman builds upon this by discussing how racial segregation, economic disparity and disadvantage, as well as political disempowerment, in both historical and current contexts, reproduce healthcare inequality, such that they encourage systemic racism and reproduce racial order (Braveman et al., 2022). Therefore, through analyzing the work of Cunningham, Dayo, Phillips-Beck, and Braveman, it becomes clear that systemic and institutional forms of racism are highly pervasive and found throughout all social

structures, institutions, spheres, and arenas. Investigating these racial structures, as it relates to Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism, directly highlights how covert forms of racism are denied, rationalized, normalized, and justified in healthcare spheres, thus leading to the perpetuation of racial hierarchal systems of oppression and domination in diagnostic, treatment, and patient care processes. Overall, the relevant literature discussed above provides insight as to how the persistence of institutionalized racism is intertwined with healthcare disparities, such that the methods of denial, minimization, justification, and rationalization facilitate the pervasiveness of racism within healthcare domains.

In addition to this, the literature above can be extended to discuss how Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism can be directly applied to the topic of healthcare inequality, explicitly concerning the concealed forms of racism found throughout healthcare spheres that impact patient experience and illness experience. The main theoretical components of the theory of colour-blind racism inform healthcare disparities, such that through the use of narratives of merit, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization, dominant racial structures are able to uphold systems of white privilege while synchronously perpetuating and reinforcing racial structures of oppression and domination (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Through critiquing these rationalized ideologies, the theory of colour-blind racism reveals how white privilege is reproduced in pervasive ways, such that it becomes institutionalized and embedded within overarching mechanisms that claim to be post- or non-racial. Thus, dominant racial structures and ideologies reproduce and perpetuate whiteness by denying the existence of racism altogether, framing racial inequalities as naturally occurring

phenomenon, using notions of cultural deficiency to explain away racial inequality, as well as claiming society is post-racial due to decreased overt forms of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). These processes are especially evident in healthcare spheres, as racialized individuals face systemic barriers when trying to gain access to safe, reliable, and affordable healthcare services, such that they are disproportionately exposed to adverse and inadequate healthcare (Dayo et al., 2023). A specific example concerns how Indigenous and First Nations individuals face systematic barriers in healthcare spheres, as Indigenous patients are disproportionately exposed to unsafe procedures, inadequate care, and inaccessible medical services (Phillips-Beck et al., 2020). That being said, racial order both maintains and is maintained by racial inequalities, as these frameworks seek to silence racialized voices and negate minority experiences, which others these individuals in the process, leading to the accessibility, quality, and dependability of healthcare services to become threatened for racialized individuals (Phillips-Beck et al., 2020).

However, there are limitations to Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism, as it fails to investigate institutionalized racism from an intersectional perspective. This means that the theory of colour-blind racism is limited, as it does not recognize the existence of overlapping forms of oppression that interact to create unique experiences of oppression and discrimination. As it relates to healthcare disparities, understanding how colour-blind racism reproduces and reinforces racial order from an intersectional perspective is necessary, as this directly highlights how multiple forms of oppression interact to shape personal experiences of healthcare. For example, Black women disproportionately experience significantly

more adverse health outcomes compared to white women due to overlapping arenas of oppression rooted in racism, sexism, and patriarchal ideologies (Dayo et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of acknowledging multiple arenas of oppression, such that sexism, racism, and heterosexism all interact to produce racialized disadvantage in economic, political, social and healthcare domains. Thus, overlapping and interconnected forms of oppression perpetuate the occurrence of unfair and unjust treatment of racialized individuals, leading to adverse health outcomes. Therefore, Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism is instrumental in acknowledging and investigating the covert forms of racism that reproduce and reinforce systems of structural disadvantage and inequality. However, it is limited in that it fails to encompass an intersectional perspective of interconnected forms of oppression that influence individual experiences of health.

Conclusively, building on the principles of critical race theory, Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism provides insight as to how the persistence of systemic racism is directly tied to processes of denying, normalizing, minimizing, and justifying racial structures and racial order. This means that there are dominant practices, policies, ideologies, and beliefs in place that seek to uphold white privilege while simultaneously subordinating racialized individuals, thus making institutional racism highly pervasive. At the core of Bonilla-Silva's theory of colour-blind racism, it is discussed how, through processes of denying, rationalizing, justifying, and diminishing the existence of racial inequality, the reproduction of white supremacy, power, and privilege are encouraged and strengthened.

These ideological notions can be applied to healthcare disparities, such that racialized individuals experience significantly more adverse health outcomes due to forms of structural racism that reinforce racial hierarchies, which are manifested through processes of excluding, silencing, and ignoring racialized voices and experiences. However, in order to understand how these mechanisms uphold whiteness while simultaneously subordinating racialized individuals, it is crucial to use an intersectional lens such that the overlapping forms of oppression that further contribute to adverse health outcomes are acknowledged and dismantled. Therefore, dominant practices, ideologies, and beliefs within healthcare sectors strengthen institutional forms of racism, such that racialized groups are forced to remain in inferior social positions, wherein they are exposed to inadequate forms of healthcare. Overall, this means that racial structures are systematically created in such a way that white people are empowered and advantaged, while people of colour are oppressed and subordinated across all social spheres and institutions.

References

- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2015). The structure of racism in color-blind, "post-racial" America. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(11), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764215586826>
- Braveman, P. A., Arkin, E., Proctor, D., Kauh, T., & Holm, N. (2022). Systemic and structural racism: Definitions, examples, health damages, and approaches to dismantling. *Health Affairs*, 41(2),

171-178.
<https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01394>

Cunningham, B. A., & Scarlato, A. S. (2018). Ensnared by colourblindness: Discourse on health care disparities. *Ethnicity & Disease, 28*(1), 235-240.
<https://doi.org/10.18865/ed.28.s1.235>

Dayo, E., Christy, K., & Habte, R. (2023). Health in colour: Black women, racism, and maternal health. *The Lancet Regional Health – Americas, 17*(100408), 1-3/
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2022.100408>

Phillips-Beck, W., Eni, R., Lavoie, J. G., Avery Kinew, K., Kyoon Achan, G., & Katz, A. (2020). Confronting racism within the Canadian healthcare system: Systemic exclusion of First Nations from quality and consistent care. (22), 1-20.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17228343>

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17

The Degrowth Movement and Media Ecology; Consuming Ourselves to Death By: Jacob Davis

All our inventions are but improved means to an unimproved end.

– Henry David Thoreau

The Seven Nations fled before him: they became what they beheld.

– William Blake

The Degrowth movement attempts to reconstruct our relationship with the planet, deepening our connection to one another while developing new ways of living divorced from capitalist hegemony. The movement opposes capitalist growth to expansion achieved at the planet's and humanity's expense. Degrowth is not some small step you can take by changing your status or profile picture; it requires deep reflection and alteration of your life to live by the land. Technological progress has become our god. The effects of development are often overlooked as we need to understand how these technologies shape us and our interactions. Using media ecology to understand degrowth can allow for a deeper examination of technology's effects on shaping our world. Over the following paragraphs, I will discuss degrowth as living within our means, redeveloping communal living, decolonizing efforts, reconnecting with the environment, dissecting the myths of capitalism, and getting in touch with the fruits of our labour before discussing the importance of media ecology as a means for deepening our understanding of the necessity of degrowth and the effects of our dependence on technology.

DEGROWTH AS LIVING WITHIN OUR
MEANS

In many ways, the West today is a landscape entirely dominated by technology. Ivan Illich believed that past a certain threshold, we would need help managing technological development (1973 in Demaria et al. 1999). In a 1997 lecture, Neil Postman suggested similarly that we may reach a point in our development where technologies use us rather than us using them (Postman 1997). The current era has brought with it the myth that technological innovation and human progress are identical (Postman 1997). In the West, we have been swept up in the fantasy of perpetual progress that has completely changed what it means to 'live within our means' as practically anything is now available to us, despite our environment. Like Postman, the Degrowth movement understands that we will solve nothing by 'cloaking ourselves in technological glory' (Postman 1997). Instead, we must examine the effects our indulgence has on ourselves and the world around us. This means rejecting the constantly expanding markets that have always been inherent to capitalist economies (Marx & Engels 83). It means developing a way of life that is not dependent upon global supply chains and the exploitation of migrant workers. It means developing a contented lifestyle rather than living in constant need of short-term satisfaction. Illich argued that 'progress' has come to be seen as reducing our dependence upon one another and our surroundings (Cayley 209). Communal and collaborative living and ownership become regressive only when the ideology of capitalism is essentialized and presented as the 'natural way.'

DEGROWTH AS RE-DEVELOPING

COMMUNAL LIVING

Degrowth reconnects us with those close to us in ways often deemed unnecessary/lost in a world of digital

networks and automation. Illich was concerned that within the computer world, "People lose the ability to distinguish themselves from the networks in which they are enmeshed" (Cayley 19). Massive bureaucratic systems flatten the experiences of the individual into standardized data that essentially eliminate the individual within the system (Postman 93). The fear is that through this process, we may, in turn, begin to lose ourselves within these systems (Cayley 19). While Illich may have been overly dramatic in his analysis, he effectively visualizes the effects of our dependence on technology. The focus on efficiency, standardization, and objectivity has come at the expense of individuality, ambiguity, and beautiful uncertainty. In contrast, degrowth is focused on developing communal living that strives to foster a society actively interested in its citizens' contexts, recognizing each's unique experiences and seeing their diversity as a part of a flourishing society. This commitment relates to all facets of our world; the de-bureaucratizing of society means a reconstruction of our justice system, education system, and political system. Degrowth pushes for the recognition of our humanity, which is stripped away from us as the overgrown byproduct of capitalism. Despite our proximity to one another, we have never been more isolated (OSG 12). Degrowth seeks to address this disconnect through forms of collective action and ownership that are intended to increase collaboration, such as ecovillages and other forms of intentional communities (Lockyer 522). Through smaller communities, all needs can be addressed without the need to reduce one another to our data to function/economic utility.

DEGROWTH AS DECOLONIAL MOVEMENTS

The Degrowth movement attempts to challenge the Westernized notion that our way of life is not only superior but should be implemented globally (Nelson & Liegey 33,34). There are meaningful connections to be drawn between the Degrowth movement and decolonial efforts stemming from similar attitudes toward the land. Fenelon states, 'Indigenous farming stands opposed to agribusiness, which is destructive to a community or local production/consumption and requires transportation, packaging, and marketing-deep-level processing that forces local growers into selling wage-labour, breaks up family and community, increases commodification in capitalist markets, and is connected to environmental decay on many levels' (Fenelon 149). Fenelon notes the disregard for ideas that reject modern notions of 'advancement,' referring to Indigenous systems that oppose Western concepts of 'progress' (149). The belittling of traditional Indigenous knowledge stems from more than just colonialism; it stems from the myth of capitalist growth (Fenelon 149). This is where the connection between the degrowth and the decolonial movement appears necessary to further the fight against the valuation of growth and profit above all else. Decolonial movements extend well beyond land acknowledgements. Instead, they refer to a fundamental restructuring of our relationship with the land. As a movement focused on justice, Degrowth stands alongside decolonial efforts not simply on the grounds of environmental destruction but based on the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples throughout history and today (Demaria et al. 206).

DEGROWTH AS RECONNECTING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Degrowth, like Indigenous movements, illuminates the importance of our relationship to the land itself (Fenelon

150). We must recognize the interplay between us and the land (Fenelon 157); as the land allows for our survival, we must take care of it (Champagne 2005, 7 in Fenelon 157). Our current production is incompatible with the necessary steps to prevent planetary disaster (Klitgaard 86,87). Additionally, Klitgaard notes that never-ending growth is only discussed by economists in relation to societies powered by fossil fuels, arguing it is the only energy source theoretically capable of providing the growth we have come to expect (87). Likewise, despite the fantasy of renewable energy, we rarely consider what a world powered by renewable energy would look like (Klitgaard 95). If we are genuinely interested in degrowth, it means challenging our preconceived notions and expectations about how our lives should look and what we are entitled to (Demaria et al. 200), considering what lives without fossil fuels would look like. In doing so, we may reconnect with the land we mindlessly depend on.

DEGROWTH AS DISSECTING THE MYTHS OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

Capitalism tends to operate from a 'grow or die' mantra, which essentializes the development process and presents the destruction of the environment and dehumanization of one another as its necessary consequences (Fenelon 147). The need to constantly accumulate within capitalism stands at odds not simply with degrowth but with our planetary future (Klitgaard 88, Nelson & Liegey 27). Economic growth tends to be presented by mainstream economists as the tool for our salvation to this day (Klitgaard 86). Because of the relationship between capitalism and growth, degrowth and capitalism inevitably stand at direct odds with one another

(Klitgaard 89). Nelson and Liegey note: 'Growth is an omnipotent solution to all our problems – even, perversely, those problems that growth has caused – from unemployment to rising inequalities, from economic crises and public debt to environmental crises, energy scarcity and even starvation' (10). In his book *Technopoly*, Neil Postman describes the dependence and passive acceptance bred through our deification of technology and development (58,59). The Degrowth movement attempts to challenge that which we have become entirely dependent upon (Nelson & Liegey 20). Degrowth is likewise critical of ideas of 'green' or 'sustainable growth' that still place growth as the fundamental goal of human existence and often refuse to reject capitalism (Demaria et al. 193).

DEGROWTH AS GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOR

Under modern capitalism, for so many, work itself has become stripped of its meaning. Work has become little more than a process for survival, and the idea of 'meaningful work' has become a fantasy, even an oxymoron, for many (Klitgaard 89). The process of finding work now has less to do with areas where we are skilled or where we can help the world and far more to do with where we can make a living. Degrowth allows us to see work not simply as a means of survival but as a means of fulfillment. It will enable us to imagine work as a place to find meaning in our lives instead of a place that seeps meaning from them. If we can live without concern about upcoming expenses, we will be able to explore our passions and interests further. In doing so, progress will be made, not on the backs of monetary value but of use value. Production and consumption are beautiful activities that ought to be recognized as such, and

degrowth provides us with the means to be deeply connected to what we produce and consume in a way that has become rare today.

Part Two

The effects of digital technologies on our world are tremendous, not only on us as labourers but as engaged members of society. Media ecology offers a means to see the detrimental effects our dependence on digital technology is having on our culture and on ourselves. Given our perpetual faith in technological progress, it appears our only way out is through degrowth. Media ecology allows us to ask whether, in our deification of technology, we are sacrificing our humanity. Over the rest of the paper, I will delve into the effects our dependence on digital technology has had on our social and political landscape and discuss the harmful impacts it has on our very humanity. We often recognize the indulgence in our lifestyles but fail to acknowledge the role mediums themselves are playing in creating the reality we are experiencing.

Speed/efficiency + access, commodification of information, somnambulism

Marshall McLuhan importantly recognized "the power and thrust of technologies to isolate the senses and thus to hypnotize society" (272). Simply put, we rarely understand the effects of technology on us and likewise miss how it changes the world around us. The allure of the screen is so powerful, Postman suggested, that it makes us feel uniquely connected to the issues we are following, even if they are entirely removed from our world (75). This process, Postman argues, has led to 'context-free information,' as we no longer need to be connected in any way to what we are being informed about; this, in turn, has led to the degradation of information as functional and its valuation as a novelty, as a commodity instead (Postman 65). Information has

become more sensationalized as the focus has shifted from being informed to being entertained, and technologies have been created that proliferate content at the necessary speed (Postman 66). The speed is required both because of the instantaneous nature of the news itself and, more importantly, because it creates a cycle whereby we are constantly fixated on one event and then the next (Postman 70,77). Debord notes precisely this in his analysis of the spectacle, stating, "In any case, they (events in society) are quickly forgotten thanks to the precipitation with which the spectacle's pulsing machinery replaces one with the next" (Debord 114 *Society of the Spectacle*). Similarly, articles have gotten shorter in the digital age (Carr 95). Everything is becoming more efficient at the expense of quality and impact, and if history has taught us anything, it is 'that the velocity of data will only increase' (Carr 157). We have come to depend upon freshness and immediacy, even if these fresh, new events will leave no trace in our memories.

Inundation through information, knowledgeable vs. opinionated, effects of news as a commodity

The Internet houses exponentially more information than even the most extensive physical library in the world (Carr 143). We have a tool at our disposal that holds all the information we could ever need about almost any topic we could be interested in learning about. With all this in mind, it seems particularly concerning that instead of the internet producing a population of informed and critically minded users, it has seemingly done the opposite (Postman 65). As news and information have turned from something functional to a novelty, being informed has often changed from being knowledgeable to being opinionated (Postman 65). News becomes little more than the sensationalized

opinions of political pundits who are focused solely on the intensity of the response they can provoke from their audiences. This is particularly concerning given the ever-presented coverage today, which means content is at our disposal whenever we want and indulges in our every interest and desire (Carr 170,71). We are running the risk of being inundated by information (Carr 170).

Social media platforms seem to create an audience of desensitized, passive consumers. The content we consume functions not simply to further our opinions but to breed a feeling of powerlessness and a complex form of apathy. Postman argues these technologies have made our thoughts self-contained within the platform they derive from, meaning we leave our thoughts behind as we move from topic to topic (100). This is particularly notable when considering the juxtaposition's of witnessing the worst of humanity and then sports highlights in the matter of seconds (Postman 105, 120,121). What are the effects of atrocities becoming familiar sights in our everyday lives? In his podcast, Ezra Klein mentioned the obvious, if often overlooked, truth that we are not built to handle both the amount and kind of content we are consuming so steadily; nothing will stop us from destroying ourselves (Klein 2022). This is not to say that one day, our online consumption will reach a breaking point, and our heads will fall off the opposite. Our passive acceptance and dependence upon techno-capitalism's indulgences close our eyes to the detrimental effects it is having on every facet of our lives.

Illich argued that without degrowth, humanity would find itself 'a prisoner in the shell of technology' (Illich in Cayley 2). Our dependence on technology has left us servants to technologies that we naively saw as neutral tools simply for our improvement

(Cayley 140). Our dependence has grown into a passive acceptance, Postman argues, leaving us at the whims of technological development (59, Technopoly). Ironically, we spend plenty of time today denouncing the very technologies we use. We are trapped in a state of partially understanding the dangers of these technologies while still feeling utterly dependent upon them for our livelihood (McLuhan 46,47 – UM). This is an example of the passivity discussed earlier: we simultaneously recognize the damage being done to ourselves. However, given the extent of our dependence upon these technologies, we have no choice but to accept them as a necessary evil.

What is our dependence on technology doing to us? We can ask questions about its effects on political discourse, but we can also examine the dangerous effects on minds (Carr). McLuhan described electric circuitry as an extension of our central nervous system. Nicholas Carr similarly describes the rewiring of our brains towards certain modes of information and away from others (41, 2012). In many ways, the technologies around us have gotten smarter over time, but it is an entirely different question if we have them alongside us. The answer Carr provides is that "the Net is making us smarter... only if we define intelligence by the Net's standards" (141). Our brains are being overtaxed on these digital platforms, and we have come to believe that this level of stimulus is expected and desired (Carr 122,123). Digital technology, Carr argues, overwhelms us with information all at once without easy means to organize or process the data in front of us (124,125). This leads to habits like 'power-browsing' and 'non-linear reading' as means to get through it all (Carr 137). These efficiency valuations happen at the expense of our critical faculties as these skimming strategies have

seemingly become the dominant form of reading (Carr 138).

There are tremendous benefits that come from the digitally connected world we live in today. It has allowed communities to form across massive boundaries and provided a connection to people feeling isolated in their day-to-day lives; it has allowed communities of people with interests outside of the mainstream to flourish. It is nonetheless important to consider how the internet has reshaped what it means to be connected today. Being connected has a global connotation more than ever before, as through technology, the world is our oyster. Carr notes a desire that the internet fosters to be seen as in the loop, suddenly making it concerning not to be seen as connected (133,134,158). This can lead to a tendency to vastly overvalue the new even when we know it is inessential (Chabris in Carr 134). McLuhan described the Global Village as the future our technology was leading to, a future where we somehow attempt to hold the world within our minds (63). In our fixation on our connection to the world, we have lost our connection to those close to us. Degrowth brings us back to community, to individuality, to living in connection with the land, to the understanding we cannot hold the whole world in our heads, nor should we.

References

- Cayley, David. 2021. *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Debord, Guy. 1970. *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit: [Black & Red].
- Demaria, Federico, Francois Schneider, Filka Sekulova, and Joan Martinez-Alier. 2013. "What Is Degrowth? From an Activist Slogan to a Social Movement." *Environmental Values* 22(2):191–215. doi: 10.3197/096327113X13581561725194.
- Fenelon, James V. n.d. "(Chapter 8) Indigenous Alternatives to the Global Crises of the Modern World-System." Pp. 143–67 in *Overcoming Global Inequalities*.
- Hickel, Jason, Giorgos Kallis, Tim Jackson, Daniel W. O'Neill, Juliet B. Schor, Julia K. Steinberger, Peter A. Victor, and Diana Ürge-Vorsatz. 2022. "Degrowth Can Work - Here's How Science Can Help." *Nature (London)* 612(7940):400–403. doi: 10.1038/d41586-022-04412-x.
- Klein, Ezra. 2022. *How We Communicate Will Decide Whether Democracy Lives or Dies* "The Ezra Klein Show." The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/26/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-interviews-sean-illing.html>
- Klitgaard, Kent. 2023. "Planning Degrowth: The Necessity, History, and Challenges." *Monthly Review (New York. 1949)* 75(3):85–98. doi: 10.14452/MR-075-03-2023-07_6.
- Liegey, Vincent. 2020. *Exploring Degrowth: A Critical Guide*. London: Pluto Press.
- Lockyer, J., (2017) "Community, commons, and degrowth at Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage", *Journal of Political Ecology* 24(1), 519-542. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2458/v24i1.20890>

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels.
1955. *Communist Manifesto*. Chicago: H.
Regnery Co.

McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin.
Fiore. 1967. *The Medium Is the
Massage*. New York: Random
House.

McLuhan, Marshall. 1967. *The
Gutenberg Galaxy the Making of
Typographic Man*. Toronto, Ont: University of
Toronto Press.

Nirmal, Padini, and Dianne
Rocheleau. 2019. "Decolonizing
Degrowth in the Post-Development
Convergence: Questions,
Experiences, and Proposals from
Two Indigenous Territories." *Environment and
Planning. E, Nature and Space
(Print)* 2(3):465–92. doi:
10.1177/2514848618819478.

Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence
and the Environmentalism of the
Poor*. Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Harvard University Press.

Pintoff, Ernest., Guy. Fraumeni, and Marshall
McLuhan. 2012. *This Is Marshall McLuhan
the Medium Is the Massage*. Thornhill, ON:
Bit Works.

Postman, Neil. 1986. *Amusing Ourselves to
Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show
Business*. New York: Penguin Books.

Postman, Neil. 1992. *Technopoly*. 1st ed.
New York: Knopf.

U.S. Surgeon General. 2023. "Our Epidemic
of Loneliness and Isolation."

[https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surg
eon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf)

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: An Analysis of Gender Exclusion in Figure Skating

By: Jade Paganelli

The global North is advancing in terms of gender inclusivity, as societal structures are being put in place to aid in the protection and inclusion of all people in sports regardless of gender identity; however, sport-specific inclusivity is advancing at a slow pace, therefore limiting individuals who do not identify with classic gender norms. Figure skating is a sport heavily structured by definitive gender expectations due to societal heteronormativity influencing the sports event categories, such as the pairs event, which, on a global stage, is a partnership between a man and a woman. The process of social advancement in the sport of figure skating is prolonged due to restrictive societal structures that force athletes to conform to gender stereotypes, stemming from the role of judgement and subjectivity in aesthetic sports, giving judges power over the scores given to athletes on their performance. I will highlight expectations of gender demonstrations and the culture of beauty standards in figure skating, I will explain the gender inclusion debate, explicitly discussing the difficulties of influencing social change. Finally, I will highlight the problems of socially advancing the sport and the dangers of non-conformity, and will discuss athletes influencing positive change. Figure skating enforces barriers to change, as gender is utilized as a dividing factor for events; however, positive change can occur through effort and advocacy from athletes.

GENDER DEMONSTRATING IN FIGURE SKATING

Classic gender norms are heavily enforced in the figure skating world, specifically in partnered events as, classically, the competitors are in partnerships of one man and one woman. The experience of many young individuals growing up in the figure skating world is incredibly structured, as skaters are told that they must not only be athletes but also conform to classic beauty standards to appeal to judges to ensure good scores. Aspects of the points system are subjective. Conformity to traditional beauty standards during a performance have hence become a normalized aspect of figure skating culture, resulting in feminist critiques highlighting that women are not only measured on their athletic ability in the sport of figure skating but on how well they fulfill classic feminine beauty standards on the ice (Kestnbaum, 2003), at times resulting in athletes receive poor scores because they did not conform to the culture of classic beauty standards in the sport. Men are also subject to the culture of beauty on the ice, often resulting in the assumption of sexuality for men participating in the sport, as it is not viewed publicly as a sport that demonstrates strength and power (Kestnbaum, 2003), all descriptors classically associated with masculinity.

Due to the culture of gender and beauty-standard conformity in figure skating, the sport can be subject to biased judging, as said judges grade the skater on their technical, meaning objective component, and artistic, representing subjective component, abilities to obtain the athlete's final score (Findlay & Ste-Marie, 2004). Subjectivity in figure skating can be influenced by factors such as how famous the athlete is and how well they conform to the beauty standard of figure skating

(Findlay & Ste-Marie, 2004), both factors resulting in inflated scoring in the subjective components category. Due to the beauty standards in figure skating, an athlete who does not conform to the culture may not score highly in the artistic scores, as femininity was not demonstrated, highlighting how classic demonstrations of gender play an influential role in an individual's ability to be successful in the sport of figure skating.

The performance of an individual's gender plays a prominent role in athlete success in aesthetic sports, specifically figure skating, as women especially are expected to demonstrate their femininity during the performance. Individuals who do not conform to classic cultural expectations of femininity in figure skating may face biased scoring regardless of their technical ability, as judges bring their opinions into the scoring panel. Women involved in judged sports are subject to expectations of conforming to feminine beauty ideals; said ideals are a demonstration of toxic gendered cultural expectations of women in society to be feminine and petite (Ginsberg & Gray, 2006) because it has been deemed aesthetically pleasing in the figure skating community, resulting in beauty standards playing an influential role in the success of an athlete. Regardless of how athletes express themselves off the ice, they must perform femininity when competing.

Negative body image is a prominent and problematic aspect of sports for youth, especially for women and gender-nonconforming individuals. In non-aesthetic sports, the body is supposed to be used as a tool and serve the functional purpose of improving athletic performance, resulting in athletes maintaining extremely fit bodies by remaining conscious of their health outside of sport (Lucibello et al., 2021), yet in aesthetic sports such as figure skating, the

body is not only a tool but a part of the scored performance. Body expectations in terms of gender conformity is an incredibly problematic aspect of figure skating for athletes. The culturally normalized demonstrations of femininity in the sport of figure skating can be labelled as alienating to individuals who do not identify with historical gender norms that are still prevalent in the skating world. Physical activity through sports should be modified to include all people regardless of gender identity (Calzo et al. 2014), and while, for example, any individual of female sex is welcome to participate in the sport of figure skating, non-conformity to classic demonstrations of femininity may hinder their ability to succeed in the sport due to the subjective scoring component. Individuals being forced to perform femininity in a way they typically do not conform to may experience negatively impacted self-esteem (Calzo et al. 2014), resulting in disparities in the sport, as individuals who do not conform to classic gender norms may not feel welcome, and additionally, should not have to perform femininity to achieve success as a figure skater.

Figure skating, as a sport, requires high levels of athletic talent however, social capital is not exclusively gained through raw talent, as it is collected by conforming to the desires of fans and judges, as the opinions of others play a significant role in determining the success of an athlete. Capital can be used to legitimize oneself in a social space (Thorpe, 2009), as gaining capital in sports demonstrates to others an athlete's validity and the right of a person to attend exclusive sport-related places. Individuals in figure skating must perform their femininity and demonstrate their talent to gain symbolic capital, meaning prestige (Thorpe, 2009); being a well-known athlete with status can

be beneficial to their success due to the subjective components of the figure skating scoring system. The expectation of athletes to conform to classic feminine gender norms to achieve success is parallel with ideologies of women achieving success using charm, a concept discussed by Bourdieu (Thorpe, 2009).

However, this undermines the talent athletes possess, as social factors are influential in figure skating. Aesthetic sport influences the perception of gendered beauty standards (Wiseman, 2022), meaning athletes are praised for performing impressive athletic feats and looking nice while playing the sport; said praise only contributes to their social and symbolic capital. The development of social capital is also tied to financial investment and recognition of athletes (Wiseman, 2022), meaning conforming to classic feminine gendered beauty standards can earn an athlete financial support in the sport. Ultimately, athlete success in figure skating should not be achieved because an individual is fitting into the beauty standards and is therefore receiving high subjective score components pertaining to artistry, amassing social and symbolic capital, due to performing classic gender expectations. Figure skating is a sport that contains much bias, a problem I have combatted, that, at times, has been beneficial to me or has damaged my ability to succeed. Athlete success should not be decided based on demonstrations of femininity but, instead, based on an individual's talent in performance.

GENDER INCLUSION IN FIGURE SKATING

Beauty plays a large role in athlete success in figure skating, and it is vital to demonstrate beauty in partnered events, typically shared by a man and a woman if

the athletes want to appeal to judges. Beauty plays a large role in media consumption, as fans often support athletes due to their talent and level of attractiveness. Fans of athletes often tie sexual motivations to who they support, meaning the more attractive an athlete is, the more support they will receive, even leading to improved television ratings if players are deemed sexually desirable (Meier & Kongjer, 2015), demonstrating that talent does not ensure success. Figure skating fans often sexualize the partnerships of dance and pairs events, two disciplines classically competed in by a team of one man and one woman. Skating partners deemed physically and sexually attractive gain more support from fans, who desire the partners to be in a relationship, as the artistic performance seen on ice can be described as intimate. Public perceptions of athlete attractiveness are often associated with classic demonstrations of gender roles. Figure skating was historically dominated by men and deemed a 'manly' activity. However, as the sport became more competitive and the performance aspect became present, the sport was labelled 'feminine' and 'girly', historically resulting in men facing "homophobic harassment and ridicule" (Adams, 2010, P. 219) for demonstrating artistry in the sport. Figure skating fans support and comprehend the artistry, although they do envision their favourite skaters to be a couple off the ice as well, resulting in athletes conforming to classic gendered beauty standards and performing intimately to appeal to judge and fan desires even if the skaters do not conform to the heteronormativity shown on the ice. The sport of figure skating is objectively inclusive of gender, yet this mainly applies to classic demonstrations of gender and sexuality. Gender and classic demonstrations of femininity play an

essential and deciding role in achieving success in figure skating.

Legal policies are in place to protect the rights, freedom, and inclusion of all athletes participating in figure skating in the Western world; despite the fact that legal rights are in place, judges' and fans' desire for classic demonstrations of gender results in a lack of social change in terms of success and support for athletes who do not conform to classic gender norms. Historic prominent ideals of hegemonic masculinity often prevail in male-dominated sports, as they are apparent demonstrations of strength, yet this is proven to be a harmful aspect of the sport for both men and women (Soares, 2022) as it is mainly a demonstration of toxic masculinity. Classic ideals of masculinity are not inherently present in figure skating, as it is a combination of athletics and artistry, resulting in all sport participants being required to participate in the artistic side of the sport associated with femininity. Mistreatment of athletes who do not conform to classic gender stereotypes is common in sports. It is visible through the scoring system, which has created legal policies that protect athletes to freedom of gender and expression. The Canadian figure skating federation, known as 'Skate Canada,' has recently implemented a rule change regarding gender labels of athletes competing in events to protect athletes and allow for gender inclusion, as well as eliminate gendered labels from the sport, such as the classic association of artistry being feminine. 'Skate Canada' has updated the definition of the team for pair and ice dance teams, with the revised definition being a team consists of two skaters,' as opposed to the former definition of a team comprised of a man and woman (Skate Canada, 2022).

Skate Canada's updated definition removes the requirement to label one's

gender, resulting in the technical elimination of gender requirements and the ability for two women, two men, or nonbinary individuals to compete as a pair. The American Skating Federation, known as 'US Figure Skating,' has not officially eliminated gender requirements but has updated the non-discrimination commitment. 'US Figure Skating' has created the 'DEI Action Plan' for diversity, equity, and inclusion to eliminate mistreatment of athletes and inequalities through education and awareness (US Figure Skating, 2021). Both the Canadian and American figure skating federations have taken steps through legal action to protect the rights of athletes. However, social bias results in injustice and mistreatment in competition settings due to subjective scoring components. Athletes who conform to classic gender norms and beauty ideals may score higher as judges may hold personal bias. Heteronormativity and gender norms are still a barrier in competition for athletes who do not conform (Larsson, 2023) despite legal action being taken to protect said athletes. Legal changes are apparent in the Western world; however, social change has yet to follow, as much of the legal policies produced by skating federations discussed are performative due to the lack of enforcement of equality and the opportunity for judges to utilize their opinions in the subjective scoring components. Fairness is often left out of the discussion when legal action has taken place (Larsson, 2023). Furthermore, social action must occur to ensure inclusion in the competition. Equity in figure skating can only arise when judges and athletes are educated on inclusivity in sport, as policy changes provide judges with the opportunity to revert to biased judging of pairs who do not conform to gender norms and who do not demonstrate femininity due

to the subjective scoring component of figure skating.

Legal change regarding the elimination of gender roles in figure skating has technically occurred in Canada, and policies supporting the inclusion of all people in the sport exist in the Western world. However, social change is slow to follow policies created by figure skating federations. Subjectivity of judges and public perceptions heavily impact the success of figure skaters who do not conform to classic gender roles. Societal structures play a large role in slow-moving change due to the influence sport has on youth introduction to gender roles. Historically, sports were representative of classic gender roles, as characteristics of sport demonstrate classic demonstrations of femininity and masculinity (Greer & Jones, 2013), leading to histories sport structures holding influence in the modern world. Due to history's influence, the public often gender-types sport, labelling aspects of sport as more feminine or masculine (Greer & Jones, 2013).

Women in figure skating must conform to classic demonstrations of femininity to appeal to wider audiences and judges. At the same time, men in the sport must demonstrate artistry, beauty, and strength to appeal to the masses. Conforming to figure skating ideals results in slow progression of the sport because individuals typically follow the norm to obtain success in the sport rather than attempt to push the envelope out of fear of losing support from judges due to the subjective scoring component. Structures of dominance facilitate and enforce the classic gender binary in all sports, resulting in a lack of inclusion of individuals who do not conform to traditional gender stereotypes (Zanin, 2023). Despite policies being in place to protect gender non-conforming

athletes, exclusion still occurs socially, which is demonstrated by the treatment of athletes that is exacerbated by the dominant discriminating societal structures of sport placing athletes into gender categories. Specifically in figure skating, dominant structures enforce demonstrations of femininity and conformity to classic beauty standards and gender norms on the ice; therefore, they still hold on to traditional gender roles (Greer & Jones 2013), as it is appealing to fans and judges. Social advancement is difficult due to the subjectivity of figure skating, as it can result in biased judging for athletes who do not appeal to the judge's standards, resulting in slow progression in countries like Canada. Athletes who push the boundaries often suffer from a negatively impacted career, resulting in their withdrawal from the line of progression to re-solidify their respect from biased 'old-school' judges and ability to succeed in the sport of figure skating.

PUSHING THE SOCIAL BOUNDARIES OF FIGURE SKATING

The boundaries of figure skating have objectively been pushed through the development of policies protecting the rights of athletes who do not conform to classic gender roles in Canada. However, social advancement is more complicated on an international level due to the social and political climates of different countries outside of the western world. Russia, a nation that produces some of the world's top figure skaters, is a communist country that discriminates against individuals who do not conform to heteronormativity and classic representations of gender identity. Russia hosted the 2014 Winter Olympics, and despite the nation's anti- LGBTQ+ policies, they have to act per the non-discrimination principles of the Olympics Winter Games (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Despite the

fact that some athletes participating in the sport of figure skating identified as gay, many of them chose not to share said information publicly on social media before the 2014 Sochi Olympics out of fear for their personal safety. Russia recriminalized homosexuality in 1993 (Buyantueva, 2018), however, homophobia and discrimination is still prominent in the country, and publicly sharing one's sexuality in the nation can be dangerous for the individual's safety due to the prevalence of said homophobia (Buyantueva, 2018), still resulting in violence and even arrests. Russia promotes heterosexuality and classic demonstrations of gender as ideal in the country (Suchland, 2018), while promoting conservative propaganda to the nation, therefore reinforcing gender norms to citizens. Discrimination of individuals based on gender identity and sexuality is not exclusive to Russia, resulting the International Olympic Committee enforcing a new anti-discrimination clause written into the host cities contracts, due to the discrimination witnessed at past Olympic games (Gibson, 2022) such as the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. Similar to policies eliminating gender requirements in paired figure skating events in Canada, the legal protections created by the Olympic games do not control the social bias held by viewers and judges. International figure skating has yet to eliminate gender requirements in paired events due to the heteronormative values held by nations around the world, resulting in difficulties in socially advancing the sport on a global scale.

Despite judge's desire to view performed classic gender roles on the ice, and the dangers of non-conformity in many countries around the world, confident skaters have spoken out about their gender identity and sexuality as a way to

demonstrate to youth that despite enforcement of gender normalcies being rewarded in figure skating, athletes can still achieve success and use their voice for good. Three athletes have become activists for inclusion in the world of figure skating, promoting the inclusion of everyone despite their sexuality and gender identity. Timothy LeDuc is the first openly non-binary winter Olympian in figure skating, and he is using his platform to promote the inclusion of all people in sport (Carpenter, 2022). LeDuc explains that at a young age, he was aware he did not fit into the mould of what was classically labelled as masculinity, yet he realized at a young age he would have to conform to gender norms to achieve success in the sport (Carpenter, 2022). Leading up to the 2022 Winter Olympics, LeDuc shared that he is non-binary on social media, explaining that sport should be used to promote acceptance and positive change across the world (Carpenter, 2022). Development of 'sport for social change' programming has had a positive impact on inclusivity on a smaller scale, as education developed from social relationships in sport has a positive impact on youths understanding of broader social issues (Cunningham et al., 2020); said education stems from introducing inclusivity in youth sport.

Positive steps being taken to introduce social and societal inclusion of all people, paired with famous athletes using their platform to promote inclusivity, can lead to a positive shift in sport. Figure skating is tied to classic demonstrations of gender, a problem that can only be changed through education and the introduction of new ideas to the sport. Government agencies in some democratic nations have begun enforcing policies of 'sport for social change' to produce social capital in youth (Sherry et al. 2015), as education of young

people is how positive societal change will occur in the future. Social and symbolic capital in the sport of figure skating is typically gained by appealing to fans and judges. However, educated sports viewers of the future may not consider the classic demonstration of gender relevant to the sport due to the social education of youth through sport. Canadian ice dancer Kaitlyn Weaver is using her platform to promote the importance of education and positive change in the sporting world, specifically in figure skating. Weaver is an athlete who skated her entire competitive career conforming to classic gender norms and demonstrations of sexuality, and who recently publicly announced that she is Queer. The athlete had been pressured to conform to the ideals of judges and fans; however, following her competitive career, she now uses her platform to promote the elimination of gender requirements in paired figure skating events (Goh, 2023).

Kaitlyn Weaver, who is on the 'Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group', was the first person to propose the elimination of gender labelling in paired figure skating events in Canada (Goh, 2023), as they are not technically relevant due to the event classically including men and women. Weaver and LeDuc are using their considerable platforms to advocate for others and promote inclusion and positive change in the sport of figure skating, and said change has not socially occurred, the efforts visible through the pressure on policy change from Weaver and the bravery of LeDuc for competing proudly as themselves, can lead to inclusion on a larger scale in the future.

Gender inclusion and the elimination of social requirements to conform to classic demonstrations of femininity, sexuality, and gender may be a slow-moving issue in figure skating, however, positive change has

begun to occur in the sport a less competitive levels. Policies are in place in Canada to legally protect athlete's rights of gender expression due to non-discrimination clauses in Canada (Skate Canada, 2022). The paper has highlighted the social discrimination despite the legal protections; however, low-level competition has welcomed the elimination of gender requirements in paired events, as it offers more people the opportunity to compete in figure skating. Skate Canada policies to eliminate gender requirements, specifically update the meaning of 'team', as a way to reflect gender diversity, and varsity sports have adopted this policy, and it has been implemented successfully. 'OUA' Sports, meaning Ontario University Athletics, is committed to diversity in sports and aims to foster equity and inclusion in amateur sporting events such as varsity competitions (OUA, 2023). Varsity sports in Ontario are leading the way in social inclusion of the new Skate Canada pair policies.

Based on personal experience, there is zero bias in the judging when comparing 'classic' partnerships and normalized partnerships on the Ontario varsity competition circuit, resulting in a positive, uplifting, and inclusive competition experience. Bias judging (Findlay, 2004), meaning negatively impacted scores for individuals who do not conform to classic gender norms when performing in figure skating, has been socially removed from the Canadian varsity experience, providing many athletes with the opportunity to perform in the sport in a way they desire, rather than conforming to ideals of judges, and fans. Varsity figure skating is not gender-typed (Greer & Jones, 2013), meaning athletes are not expected to demonstrate classic demonstrations of femininity and masculinity in the sport. Changing inclusion policies is much more

complicated in higher levels of figure skating, especially on a global scale. However, positive change in the sport is visible in Canada and, over time, could expand to inclusion in higher levels of competition within the Canadian competition circuit.

CONCLUSION

Figure skating is a sport that conforms to a classic demonstration of gender and desires for femininity in performances. Social change is slow to occur due to the role and impact of judgement in the sport, as the scoring system is partially subjective, resulting in difficulties in socially advancing the sport due to athlete's fear of limiting their success because of non-conformity to classic ideas of what a figure skater is supposed to be. In this paper, I highlighted traditional demonstrations of gender in the sport, the difficulties of gender inclusion on a global scale in figure skating, and finally, the importance of pushing for social advancement in the sport. Positive social change is difficult to advance on a worldwide scale; however, in Canada, positive change has already begun to occur, meaning there is hope for the elimination of bias, and complete inclusion is the future for figure skaters in Canada.

REFERENCES

- Adams, M. L. (2010). From Mixed-Sex Sport to Sport for Girls: The Feminization of Figure Skating. *Sport in History*, 30(2), 218–241.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2010.481208>
- Buyantueva, R. (2018). LGBT Rights Activism and Homophobia in Russia. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 65(4), 456–483.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1320167>

Ginsberg, R. L., & Gray, J. J. (2006). The differential depiction of female athletes in judged and

non-judged sport magazines. *Body Image*, 3(4), 365–373.

Gibson, O. 2022. Olympic Anti-Discrimination Clause Introduced After Sochi Gay Rights Row.

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2014/sep/25/olympic-anti-discrimination-clause-sochi-gay-rights-row>

Goh, Z. (2023). Kaitlyn Weaver: Why Skate Canada's Gender Rule Change for Pairs and Ice Dance Teams Matters. Olympics. <https://olympics.com/en/news/kaitlyn-weaver-skate-canada-gender-rule-change-pairs-dance-teams-matters>

Greer, J. D., & Jones, A. H. (2013). Beyond Figure Skating and Hockey: How US Audiences Gender Type Winter Olympic Sports. *International Journal of Sport & Society*, 3(4).

Human Rights Watch. (2014). Russia: Sochi Games Highlight Homophobic Violence. Human

Rights Watch News.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/02/03/russia-sochi-games-highlight-homophobic-violence>

Kestnbaum, E. (2003). *Culture on ice: Figure skating & cultural meaning*. Wesleyan University Press.

Larsson, H., & Auran, I. (2023). Trans inclusion and gender equality in sport and exercise - an (im)possible equation? *Sport in Society, ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2023.2233439>

Lucibello, K. M., Koulanova, A., Pila, E., Brunet, J., & Sabiston, C. M. (2021). Exploring adolescent girls' experiences of body talk in non-aesthetic sport. *Journal of Adolescence (London, England.)*, 89(1), 63–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2021.04.003>

Meier, H. E., & Konjer, M. (2015). Is there a premium for beauty in sport consumption? Evidence from German TV ratings for tennis matches. *EJSS. European Journal for Sport and Society*, 12(3), 309–340. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2015.11687968>

Sherry, E., Schulenkorf, N., & Chalip, L. (2015). Managing sport for social change: The state of play. *Sport Management Review*, 18(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2014.12.001>

Skate Canada. 2022. Definition of 'Team; Updated to Reflect Gender Diversity Across the Podium Pathway. Skate Canada. <https://skatecanada.ca/2022/12/definition-of-team-updated-to-reflect-gender-diversity-across-the-podium-pathway/>

Soares Moura, E. (2022). “I Can’t Because I Am a Man”: Masculinity, Manhood, and Gender Equality in Sport for Development. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 39(3), 231–239.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2020-0166>

Suchland, J. (2018). The LGBT specter in Russia: Refusing queerness, claiming ‘whiteness’. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 25(7), 1073-1088.

Thorpe, H. (2009). Bourdieu, Feminism and Female Physical Culture: Gender Reflexivity and the Habitus-Field Complex. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 26(4), 491–516.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.26.4.491>

US Figure Skating. 2021. DEI Action Plan. US Figure Skating.

<https://www.usfigureskating.org/sites/default/files/media-files/DEI%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

Wiseman, M. S., & Nicholas, J. (2022). Synchronized Swimming in Ontario, 1920-50s: Gender,

Beauty, and Sport. *Sport History Review*, 53(1), 6–25.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/shr.2020-0036>

Zanin, A. C., LeMaster, L., Niess, L. C., & Lucero, H. (2023). Storying the Gender Binary in

Sport: Narrative Motifs Among Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming

Athletes. *Communication and Sport*, 11(5), 879–904.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795221148159>

Bureaucracy, Globalization, and Technology Impacting Professions

By: Julia Saltzman

In today's world, the changing nature of work is a significant phenomenon. Various trends, movements, and factors have reshaped traditional paradigms of professions. Sociological perspectives and sociologists have begun reconstructing forms of the concept of work, examining how cultural and social factors influence our understandings (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 54). Bureaucracy, firstly, has undergone a transformation in the contemporary work landscape, ushering in structured environments and hierarchies within larger organizations. Additionally, globalization has fundamentally transformed the nature of work today by introducing more effective transport methods. Lastly, technology is changing the nature of work by creating new obstacles and solutions. Each of these three elements will be further explored within the context of occupations as this paper seeks to understand the part they have played and are playing in changing professions today. Through an analysis of the interplay between globalization, bureaucratization, and technology, the primary aim is to illuminate the profound transformation that professions have undergone in the present day. Drawing upon course materials and lectures, this paper's central argument is that bureaucracy, globalization, and technology have brought both constructive and detrimental changes in the essence and functioning of work within contemporary society. Bureaucracy will be conceptualized within the legal profession, globalization within the manual labour and manufacturing industry, and technological adaptations demonstrated within the profession of nurse practitioners. This topic is of paramount

significance because it offers critical insights into the evolving nature of work.

BUREAUCRACY CHANGING THE NATURE OF WORK

The nature of work has undergone profound transformations across various professions by bureaucratic practices. Bureaucracies are structures of administrative bodies facilitating formal rules and regulations that have reshaped the landscape of various occupations (Lecture 6 Sept). The Industrial Revolution marked a pivotal era of massive growth in bureaucracy and the emergence of structured factory settings (Lecture 6 Sept). Workers performed specialized tasks and assembly lines in these settings, which dramatically redefined work organization (Lecture 6 Sept). Specialization is a fundamental tenet of bureaucracy, ensuring that employees perform their roles precisely, reduce errors, and promote consistency. However, excessive specialization can lead to potential drawbacks, including reduced adaptability and innovation. Collectively, these insights emphasize how bureaucracy continues to shape and influence the nature of work in contemporary professions.

BUREAUCRACY CHANGING THE NATURE OF LAWYERS WORK

This essay section explores how bureaucratic structures within organizations can erode professional autonomy and independence, using the legal profession as an illustrative example. This transformation can be attributed to the process of corporatization, which entails the adoption of bureaucratic frameworks by large organizations (Lecture 18 Sept). Autonomy holds a pivotal role in defining the essence of professionals, as it empowers them to carry out their responsibilities independently while simultaneously fostering the growth of professional communities (Sweet &

Meiksins 2020: 61). Jacobsson's Swedish ethnographic study aligns seamlessly with this essay section, as it meticulously examines the erosion of professional autonomy within bureaucratic structures (Jacobsson, et al., 2020). Building upon Jacobsson's study, which provides concrete empirical insights into how organizational culture can impact worker autonomy within bureaucratic structures (Jacobsson, et al., 2020), it becomes evident that as legal professionals are increasingly encouraged to transition into private sectors, such as corporate law, they frequently face a significant erosion of their autonomy. This shift aligns with the "deskilling of labour" concept, where workers become highly specialized within their respective fields but are confined to specific tasks within a more extensive process, diminishing creativity and independence (Lecture 6 Sept). The "deskilling of labour" is particularly evident among lawyers who engage in highly fragmented work, akin to the prevalent characteristics of other bureaucratized structures. Within large firms that employ hundreds of lawyers, individual practitioners frequently encounter a reduction in their autonomy due to the organization's size and hierarchical structure (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 45) Attorneys often find themselves ceding control over the work's pace, which is predominantly dictated by management (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 60).

Consequently, this dynamic tends to promote lack of autonomy among legal professionals, resulting in reduced job satisfaction (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 60). However, it is essential to acknowledge that as organizations increasingly embrace corporatization, the relentless pursuit of efficiency and profit can sometimes undermine traditional collegiality. For instance, lawyers can operate as sole practitioners, providing their services

directly to the community (Lecture 6 Sept). In highly structured organizations, lawyers may interact less with their colleagues, which can hinder the exchange of ideas, mentorship, and collaboration essential for professional growth. Therefore, as the legal profession navigates the changing landscape of corporatization, finding a balance between the pursuit of efficiency and the preservation of collegiality remains a central challenge.

Additionally, the intrusion of bureaucracy can lead to dehumanization and the introduction of McDonaldization principles into legal professional settings. McDonaldization refers to the persuasive influence of bureaucratic principles, particularly efficiency and predictability, but is criticized for its dehumanization tactics (Lecture 13 Sept). Individuals within the legal field are being treated more like standardized entities rather than recognizing their unique qualities. Drawing upon the sociological insights of Max Weber, he concludes that bureaucratic systems employees often found themselves "treated as mere numbers" (Lecture 6 Sept). This phenomenon often manifests as employees in bureaucratic legal settings feeling reduced to numbers, giving rise to the concept of impersonal organizations within the legal profession. This can have implications for client relationships, as personalization and individualized attention may be sacrificed in favour of standardized procedures. Lawyers' commitment to serving the broader interests of entities, including corporations, is paramount in fostering altruism and setting professions apart from other fields. Altruism means a profession's dedication to contributing to the community's well-being and serving the greater good (Lecture 18 Sept). However, in recent times, the nature of legal work has been transforming due to the influences of corporatization and

bureaucratic structures, particularly within large legal firms (Lecture 18 Sept). These firms emphasize metrics such as billable hours and profit maximization, which can sometimes stand in stark contrast to the altruistic ideals traditionally associated with the legal profession. This shift in priorities can lead to tensions for lawyers due to a socialization process within occupational roles (Lecture 27 Sept). These lawyers must balance the demands of their corporate clients with their professional obligation to uphold justice and the rule of law.

Moreover, in contemporary society, gaining admission to law school and securing a position within major law firms have become highly competitive. Robert Granfield's interviews with prospective Harvard Law School students delved into their altruistic motivations and revealed a surprising statistic—only 20% of applicants cited human rights, access to legal support, and social justice as their driving forces (Lecture 20 Sept). Furthermore, this minority often sees their altruistic ideals erode as they undergo the socialization process within law schools, adopting a more cynical approach to practice (Lecture 4 Oct). This transformation can be attributed to the pervasive competitive environment within corporate-dominated legal settings, where lawyers are often drawn towards building their own prominent and lucrative careers rather than pursuing altruistic paths. Bureaucracy significantly impacts the legal profession for the reasons above.

GLOBALIZATION THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

Bureaucracy has undeniably reshaped the landscape of work, and concurrently, globalization has exerted its own significant impact on the nature of work. Globalization revolves around the intricate interplay of settlement,

colonization, and the exploration of new lands, which was improved by navigational techniques (Lecture 13 Sept). This notion is intricately intertwined with transportation technologies, encompassing vast vessels, highway networks, high-speed railways, and continent-crossing trains, all pivotal in facilitating the unhindered flow of goods and services across international boundaries (Lecture 13 Sept). This expansion of global trade aligns with reshaping the employment landscape, but it also correlates with the emergence of unjust working conditions. This section of the essay will analyze how globalization has transformed manual labour occupations within the job market, global supply chains, and the detrimental nature of employment.

GLOBALIZATION CHANGING THE NATURE OF THE MANUAL LABOR INDUSTRY

Globalization has brought about significant changes in the manual labour industry's management landscape, mainly through outsourcing and offshoring (Sept 13 Lecture). Among the most striking effects is the pursuit of automation and operational efficiency within manual labour sectors. A clear illustration of this transformation can be found in the concept of 'breaking bulk,' a pivotal element within the expansive "delivery mega sector" encompassing transportation, wholesale trade, retail trade, and utilities—an element recognized as a cornerstone of the emerging economy (Sweet & Meiksins, 2020: 61). Globalization has brought about a revolution in the intricacies of manual labour management by automating tasks that were previously repetitive and physically demanding. Traditionally, this labour-intensive delivery process involved the manual unloading and loading of goods from bulk carriers on ships. However, the advent of intermodal

transportation, characterized by the adoption of standardized shipping containers and the deployment of colossal overhead cranes, has undergone a dramatic overhaul (Lecture 13 Sept). Managers in this sector have undergone a profound transition, shifting from hands-on manual tasks to overseeing and optimizing intricate logistics systems that integrate advanced machinery and automation (Lecture 13 Sept). In essence, globalization has streamlined managerial practices within the industry, leading to heightened levels of productivity and fundamentally reshaping roles within the industry.

BUREAUCRACY CHANGING THE NATURE OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

While globalization brought about notable improvements in the manual labour industry, it simultaneously brought about detrimental consequences in the management of the manufacturing industry, particularly in terms of deteriorating working conditions. Class disparities reflect existing wealth concentration, driven by factors like declining labour unions and wealth invested in global production (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 91). The emergence of the new global economy led to a wave of large corporations expanding into less developed countries, enticed by the prospect of cost-effective labour and operational savings, albeit often managers sacrificing the well-being of its workers (Lecture 13 Sept). For instance, numerous large corporations operating in developing nations were found to perpetuate substandard and hazardous working conditions within their factories. An especially poignant illustration of this issue can be witnessed in the case of H&M in Bangladesh, where the egregious employment of child labour was uncovered (Lecture 13 Sept). Fueled by profit motives,

management locked doors to maximize productivity, inadvertently endangering workers' lives in the event of a fire (Lecture 13 Sept). In essence, globalization has transformed the nature of work for management in the manufacturing industry by creating a dual imperative: optimizing operations for cost efficiency while simultaneously addressing the pressing ethical and human rights issues that have emerged through expanded global production. This duality underscores the importance of responsible and conscientious management practices in these challenges.

Moreover, in such perilous work environments, non-cognitive skills, including sociability, courage, and adaptability, become paramount to enforce change (Han 2021: 467). Han's research illuminates how these competencies empower individuals to contribute to positive change within academic realms (Han 2021: 472). Nonetheless, this concept applies to workers in the manual labour industry. Employees in deteriorating working conditions can utilize these non-cognitive skills to advocate for fair labour practices, facilitate improved working conditions, and engage in cross-cultural collaborations.

The intersection of demographics and cognitive biases compounds these working challenges within the manufacturing industry (Lecture 25 Sept). A loosely established correlation exists between Lauren A. Riviera's research on cultural fit and hidden biases within hiring processes, with demographics playing a significant role in influencing cognitive biases (as discussed in Lecture on September 25th). There exists a pervasive bias favouring the hiring of younger individuals over their older counterparts, often on the premise that they are more adaptable, which is seen in H&M's factory

(Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 51). This demographic-oriented approach highlights the necessity of paying closer attention to these factors, as they can erect cognitive barriers that hinder the resolution of the deteriorating working conditions prevalent in the manufacturing industry.

TECHNOLOGY CHANGING THE NATURE OF WORK

Lastly, technology has evolved to reconstruct preconceptions about work and how work is performed. Though technology encompasses a broad system of knowledge to improve activities in the workplace and eliminate monotonous tasks effectively, some employees are concerned their jobs will become obsolete. For instance, bank tellers who were classified as clerical workers, are now being replaced through computerized information systems (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 49). Historically, clerical roles were considered prestigious occupations; however, the transformation of clerical workers can be attributed to the integration of technology (Lecture 18 Sept). This shift involved moving from a primarily private sector focus on physical and manual labour to a more streamlined, technology-centred approach, underscoring the transformative power of technology in reshaping the nature of work.

TECHNOLOGY CHANGING THE NATURE OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS WORK

Technology changes the nature of nurse practitioners' work through the creation of deskilled arguments (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 43). In this deskilling argument, technology is viewed as a tool that can streamline processes and decision-making, potentially diminishing the need for specific clinical skills and individual judgment (Troller 2019: n.p). Nurse

practitioner Suzanne's experience exemplifies this as guidelines or algorithms, driven by technology, limited her discretion when determining hospitalization solely based on the patient's age (Troller 2019: n.p). This illustrates how technology can diminish the role of healthcare professionals in making personalized, patient-centred decisions, highlighting one aspect of the deskilling argument.

Contrary to the deskilling argument, the upgrading argument asserts that technology frees professionals from mundane tasks, enabling them to be more creative and enhance their knowledge (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 136). This optimistic viewpoint perceives technology not as a skill-reducer but as a skill-enhancer through increased autonomy (Lecture 11 Sept). Nurse practitioners can streamline tasks with technology, such as record-keeping, communication, and diagnostic testing (Troller 2019: n.p). To better illustrate this concept, Frederick Winslow Taylor, known for Taylorism, pioneered Time and Motion Studies to scientifically analyze how individuals perform their tasks intending to maximize productivity (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 35). Similar to the upgrading argument, Taylorism methods sought to optimize the output of each individual while reducing possibilities for relaxing on the job (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 62).

Contemporary technology, such as the Vocera system in healthcare, echoes this concept (Lecture 13 Sept). With the Vocera system, nurses can communicate with their colleagues seamlessly and instantaneously, eliminating the need for time-consuming methods like pagers or phone calls. This instant communication improves productivity, allowing nurses to spend more time directly caring for patients and less on administrative duties (Lecture 13 Sept). The ongoing debate between the deskilling and

upgrading arguments highlights the multifaceted impact of technology on the nature of work.

Additionally, recent research indicates that nurse practitioners are experiencing a shift in their roles due to technological advancements, enabling them to prioritize patient-centred care. LaTonya Trotter's study further illustrates the dynamic nature of professions in healthcare, where nurse practitioners strive for recognition as independent healthcare practitioners while respecting the roles of medical doctors (Troller 2019: 91). In her research, she introduces the concept of "reparative boundary-work" which refers to the strategies employed by nurse-practitioners-in-training to address the challenges posed by their entry into the domain of diagnostic medicine, a terrain traditionally associated with physicians (Troller 2019: 92). Nurse practitioners play an instrumental role within the medical field caring for patients; yet, their role often involves significant emotional labour that has led to higher rates of burnout within this field (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 60). Thus, recognition and "routines that help nurses manage interactions with patients" like the Vocera system, can help alleviate nurses' emotional turmoil (Sweet & Meiksins 2020: 60). Addressing burnout in the context of technology's role in nursing is not just about managing workloads but also ensuring nurses have the support to navigate the digital landscape while delivering quality care. In essence, these examples underscore how technology and strategies rooted in innovation influence the evolving nature of nursing.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary landscape of professions is undergoing profound transformations driven by the interplay of

globalization, bureaucracy, and technology.

The primary assertion of this paper is that the combination of bureaucracy, globalization, and technology has resulted in significant transformations like work today, yielding both beneficial and adverse outcomes. Bureaucracy has reshaped work environments, emphasizing specialization and efficiency yet sometimes eroding professional autonomy and altruistic ideals, particularly in corporate-dominated settings. Globalization has streamlined practices and redefined roles, leading to positive shifts in some industries and detrimental consequences in others, including poor working conditions. Technology has played a dual role, with debates between deskilling and upgrading arguments highlighting its impact on work complexity and autonomy. The evolving nature of professions in contemporary society reflects a dynamic and multifaceted landscape shaped by these three influential factors. Understanding these changes is crucial for adapting to the challenges and opportunities presented by the modern world of work.

REFERENCES

- Han, Siqi. 2021. "Reproducing the Working Class? Incongruence between the Valuation of Social-Emotional Skills in School and in the Labor Market." *Sociological Perspectives* 64(3): 467-487.
- Kay, Fiona. 2023. "Changing the Nature of Work," September 6.
- Kay, Fiona. 2023. "Changing the Nature of Work," September 11.

Kay, Fiona. 2023. "Changing the Nature of Work," September 13.

Kay, Fiona. 2023. "The Professions," September 18.

Kay, Fiona. 2023. "The Professions," September 20.

Kay, Fiona. 2023. "Entry to Professional Schools and Labor Markets," September 25.

Kay, Fiona. 2023. "Becoming a Professional," September 27.

Kay, Fiona. 2023. "Becoming a Professional," October 4.

Jacobsson, Kerstin, Ylva Wallinder, and Ida Seeing. 2020. "Street-level bureaucrats under new managerialism: a comparative study of agency cultures and caseworker role identities in two welfare state bureaucracies." *Journal of Professions and Organization* 7(3): 316–333.

Sweet, Stephen and Peter Meiksins. 2021. "Chapter 1: Mapping the Contours of Work." Pp. 31–56 in *Changing Contours of Work Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. Los Angeles, California: Sage.

Sweet, Stephen and Peter Meiksins. 2021. "Chapter 2: New Products, New Ways of Working, and the New Economy Mapping the Contours of Work." Pp. 57–86 in *Changing Contours of Work Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. Los Angeles, California: Sage.

Sweet, Stephen and Peter Meiksins. 2021. "Chapter 3: Economic Inequality, Social Mobility, and the New Economy." Pp. 87–112 in *Changing Contours of Work Jobs and Opportunities in the New Economy*. Los Angeles, California: Sage.

Trotter, LaTonya. (2019. "'I'm not a Doctor. I'm a Nurse': Reparative Boundary-Work in Nurse Practitioner Education." *Social Currents* 6(2): 105-120.

**“If you Have Nothing to Hide you Have Nothing to Fear”:
Critiquing the Experiences of
Data Collection Practices for
the LGBTQ+ Community
By: Lauren McDermott**

The fallacy that “if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear” represents a privileged attitude that ignores cis and heteronormative structures that are embedded into practices of surveillance practices of data collection to marginalize 2SLGBTQIA+ communities further. Challenging cis and heteronormative expressions of identity may lead to increased surveillance and discrimination of 2SLGBTQ+ communities, where these groups continue to be viewed as deviant through data categorization, which limits their freedom to express themselves openly. In contextualizing data collection processes alongside Foucault’s concept of biopower, this paper will challenge the idea that visibility through representation translates to greater acceptance of 2SLGBTQ+ identities. This will demonstrate that the problem is not simply whether individuals have something to hide but that non-cis or heteronormative identities are more likely to be targeted, which can enhance harassment and discrimination through data collection and sorting processes.

Fischer (2019) argues that within the past ten years, there has been a significant increase in visibility in the media of 2SLGBTQ+ folks, alongside advocacy for trans and gender nonconforming rights (4). Visibility, in this sense, can translate to more identities being acknowledged outside of cis and heteronormative expectations, which ideally can provide greater recognition and acceptance for 2SLGBTQ+ communities. To contrast the notion of

visibility, Klaassen (2020) conceptualizes invisibility as the experience for gender nonconforming people who are “deprived of the power of being seen and heard” where there lies a tactical value of invisibility through “protection from the controlling gaze of heteronormative and other normalizing instances” that seek to prevent marginalized groups from gaining power and challenge the social order that has traditionally allowed heteronormative bodies to retain power in society (4).

While a shift away from invisibility through increased media representation and recognition of non-cis and heteronormative bodies “is seen as a measure of cultural justice and social equality,” Fischer (2019) illustrates that this transition has resulted in “a conservative backlash, with increased surveillance and regulation of 2SLGBTQ+ people by the security state and media organizations” (14). They note that this practice can be tied to Foucault’s concept of biopower. Biopower refers to surveillance practices that go beyond monitoring populations but are more about shaping and controlling individual identities to enhance social order and stabilities that align with dominant groups’ goals and expectations, ultimately preserving existing hierarchies (Kafer and Ginberg 2019; Foucault 1977). In the context of 2SLGBTQ+ populations, individuals that challenge cis or heteronormative norms are more likely to be scrutinized, through further surveillance such as state surveillance practices like full-body scanners at airports, denial of access to public restrooms or denial of healthcare services (Kafer and Ginberg 2019). Given that biopower entails the regulation of identities viewed as acceptable by those in power, surveillance of 2SLGBTQ+ communities may seek to limit gender and sexual expression through monitoring online activities, monitoring public spaces and

social interactions or categorizing and targeting particular identities in data collection practices (Fischer 2019).

While visibility is thought to be necessary for complete self-representation in the social space, preventing individuals from needing to hide pieces of their identity from society, Klaassen (2020) emphasizes that “because visibility is the result of a constructive process that develops from existing norms and pictorial traditions, it is linked to the judgement and stigmatization that arise from the gaze of one that is directed at the ‘Other’ and that can be heteronormative, disciplining and potentially violent” (4). With this ‘othering’ gaze that seeks to criticize non-cis/heteronormative bodies, visibility can be understood as a trap, where under biopolitical practices of state surveillance, what has replaced total invisibility for 2SLGBTQ+ communities are a “kind of carefully regulated, segregated visibility” (2019:14). Kafer and Ginberg (2019) explore Foucault’s concept of biopower within digital spaces, considering that “queer identities challenge systems because they are improper configurations of gender, sex and sexuality that conceal the body and render it a threatening inconsistency” among algorithmic systems or data sorting models that seek to understand and categorize users in digital spaces (593). Contemporary surveillance practices utilize assessments of risk and value in online spaces, whereupon categorization, 2SLGBTQ+ communities may be subject to further targeting and discrimination for falling outside of the “optimal model” based on cis and heteronormative bodies, which dictates access to resources and information (28; Kater and Ginberg 2019).

Through this, we can turn to the policing of online spaces that focus on the 2SLGBTQ+ community that Moscufo and

Dobuski (2022) highlight in their article on “the digital closet.” Moscufo and Dobuski (2022) explain that categorization of user data leads to shadow-banning of certain content and users, where 2SLGBTQ+ users “have difficulty producing and distributing content online and connecting on social media without facing harassment and misinformation” or content being taken down in its entirety. Further, Factora (2023) highlights recent concerns with this user sorting across social media platforms where multiple TikTok employees have disclosed that they can access the names of users who have engaged with 2SLGBTQ+ content on the app, which is concerning given the ubiquitous nature of many app’s data collection and privacy policies that do not fully disclose who has access to users’ data. The content that users engage with online can be used against them, especially when combined with the underlying principles of biopolitical practices embedded within data collection systems. These systems have historically labelled homosexuality as deviant, leading to increased scrutiny and control over individuals who exhibit such behaviour (Kafer and Ginberg 2019). This increased control based on the categorization of identity demonstrates that 2SLGBTQ+ individuals may not have anything they are intentionally hiding but are subject to greater surveillance based on their actions within digital spaces.

Guyan (2021) provides a different example of the contradiction of visibility among 2SLGBTQ+ communities by examining what “being counted” within state surveillance practices like census data means for marginalized groups such as 2SLGBTQ+ communities, which expands on Fischer’s (2019) exploration of visibility where “being visible also means that one is being counted and administrated according to the state” and the normalizing processes

that seek to control individuals who fall outside of the state's conception of an ideal person (Fischer 2019:14). Guyan (2021) highlights the limitations of the categories within this data collection process, where the state chooses which categories "count" for population data, where in the case of Scotland, nonbinary people are not included, meaning that "collecting data about the lives of some queer people can push those who fall outside these expectations further into the shadows" including gender non-binary and gender fluid individuals.

Further, Guyan (2021) highlights that those opposing queer rights may use this data to further their claims, where if the percentage of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans populations is higher than anticipated, opponents may question the reliability of the census. Still, if the percentage is lower than expected, the data may support claims that seek to reduce funding for LGBTQ services. Ball, Green, Koskela and Phillips (2009) note that the simultaneous journey for recognition by the state, alongside the hope of avoiding discrimination, places pressure on queer subjects to adhere to the norms ascribed within these categories made by cis and heteronormative structures and accept an essentialist model of categorizing gender and sexuality instead of recognizing this aspect of one's identity as fluid and subject to change over time. While extending categories among census data to make more gender identities visible among demographic data, these systems are rooted in practices that have traditionally sought to control marginalized communities and inflict harm for going against the norm (Guyan 2021). Guyan (2021) argues that "rather than collecting more accurate or better-quality data about queer communities, we need to examine the bigger picture and reimagine data collection" that seeks to maintain social order under traditionally established white,

patriarchal, colonial, and cis and heteronormative power structures. This example of demographic data for some 2SLGBTQ+ individuals demonstrates that increased visibility does not translate to increased protection under state surveillance but may lead to greater invasive surveillance practices that seek to monitor certain groups that are perceived as threats to the state's conception of ideal social order.

These examples of data collection processes, whether in digital spaces to control whose pages are most likely to be promoted on social media platforms or state data collection practices to gain demographic information, demonstrate that increased visibility can lead to increased discriminatory surveillance. The concept of visibility is insightful in recognizing the need to reject the narrative that having something to hide means something is shameful, whereas having something to hide may result from experiences of data collection practices that discriminate against marginalized identities. While 2SLGBTQ+ communities may not feel as though they need to hide their identities due to increased media recognition and access to rights, continued mass surveillance and discrimination challenge the idea that "if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear" extends to all individuals.

References

- Ball, Kirstie, Nicola Green, Hille Koskela, and David J. Phillips. 2009. Editorial: Surveillance Studies needs Gender and Sexuality. *Surveillance & Society* 6(4): 352-355.
- Factora, James. 2023. "Tiktok Tracked Users Who Watched 2SLGBTQ+ Videos, New Report Finds." *Them*. Retrieved December 4, 2023

(<https://www.them.us/story/tik-tok-lgbtq-content-tracking-report>).

Fischer, Mia. 2019. *Terrorizing Gender: Transgender Visibility and the Surveillance Practices of the U.S. Security State Discipline and*

. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Punish*. Toronto: Random House of Canada Limited.

(Part3, Chapter3: Panopticism)

Guyan, Kevin. 2021. "For Queer Communities, Being Counted Has Downsides." *Wired*. Retrieved December 4, 2023 (<https://www.wired.com/story/queer-data-census-equality/>).

Kafer, Gary and Daniel Grinberg. 2019. "Editorial: Queer Surveillance." *Surveillance & Society* 17(5):592–601.

Klaassen, Oliver. 2020. "I Spy with my Little Eye... Queer(ing) Counter-Surveillance Tactics of Camouflage and Opacity in Dean Sameshima's *In Between Days (Without You)* 1998." *The French Journal of Media Studies* 8(2):1-25.

Monahan, Torin, and David Murakami Wood, eds. 2018. *Surveillance Studies: A Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press. (pages 5 - 27)

Moscufo, Michela and Mike Dobuski . 2022. "2SLGBTQ+ Community Facing Increased Social Media Bias, Author Says." *ABC News*. Retrieved December 4, 2023 ([community-facing-increased-social-media-bias-author/story?id=85463533\).

Travers, Ann. 2019. "Review of Beauchamp's *Going Stealth: Transgender Politics and U.S. Surveillance Practices*." *Surveillance & Society* 17\(5\):752–56.](https://abcnews.go.com/US/lgbtq-</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

A Reform Proposal for Medical Assistance in Dying Where the Sole Underlying Condition is a Mental Disorder

By: Noor Nasr

Suicide and euthanasia as a means to end one's suffering presents an interesting problem socially and within Canadian law, which has undergone a transition from a criminalized and highly stigmatized action to an authorized medical practice for individuals who fit within a specific set of criteria. In Canada, assisted suicide practices are better known as Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) within the law. Proponents of MAiD claim that assisted suicide is a problem of personal autonomy and choice; in preventing individuals from seeking out physician-assisted suicide, their rights outlined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, particularly sections 7, 12, and 15 are infringed upon by the prohibitions in the *Criminal Code* (Dumsday 2021). However, throughout the long history that Canadian law has undergone, the boundaries of whom MAiD is available and the eligibility criteria have expanded, introducing the potential for misuse and abuse of assisted death regarding vulnerable populations. The broadening criteria of MAiD have allowed individuals suffering from neurological and psychiatric conditions, non-terminal conditions, to request MAiD, which is known as MAiD for Mental Disorders as the Sole Underlying Medical Condition (MD-SUMC) (Council of Canadian Academics 2018:5). The specific problem of MAiD for psychiatric conditions is complicated; proponents of MAiD MD-SUMC argue that it is cruel and unjust to permit the continued suffering of individuals with treatment-resistant conditions, while opponents argue that the

legalization of MAiD MD-SUMC may cause further harm and further erode the medical- and palliative-care systems. As the boundaries of whom MAiD is available to expand, the question of where to draw the line arises: how legislature and lawmakers can balance the needs and autonomy of all Canadian citizens while mitigating the negative impact that MAiD MD-SUMC may have?

First, to understand how euthanasia and assisted dying came to be such highly contested topics, the historical attitudes and perspectives regarding the act of committing suicide must be understood within a legal framework. S. 241 of the *Criminal Code* has a very long history, extending beyond the first *Canadian Criminal Code*, in which the act of suicide was criminalized. Canada's legal system is rooted in English common law, a form of law not written down as legislation, which then evolved into a system of rules based on precedent (Department of Justice Canada 2015:4). In common law, suicide was considered to be a form of homicide and an offence against both God and the King's interests; in *Commentaries on the Laws of England* "the law of England wisely and religiously considers, that no man had a power to destroy life, but by commission from God" (Blackstone 1769:189 cited in *Rodriguez v British Columbia [Attorney General]*, 1993 CanLII [SCC], [1993] 3 SCR 519). The *Criminal Code* was then revised in which attempting, or counselling, aiding, or abetting another to commit suicide was an offence, codified in law from 1892, punishable by a life sentence, to 1953, which amended the sanction to 14 years in prison (Carter and Rodgeron 2018:780-1). Suicide was officially decriminalized in 1972, after which the right to refuse medical intervention and to withdraw or discontinue treatment gained recognition (Carter and

Rodgerson 2018:782). It is clear how religion, specifically Christianity, shaped the dominant notions of ethicality and morality, shaping Canadian legislation and law.

Several key cases have been brought forth by those who believe that the laws prohibiting assisted death violated their constitutional rights. Section 241(b) of the *Canadian Criminal Code* prohibits the counselling or aiding of suicide as it violates the rights set out in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (*Criminal Code* R.S.C., 1985 c. C-46 s. 241 [b]). Between the 1990s and 2000s, reports, consultations, and policies were released to address the issue of assisted death, resulting in the British Columbia Ministry of the Attorney General releasing guidelines for Crown Counsel (Carter and Rodgerson 2018). Concerning charging individuals under the *Criminal Code*, the guidelines stated that palliative care, withholding or withdrawing medical treatment, when administered according to ethical medical standards, would not be subject to criminal prosecution (Carter and Rodgerson 2018:785).

Bill C-14, An Act to amend the *Criminal Code* and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying), revised the *Criminal Code* officially exempting criminal liability, as well as amending the eligibility criteria in an attempt to balance autonomy and the protection of the vulnerable (*Criminal Code* RSC 1985 c. C-46 as amended by An Act to amend the *Criminal Code* and to make related amendments to other Acts SC 2016, c 3 <<https://canlii.ca/t/52rs0>>; Konder and Christie 2019; Nicol and Tiedemann 2021). Here, a person may receive MAiD only if they meet all of a set of criteria; of particular importance is the requirement of a "grievous and irremediable medical condition" (An Act to amend the *Criminal Code* and to make related amendments to other Acts

[medical assistance in dying] SC 2016 c 3 s. 241.2[1c]; Konder and Christie 2019). A grievous and irremediable medical condition is defined according to the following criteria:

(a) they have a serious and incurable illness, disease, or disability; (b) they are in an advanced state of irreversible decline in capability; (c) that illness, disease or disability or that state of decline causes them to endure physical or psychological suffering that is intolerable to them and that cannot be relieved under conditions that they consider acceptable; and (d) their natural death has become reasonably foreseeable, taking into account all of their medical circumstances, without a prognosis necessarily having been made as to the specific length of time they have remaining (An Act to amend the *Criminal Code* and to make related amendments to other Acts [medical assistance in dying] SC 2016 c 3 s. 241.2(2); Konder and Christie 2019).

The requirement that an individual's natural death be reasonably foreseeable to access MAiD was a particular point of contention challenged and debated, which facilitated the introduction of Bill C-7. The case of *Canada (Attorney General) v E. F.*, in the Alberta Court of Appeals raised two issues: whether the constitutional exemption in *Carter* applies only to the terminally ill and whether or not psychiatric conditions prohibit an individual from receiving MAiD (Applebaum 2017:315-6; *Canada [Attorney General] v E. F.* 2016 para. 11; Carter and Rodgerson 2018:792). E. F. suffered from severe conversion disorder, a psychiatric condition which rendered her effectively blind and non-ambulatory; "her quality of life is non-existent. While her condition is

diagnosed as a psychiatric one, her capacity and her cognitive ability ... are unimpaired" (Applebaum 2017:315; *Canada [Attorney General] v E. F.*, 2016, para 7). It is important to note that the administration of assisted death, where the sole condition is a mental disorder, has not, to date, occurred in Canada. Thus, perspectives and opinions on potential implications, consequences, and benefits must build upon what is known in the global medical sphere.

The prevailing state of mental health in Canada, as well as the prevalence of mental illness and disorders amongst the Canadian population, is crucial to the discussion surrounding physician-assisted death. Globally, mental healthcare services are poorly funded as compared to other health sectors (Council of Canadian Academics 2018:27). There has been a well-documented need for mental health services in Canada; in 2018, an estimated 5.3 million Canadians reported needing mental healthcare, and of them 1.2 million stated that their needs were partially met, with 1.1 million stating that their needs were entirely unmet (Moroz, Moroz and D'Angelo 2020:282; Palay *et al.*, 2019:762; Sareen *et al.*, 2005:644). Additionally, a review of the prevalence of mental disorders and suicidality through the provinces found that British Columbia and Ontario exhibited the highest prevalence of suicide planning, and Ontario exhibited the highest prevalence of suicide attempts (Palay *et al.*, 2019:761-2). The mental healthcare system, as it currently exists, does not adequately address the needs of the mentally ill, a concern which is crucial to the discussion surrounding MAiD SUMC-MD. The specific barriers Canadians face in the accessibility of services can disproportionately impact marginalized people. Long wait times for primary and psychiatric care, a shortage of accessible mental health professionals, cultural and

language barriers, concerns about stigma, inequities due to geographic location and demographics, and the cost of services not being covered are various barriers that people face (Council of Canadian Academics 2018:27; Health Canada 2022:45; Moroz *et al.*, 2020:282).

The presence of a mental disorder is strongly correlated with various social, economic, and environmental inequalities, such as poverty and homelessness, and disproportionately affects women, youth, Indigenous people, immigrants, refugees, and other racialized groups (Council of Canadian Academics 2018:26). The inaccessibility of adequate mental health treatment coupled with the disproportionate rates of mental illness among structurally vulnerable populations demonstrates the risk that marginalized populations may excessively turn to MAiD SUMC-MD. The inadequacy of the current healthcare system can be owed to its neoliberal and biomedical framework, which centers treatment and shifts away from the prevention of illnesses through various personal, environmental, and social determinants of health (Polzer and Power 2016:4). Under this model, individuals who experience marginalization due to their subordinate position in society, along one or more axis of inequity, will disproportionately experience the adverse effects of the medical system, which deepens poverty, intensifies experiences of social exclusion, and exacerbate poor living conditions (Polzer and Power 2016:9).

Currently, assisted death and euthanasia for mental disorders is not available in Canada, but is available in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg (Applebaum 2017; Council of Canadian Academics 2018; Health Canada 2022; Kim, De Vries and Peteet 2016:363; Konder and Christie 2019; Thienpoint *et al.*, 2015). As the legalization of medical assistance in

dying in Canada can be owed, in part, to the availability EAS globally, such practices can be examined to understand how MAiD SUMC-MD might operate within Canada. Kim *et al.*, (2016) conducted a review of psychiatric Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide (EAS) case summaries collected from the Dutch regional euthanasia review committee seeking to identify the characteristics of those who receive EAS for psychiatric conditions (362-3). It is critical to note that in 18 cases, the physician administering EAS was new to the patient (Kim *et al.*, 2016:365). This is crucial to consider, as the subjectivity of grievous and irremediable suffering is difficult to determine, particularly in the case where physicians are unfamiliar with the patient's complete history (Thienpoint *et al.*, 2015:2). Many of the subjects had a suicide attempt in the past, some of whom had multiple attempts (Kim *et al.*, 2016:364). Here, it is evident that the rates of mental illness and suicidality, which disproportionately impact structurally vulnerable populations, and the utilization of EAS practices globally may have dire consequences.

In terms of MAiD SUMC-MD, the high prevalence of suicidality in mentally ill populations presents particular difficulties with respect to the groups it seeks to serve. A report conducted by Health Canada (2022) found that of the 157 mental disorders listed in the DSM-V, four primary diagnoses have suicidality as a main symptom; the mental disorders most frequently associated with completed suicide tend to be mood disorders, substance use disorders, and personality disorders (43). In many cases, suicidality is a core symptom of the condition (Applebaum 2017:316; Council of Canadian Academics 2018; Health Canada 2022:41-2). The question, then, is "whether it is possible to determine an individual's ability to consent when their

wish to die is an intrinsic property of their illness instead of a consequence" (Konder and Christie 2019:35). Is there a fundamental difference between the suffering experienced by a terminally ill patient who wishes to die, as compared to the suicidality expressed by a mentally ill person? The difficulty in determining eligibility for the administration of MAiD, then, rests on the delicate balance between the acknowledgement that "some mental disorder can produce enduring and intolerable suffering" psychologically and physically against the fact that certain mental conditions do impair a person's ability to reason (Council of Canadian Academics 2018:29). The inadequacy of the mental healthcare sector in Canada, coupled with the high prevalence of mental illness and suicidality in structurally vulnerable groups highlight the risks that the legalization of MAiD SUMC-MD presents.

The subjective nature of grievous and irremediable in the criteria to access MAiD complicates the determination of eligibility, which has necessitated the use of 'untreatable' as a criteria. Untreatable, in the case of mental disorders, refers to patients who are unresponsive to therapy and interventions, such as anti-depressants, evidence-based psychotherapy, other classes of medications, and adjunctive treatments, through multiple trials (Mrazek *et al.*, 2014:977). It has been found that an estimated 12-20% of patients with depression are thought to be treatment-resistant (Applebaum 2017:316; Mrazek *et al.*, 2014:983). It is far easier to define when a condition is untreatable or incurable regarding eligibility criteria; designating a condition as treatment-resistant implies that all measures have been taken and were unsuccessful. Yet, as was seen in some cases internationally, some patients requesting EAS had it administered by a physician they

had never been treated by before by the physician administering the substance, such as in the end-of-life clinic (Applebaum 2017). This exemplifies the precarity of allowing MAiD SUMC-MD; it is difficult to fully understand the history of the patient's treatments and responses and the nature of the suffering, which may allow for misuse of the system.

To further demonstrate the unreliability of administering MAiD SUMC-MD, the attitudes regarding the burden that treatment-resistant conditions impose on society must be analyzed. The World Health Organization was found to have ranked major depressive disorder among the diseases most debilitating to society, partially due to the increased utilization of healthcare resources, diminished quality of life, and the indirect personal and societal costs (Mrazek *et al.*, 2014:977). Mrazek *et al.* (2014) conducted a literature review seeking to assess the clinical, economic, and societal burdens that treatment-resistant depression poses within the United States. They repeatedly emphasized that patients with treatment-resistant depression contribute a significantly high burden of illness to societal costs, their quality of life, participation in the labour force, and utilization of medical resources (Mrazek *et al.*, 2014:977-8; Sareen *et al.*, 2005). This is interesting, as it contrasts with the data indicating that most individuals do not find sufficient treatment and services in the mental healthcare sector. They found that the burden of treatment-resistant depression is on par with that of other chronic conditions, such as cancer (Mrazek *et al.*, 2014:984). The substantive quantity of literature which views treatment-resistant depression as a burden then plays a significant role in the harms that will emerge from the legalization of MAiD SUMC-MD. With consideration of the high rates of

mental illnesses, the unequal distribution of mental illnesses among structurally vulnerable populations, and the insufficiency of contemporary mental healthcare structures, the legalization of assisted death in the case of untreatable psychiatric conditions further legitimizes the belief that the ill are burdensome to society. The framing of treatment-resistant conditions and the legalization of assisted death for mental illness conveys the notion that those with treatment immune conditions are not deserving of support. This framework, however, entirely disregards the inaccessibility of adequate mental health treatments, the disproportionality of mental illness among marginalized populations, and the additional barriers they face in accessing care.

This set a dangerous precedent, in which vulnerable groups, who already experience structural disadvantages, may seek out MAiD in place of further treatments. Applebaum (2017) reported that some patients whose conditions were categorized as treatment-resistant merely failed to respond to a single anti-depressant and had not attempted evidence-based psychotherapy, other classes of medications, and adjunctive therapies (316). While the incurability and irreversibility of psychiatric conditions as eligibility criteria for MAiD is determined based on the evolution of the condition and responses to past interventions, Canadians have the right to refuse treatments they do not wish to undergo before the classification of an intractable condition (Applebaum 2017:316; Health Canada 2022:39-40). This poses a significant risk to the safety and livelihood of Canadians; it is known that many mental illnesses feature hopelessness and apathy as symptoms, and so any individual who wishes to die may refuse treatments to ensure they possess the eligibility criteria.

Vulnerability assessments are required before considering MAiD SUMC-MD, which must establish the individual's competency and demonstrate their ability to consent (Konder and Christie 2019:36).

Yet, the healthcare system is overburdened. It is known not to provide sufficient care, and this weakness in the system will potentially allow for individuals who do not possess all the eligibility criteria to receive assisted death. In sum, the substantive rates of mental illness amongst the population and the disproportionate impact on marginalized groups, the barriers that people face in accessing treatment, the inadequacy of available treatments and the unreliability and inconsistency of determining eligibility all exemplify the very precarious nature of the legalization of MAiD SUMC-MD.

The legalization of assisted death for psychiatric conditions appears to merely be a surface-level solution to the high incidence rates of mental illness and suicidality amongst the Canadian population. Thus, a potential for reform exists through supplementary social programs, improved patient education, quality-of-life improvement programs, and increased resources for inadequate care clinics (Mrazek *et al.*, 2014:984-5). An impactful reform to MAiD in Canada would balance the needs of those genuinely suffering, as in the case of *E. F.*, whose psychological condition caused physical harm, with the protection of those most affected by the inadequate social programs and policies. As the health care and social services and programming sectors currently exist, the risk of allowing MAiD SUMC-MD, concerning the dire implications that would impact the structurally vulnerable, does not counterbalance the infringements of *Charter* rights, as per s. 1, which states that limits on the rights and freedoms can be demonstrably

justified (*Constitution Act* 1982, s. 1). As such, a reform of the laws regarding MAiD in the case of psychiatric disorders necessitates a reform which will address the disproportionate impact of mental illness and suicidality in vulnerable populations and the sources of these disorders.

REFERENCES

- An Act to amend the *Criminal Code* and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying) SC 2016, c 3
<<https://canlii.ca/t/52rs0>>
- Appelbaum, Paul S. 2017. "Should Mental Disorders Be a Basis for Physician-Assisted Death?". *Psychiatric Services* 68(4): 315-317. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201700013
- Blackstone, William. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, vol. 4, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1769.
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, s. 1, 7, Part 1 of the *Constitution Act* 1982, Schedule B to the *Canada Act* 1982 (UK), c-11, <<https://canlii.ca/t/ldsx>>
- Carter, Rose M., and Brandyn Rodgeron. 2018. "Medical Assistance in Dying: Journey to Medical Self-Determination". *Alberta Law Review* 55(3): 777- 804. <https://doi.org/10.29173/alr2459>
- Council of Canadian Academics. 2018. *State of Knowledge on Medical Assistance in Dying for Mature Minors, Advance Requests, and Where*

a Mental Disorder Is the Sole Underlying Medical Condition: Summary of Reports

. Ottawa, ON:

Canada.

Criminal Code

(R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46)

Department of Justice Canada. 2015.

Canada's System of Justice. ISBN 978-1-100-25574-3. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csjsjc/just/img/courten.pdf>

Dumsday, Travis. 2021. "An Overview of *Carter v. Canada*". Pp. 11-45 in *Assisted Suicide in Canada: Moral, Legal, and Policy Considerations*. British Columbia: UBC Press.

Health Canada. 2022. *Final Report of the Expert Panel on MAiD and Mental Illness*. Ottawa, ON: Canada.

Kim, Scott Y. H., Raymond G. De Vries, and John R. Peteet. 2016. "Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide of Patients with Psychiatric Disorders in the Netherlands 2011 to 2014". *JAMA Psychiatry* 73(4): 362-368. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2015.2887

Konder, Ricarda M., and Timothy Christie. 2019. "Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in Canada: A Critical Analysis of the Exclusion of Vulnerable Populations". *Healthcare Policy* 15(2):28-38. doi: 10.12927/hcpol.2019.26073

Moroz, Nicholas, Isabella Moroz, and Monika Slovinec D'Angelo. 2020. "Mental Health Services in Canada: Barriers and Cost-Effective Solutions

to Increase Access". *Healthcare Management Forum* 33(6): 282-287. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0840470420933911>

Mrazek, David A., John C.

Hornberger, C. Anthony Altar, and Irina Degtiar. 2014. "A Review of the Clinical, Economic, and Societal Burden of Treatment-Resistant Depression: 1996-2013". *Psychiatric Services* 65(8): 977-987. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201300059

Nicol, Julia and Marlisa Tiedemann.

2021. *Bill C-7: An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Medical Assistance in Dying)*. Library of Parliament Legislative Summary Publication No. 43-2-C7-E. Ottawa, ON: Canada

Palay, Joshua, Tamara L. Taillieu,

Tracie O. Afifi, Sarah Turney, James M. Bolton, Murray W. Enns, Mark Smith, Alain Lesage, Jeffrey A. Bakal, Brian Rush, Carol E. Adair, Simone N. Vigod, Steven Clelland, Katherine Rittenbach, Paul Kurdyak, and Jitender Sareen. 2019. "Prevalence of Mental Disorders and Suicidality in Canadian Provinces" *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 64(11): 761-769.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0706743719878987>

Polzer, Jessica and Elaine Power.

2016. "The Governance of Health in Neoliberal Societies". Pp. 3-42 in *Neoliberal Governance and Health: Duties, Risks, and Vulnerabilities*, edited by J. Polzer and E. Power. McGill-Queens University Press.

Sareen, Jitender, Brian J. Coz, Tracie O. Afifi, Ian Clara, and Bo Nancy Yu. 2005. "Perceived Need for Mental Health Treatment in a Nationally Representative Canadian Sample". *Can J Psychiatry* 50(10): 643-651. DOI:10.1177/070674370505001011

Thienpoint, Lieve, Monica Verhofstadt, Tony Van Loon, Wim Distelmans, Kurt Audenaert, and Peter P. De Deyn. 2015. "Euthanasia Requests, Procedures and Outcomes for 100 Belgian Patients Suffering from Psychiatric Disorders: A Retrospective, Descriptive Study". *BMJ Open* 5(7):1-8. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2014-007454

CASES CITED

Canada (Attorney General) v E. F., 2016 ABCA 155 (CanLII)
Rodriguez v British Columbia (Attorney General), 1993 CanLII 75 (SCC), [1993] S.C.R 519

"Breaking the Mold: Exploring the Stigmatization of Voluntarily Childfree Women in North America"?

By: Erin Yuill

Western media conceptualizes women down to their innate biology. North America reinforces these ideals through the falsification of women desiring pregnancy with the addition of emotional positivity from relatives to create an equation that would be repeated and continuously utilized through films, television shows, toys, role models, and literature (Wood 2001). This begs the question of whether all women feel this craving to carry and reproduce, and the answer is no. The exclusion of voluntarily child-free individuals is a political stance on pronatalism and economic sustainability. This alienation is felt worldwide, and those who practice the ideology must be discrete and humble about their decision. Women who choose to be childfree are stigmatized and seen as deviants as they do not conform to social habitus ideals. As a result of this stigmatization, voluntary childfree women are assailed on their moral character and mental stability and are faced with inequitable societal policies and standards.

The significance of being voluntarily childfree is inherently related to the definition of womanhood. Having the freedom to choose whether to procreate or to remain child-free challenges modern societies and cultures to redefine what it means to be a woman. This also facilitates women's fulfillment through other things, such as their careers. According to Yvonne Vissing (2002), there is a cultural mandate in which women are meant to become mothers scribed into their psyches. Further,

young cisgender women are socialized to behave motherly and nurture others and toys in the belief that they will have children to take care of later in life (Ibid: 6). In relation, Dr. Jean Veevers (1980), the existence of the parenthood prescription as a moral necessity to be socially accepted in North America. This particular social acceptance stems from religious groups, which are displayed by the prevailing influence of Christian ideals and texts on the behaviour of citizens in North America (Veevers:5).

Midway through the 20th century, women had come into newfound agency. This was seen through the gain of rights, being able to vote and take control of their lives. In translation, this sociological field of study only rose and began to be investigated in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In relation, when comparing cis-gendered heterosexual men and women in terms of voluntary childlessness, there is a clear double standard in the reaction from the collective consciousness found in North America. This is emphasized through Tim Kreider's evaluation of response to his choice to remain childfree- "Men who don't want kids get a dismissive eye roll, but the reaction to women who don't want them is more like What's wrong with you?" (Daum 2015:268). Kreider comments on how men are given little chastising and then disregarded for being immature, whereas women are "regarded as unnatural, traitors to their sex, if not the species" (Ibid: 159). The magnitude of the response of choosing not to procreate between cisgender men and cisgender women is grandiose in perspective.

A common conflict in being child-free is to accept the lack of urge to engage in motherhood. Safer demonstrates this turmoil by saying, "I finally said to myself, I don't really want to have a baby, I want to want to have a baby" (Daum 2015: 190). In

Veevers' (1980) work *Childless by Choice*, she sorts voluntarily childfree women into two categories: rejectors and aficionados. The former group "are those who disavow the parenthood mystique and who have actively and vehemently rejected the parenthood role." (Ibid: 159). These individuals cannot comprehend their lives with the inclusion of children, focus on the disadvantages of having children, and tend to dislike children overall (Veevers 1980). Similarly, the aficionados have a more positive outlook in that they "appreciate the advantages of not having children, rather than the disadvantages of parenthood" (Veevers:159). Their motivation stems from not wanting their passions to be infringed upon and having no particular strong stance on natalism (Ibid). An interesting key difference between the two groups is that aficionados are said to have more "unconventional" upbringings than rejectors (Ibid: 159).

Psychotherapist Jeanne Safer wrote, "Shame—for being selfish, unfeminine, or unable to nurture—is one of the hardest emotions to work through for women who are conflicted about having children." when speaking about her self-inflicted judgement over her decision not to abide by the social habitus of being a mother (Daum 2015:187). Social habitus is a concept that refers to the constraints of social actors about their purpose in the world and motivations that are shaped by social experiences early in life. Habitus is consistent among individuals of the same social position (Anderson 2016). In this case, women are the social actors. Their "sense in the social world" (Ibid) is reproduction, which has been reinforced throughout their lives through media, authority figures, institutions, and kin. The consequence resulting from the deviancy of motherhood is social judgment. It is common for others to believe that not

having children voluntarily is due to mental illness or marital unhappiness. In turn, this ails the individual who did not subscribe to natalism and likely leads to identity issues via role strain. The lack of voluntarily childfree women in media and prevalence in classes are not typically advertised and displayed as it could encourage other women to deviate from conformity.

The concept of conformity directly relates to Pierre Bourdieu's "third way," which speaks to forces named habitus, capital, and fields (Mullins: 99). Cisgender, heterosexual women opting to become childfree is seen as a violation of fertility norms in Western societies, especially in North America. Continuing, Goffman (1963) wrote, "... the metropolitan unmarried and merely married who disavail themselves of the opportunity to raise a family" (Goffman1963: 154 in Veevers 1980). This quote is included in Goffman's list of deviancies, ergo, the process in which the decision to not engage in child-bearing practices becomes stigmatized. So, it can be concluded that the social meanings of being voluntarily childfree and the incidence of being a cisgender, heterosexual woman are almost defined wholly negatively. On the contrary, Veevers (1980) explains that "... masculinity can be affirmed through occupational success or sexual prowess", hence, the lack of attention on cisgender, heterosexual men as there is not a "motherhood mandate" they must face (Veevers 1980: 7).

Political, social, and educational factors have impacted adopting child-free lifestyles. In Veevers' (1974) studies, all the participants were white, mostly middle-class, and of varying education. Their family life followed the nuclear model and was relatively stable. On top of this, they had access to birth control contraceptives. Interestingly, race does play a role in the

perception of voluntarily childless women. It was found that from a demographic of college students, African American women who have chosen to pursue motherhood are seen more positively in correlation to African American women who are voluntarily childfree. Results from the study also showed that in comparison, white women of either choice were viewed more favourably than the African American groups (Vinson et. Al 2010: 429-430).

By going against authority and conformity, the social response to the deviancy of parenthood is mostly negative. Veevers (1980) found that voluntarily childfree, cisgender, heterosexual women used two strategies to disengage the negativity directed toward them. The first strategy was to engage with symbolic gestures that alluded to eventually partaking in motherhood, such as adoption or fostering. The second strategy employed was to explain how their morality was averse to motherhood (Ibid). The anonymity of various studies focusing on the voluntary childfree indicates the magnitude in which the social response can affect the livelihood of these individuals.

Safer expressed that she felt shameful for not wanting to have children. She went on to say that she turned against herself by thinking she was unfeminine, selfish, and unable to nurture (Daum 2015: 187). Safer's experience gives insight into the internal role strain that comes with agency. Upon publishing her first essay on consciously avoiding child-bearing, she chose to do it anonymously so as not to receive any backlash for her personal choice. In relation, further reasoning behind this is that there is an assumption that women who choose not to reproduce have mental illness in general and or that would prevent them from successfully raising a child (Veevers 1980).

On the other side of being voluntarily childfree are institutions in place that support pronatalism. Like Veevers' work, Park (2002) discovered other methods childfree individuals utilize to disengage from the negative criticism they receive for their choice. These methods refer to redefinition, "identity substitution, condemning the condemners, asserting a right to self-fulfillment..." (Park 2002: 21). Redefinition refers to information control in which women reduce one deviant attribute and heighten another to deflect judgment to enact a negative feeling in inquirers (Park 2002: 33). Condemning the condemners refers to when "they took responsibility for their action but denied the negative qualities associated with it" (Park 2002: 35). By exacting this process, individuals can reflect on their choices and feel morally secure within themselves. Finally, by way of redefinition, child-free individuals can explain the proactiveness and social contribution their decision entails (Ibid). Combined, Veevers and Park have identified various strategies that voluntarily childfree individuals can use to their advantage to combat the stigmatization of their decisions.

Mullins (2018) draws on the macro and micro-level trends affecting the choice of being child-free. These macro-level choices reference feminism and contraception availability. In contrast, the micro-level focuses on personal fulfilment and preferences (Mullins 2018: 97). Pronatalism is a political attitude in place to advocate fertility and reproduction (Veevers 1980: 3). Originally, the neologism was used in reference to governmental acts and policies that encouraged fertility (Blake 1973 cited in Veevers 1980: 3). A policy that embodies this is the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) in Canada. Commonly referred to as the "baby bonus", this payment is when mothers receive a monthly

fee for each child they take care of (Government of Canada 2022: para 1). This institutional parameter is a clear example of pronatalism in an occupational setting that separates voluntarily childfree women from those that have progeny.

Next, the availability of birth control, abortion, and sterilization is an impactful macro-level institution in the lives of voluntarily childfree individuals. Most physicians are reluctant to proceed with sterilization procedures concerning unmarried and childless women. The cause behind this reluctance is a manifestation of personal influence, fear of a lawsuit, and the irreversibility of the procedure. A scenario that has often been recreated is when 1500 physicians were asked whether they would complete a vasectomy procedure, to which a significant percentage indicated that they would not be based on parenthood and relationship status. The majority conclusion was that they would not continue for the sole reason that the individual did not want to have children (Veevers 1974: 402-403). Empirically, there is a fair assumption that upon the request for sterilization, women would be denied due to the pronatalist beliefs commonly found among practicing medical professionals (Ibid). Compared to mature, childless women, younger, childless, married women have reported: “receiving considerable pressure from their physicians to become mothers” (Veevers: 401). Thus, a macro-level factor that is evoked in response to voluntarily childless women is a refusal to comply with the requests of the individual due to solid ties of pronatalism.

Veevers (1980) summarized and found that childfree women take in almost unanimous messages from other individuals that they have a duty to produce progeny. She discovered that being childfree was more stigmatizing compared to the experiences of involuntarily childless

individuals (Ibid). This study highlights how voluntarily childfree women face more impactful stigma than their involuntary counterparts. This cultural stigma has origins in historical and mythological texts. The message is frequently promoted in excerpts from the bible. Examples include “Women will be saved through bearing children.” (1 Timothy 2:15 cited in Vissing 2002) and “Give me children or I die” (Genesis 30:1 cited in Vissing 2002). These passages allow insight into how child-bearing is prevalent in current Western society as one of the main texts enforces the message that denounces and dehumanizes women down to their reproductive organs.

Additionally, Vissing (2002) points to the foundations and core constructs of America as a country as a family. Christianity, patriarchy, and subordination of women were all core elements of Colonial America in which is displayed in the context of “Our land free, our men honest, and our women fruitful” from a famous colonial toast (Vissing 2002: 9). Moreover, family production and procreation have prevalence in politics and the economy. In the early years of North America, children were used as labourers to assist with rural tasks for cheap (Ibid). Although the average part-timer age in North America has become greater, children are still necessary to keep the economy functioning properly by working suboptimal jobs. Tying this back to pronatalism, it is transparent that the topic of procreation has a political face but is internally economic. Put into the perspective of voluntarily childfree individuals, they choose to prioritize their financial success and happiness over that of government figures.

Mullins’ research conveyed that there is a relationship between the political outlook and cultural capital measures that contribute to the choice of reproductive

habitus (Mullins 2018: 119). The data they collected showed that voluntarily childfree individuals have less traditional values and are more egalitarian (Ibid).

Despite changes in the economic structure of Canada, the United States of America, and Mexico, these Western societies continue to define women by their reproductive ability, sexuality, and caregiving role. However, this structural change has also facilitated women to necessarily work and pursue more adventurous occupational positions (Vissing 2002: 7). Although this is positive, it does not excuse the deviancy of opting out of parenthood in the eyes of the collective consciousness of North American societies.

As a result of collective consciousness facilitating a mechanical society, cisgender, heterosexual women are stigmatized for their choice of unsubscribing from traditional gender norms and prescription of motherhood. Veevers (1980) created “Models of Childlessness” that sorted the social critiques in reaction to voluntarily childfree women: diagnostic, deprivation, and labelling (Veevers 1980: 8). Diagnostic is the feedback that is focused on the assumption of psychological maladjustment that has no real evidence other than judgement (Ibid). The second, deprivation, as a social response, is on the basis that the choice to remain childfree is due to the childfree individual having a higher moral standing, thinking that they are at an advantage in comparison to those who have experience with parenthood (Veevers 1980: 11). The last “labelling” is when childfree individuals are seen as “immoral” and whose behaviour is inexcusable. The conformers go so far as to sanction voluntarily childfree women for their choice (Ibid). Ergo, the social response to the

voluntary refusal of child-bearing habitus is detrimental to the growth of agency, mental health, and self-identity. The negative responses priorly mentioned may lead childfree women to take on the deviant attributes they have been falsely criticized for, meaning that although the individual may not have any of the behaviour they have been accused of, they may develop their person into the shape they have been forced into (Goffman 1963 cited in Veevers 1980).

Although the obligation of the “motherhood mandate” has lessened over the decades, the image of motherhood is still firmly tied to the obligation of womanhood. Normative structures in Western society have been challenged to re-evaluate the concept of womanhood in correlation to being voluntarily child-free. Perceptively, it should be noted that both macro and micro parameters vary from individual to individual and that no single, direct happenstance contributes to deviancy. Women are actively establishing methods in which they can subvert traditional expectations and norms of what it means to be a woman without subscribing to motherhood.

To conclude, it is clear that equity rehabilitation needs to be implemented in social policies concerning child-free individuals. Installing structures such as monetary benefits to childfree individuals alongside the CCB would validate and legitimize childfree individuals. In addition, medical professionals should invest in individuality in the circumstance of fertility issues, and voluntarily child-free lives should be spoken of as a valid option for all individuals.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Karen L. 2016. *Thinking About Sociology*. Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: Oxford University Press, pp 269-292.

Daum, Meghan. 2015. *Selfish, Shallow, and Self-Absorbed: Sixteen Writers on the Decision Not to Have Kids*. New York, USA: Picador.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall

Government of Canada. 2022. Canada child benefit. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview.html>

Mullins, Alyssa. 2018. Capital in Pronatalist Fields: Exploring the Influence of Economic, Social, Cultural and Symbolic Capital on Childbearing Habitus, Sappleton, N. (Ed.) *Voluntary and Involuntary Childlessness (Emerald Studies in Reproduction, Culture and Society)*: Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 97-124.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-78754-361-420181005>

Park, Kristin. 2002. Stigma Management among the Voluntarily Childless. *Sociological Perspectives* 45(1):21-45. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/sop.2002.45.1.21>

Veevers, Jean E. 1980. *Childless by Choice*. Toronto, ON: Butterworths.

Veevers, Jean E. 1974. Voluntary Childlessness and Social Policy: An Alternative View. *The Family Coordinator*, 23(4), 397–406.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/583116>

Vinson, Candice, Smith, Nathan G., Mollen, Debra. 2010. Perceptions of Childfree Women: The Role of Perceivers' and Targets' Ethnicity. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 20(5): 426-432. Doi: 10.1002/casp.1049

Vissing, Yvonne. 2002. *Women Without Children: Nurturing Lives*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press

Wood, Julia T. 2001. *Gendered Lives*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology J. Community Appl. Soc. Psychol., 20: 426–432 (2010) Published online 28 July 2010 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI: 10.1002/casp.1049

Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology J. Community Appl. Soc. Psychol., 20: 426–432 (2010) Published online 28 July 2010 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI: 10.1002/casp.104

How the Pornographic Industry Condones Gender Inequality and Violence: A Sociological Analysis of Gender By: Julianna Bennett

Pornography, like any other mass-produced component of popular culture, shows a clear depiction of societal attitudes and cultural variations that influence systemic inequalities. Feminist theory is a specific discipline of sociology that examines the gender roles seen in this popular culture. This essay will use this lens to highlight how pornography creates a division between gender identities in a modern Western atmosphere. Femininity is exclusively portrayed as the 'weaker' sex in multimedia representations like pornography, and deconstructing it provides a clear mirror of prevailing gender differences in the twenty-first century. This essay will argue the social consequences of pornography available to North American culture of the 21st century, specifically regarding the adolescent population. Pornography enables the acceptance of gender-based violence rather than painting it as a social issue because of its hazy division between fantasy and reality. This piece of popular culture also shows a representation of gender and sexuality that depicts conventional stereotypes rather than more realistic delineations. Lastly, I argue that objectification of the female body in such explicit renderings makes allowances for individuals to regard femininity as inferior. Pornography is a socioeconomic issue that must be heavily regulated and less accessible to individuals of ingenuous ages. Systematic indifference to gender is associated with higher consumption of pornography and use from a young age,

allowing for the acceptance of inequality as a fact within communities.

Before analyzing the effects of pornography, it would be critical to first understand why pornography plays an influential role in Western culture. Pornography can be defined as visual, textual, or other sexually explicit material that is designed to arouse individuals. Many medians render commercial depictions of pornography, and it can, therefore, be found in many ways that shy away from online videography. This can include, but is not limited to, advertisements, magazines, websites, films, and books. For instance, ads on public transportation, which are easily accessible to a younger audience, show half-naked women being presented as the ideal form of femininity. This lucrative business has become a booming industry in Western culture that has limited restrictions on how people can access it.

The condonement of gender-based violence within Western culture stems partially from the readily accessible pornography that young ages often interact with. The sexual coercion and aggression present on American college campuses are critiqued (Marshall, Miller and Bouffard 2017). Marshall et al. measured verbal coercion as "lying or pressuring someone into sex" and physical coercion as the "use of physical force or the action of getting the person intoxicated" (2017). According to their findings, based on the frequency of use and the number of medians used to consume pornography, there is a link between verbal coercion and rape acceptance in such (Marshall et al. 2017). Increased frequency of pornography use has been associated with an inflation in a male's willingness to coerce another individual into sexual acts rather than physically verbally (Marshall et al. 2017). Although that is not to say that physical persuasion is not an act associated

with a background in heavy pornography use, it is merely linked to an initial act of verbal communication. Within this experiment, Marshall et al. (2017) approached these findings by asking hypothetical questions, whilst previous studies have focused on self-reported sexual assaults. Within this experiment, the frequency of use of explicit material was measured compared to the response given by each volunteer (Marshall et al. 2017). They found a relationship between sexual coercion in male sexual offenders and previous engagement with pornography that is rather violent (Marshall et al. 2017). Whether the pornography contains aggressive mannerisms or harm-inducing physical behaviours, these sites are not regulated to exclude violence toward women. It is incredibly relevant to this argument that this research disregards previous examples. Such examples focus on non-violent mainstream pornography as justification that it does not contribute to sexual violence. The basis of many arguments against pornography as an influence of sexual aggression focuses on docile genres that indeed do not contribute to this research and cannot be linked to this theory.

This research indicates that there is a connection between an increased viewing of pornographic material and the hostile intentions in social relations that lead to sexual coercion. As the male participants in this research study can contend, being exposed to narrow-minded explicit material that portrays women as sexual beings instills a sense of entitlement. Those who see first-hand how sexual interactions are presented as devoid of emotion and specifically for male pleasure are more likely to crave such interactions. So much so that they expect women to engage in sexual acts that are depicted in many genres of mainstream

pornography, which is essentially a contributing factor to rape culture. Rape culture is an ongoing belief system that victimizes those who have allegations of sexual assault and justify acts by pointing out irrelevant factors. If a rapist feels entitlement through the roles of pornography, they feel as though women are objects to be used in society.

As a collective study on a multitude of previous research, as well as their own, Nicolas, Lathan and McDermott delve into the problematic activity and how pornography use is associated with sexist normalities (2021). The study conducted consisted of over a thousand participants who acknowledged their frequency of hardcore and mainstream porn use (Nicholas et al. 2021). Results showed that cis-gendered heterosexual individuals who watch more hardcore porn have an aggressive, sexist attitude toward violence against women (Nicholas et al. 2021). Male dominance conceptions and rape myths have been proven to stem from more than just psychological phenomena but rather social acceptance of the matter (Nicholas et al. 2021). Throughout a variety of research, it can be noted that high pornography use has a common thread of sadomasochistic beliefs consistent with social scripts (Nicholas et al. 2021). Viewers often aspire to replicate the sexual acts they watch (Wright 2011; Nicholas et al. 2021). As men are more likely to request the perspectives that they watch if those consist of violence without consent, they are more liable to do this action (Wright 2011; Nicholas et al. 2021). Nicholas et al. argue that “if a scene depicts a man choking/spitting on a woman, it promotes a sexist gender differential even if the woman consents to the acts” (2021). Therefore, regardless of the woman’s position in the act, it is impressionable, especially on younger viewers. Young

viewers are partially absent of cultural norms and are thus the most impressionable in matters such as consent (Nicholas et al. 2021).

If it is socially accepted in pornography, then violence can be assumed as acceptable within realistic environments. This is the thought of viewers who commit acts of sexual advancement on women when pornography reflects a biased perspective from the dominant white man. Violence, as an action, is often repeated by the individual because humans tend to repeat social interactions that are deemed acceptable (Nicholas et al., 2021). To conform to society, human agency often reflects the influence of others and the environments an individual is put in (Nicholas et al. 2021). Agency will allow for sexual objectification and possible violence against women because this media shows fantasy where it is absent of regulations. If dangerous videos of daredevil stunts must begin with warnings that inform the viewer they are not to be recreated, explicit material that may harm women should follow the same format. Hostile sexist ideologies have a connection to the range of pornography use that a single individual has because it allows for no division between real life.

Pornography, as any media representation, is a leading factor in negative body image because it formulates an ideal Western standard of beauty that is unrealistic to many American women. Mary Hill argues this in her article and highlights the damaging effects that contribute to one's mental well-being (2017). Over 150 participants answered questions about the use of pornography in their relationships and how it has caused them to change themselves in order to meet societal standards (Hill 2011). The results showed that 84% of individuals asked believed their partner's pornography use harms their attitudes

towards their bodies (Hill 2011). They (Hill) found that pornography is just another form of media that negatively influences beauty standards on not only women but men too (2017). Often, when viewing, individuals compare themselves to those in pornography videos. The Westernized stereotype of how women should be and how they are sexualized in pornography affects their relationships because men expect women to act as porn stars do in fantasized media (Hill 2011). The results of their study found that pornography does not have a significant influence on mental illness, but sexual objectification does play a role in relationships (Hill 2011).

This article does not fully argue that pornography leads to a strain on mental illness, but it admits to sexual objectification in pornography (Hill 2011). When women do not feel like they fit into societal norms, they feel lesser when they are compared to just that by their partners (Hill 2021). This article supports how sexism is condoned in pornography because it is the discrimination of women based solely on their biological sex. The effect of a negative body image because of a constant media version of the perfect woman is a major issue in society. This creates an indifference to gender as women continue to conform to the societal ideal of how they should look and act. Portraying women as nothing more than mere sexual beings in pornography, devoid of emotions, allows hegemonic relations to be influenced in everyday life.

From an intersectional perspective, it is imperative to analyze how women of colour are presented in pornography, as they are stereotyped not only for their sex but their race as well. Black women have often been the target of aggression, compared to that of white women in pornography (Fritz, Malic, Bryant and Zhou 2020). Within an analysis of objectification indicators in pornography,

black women at 50.8% were more often set forth as the targets of aggression compared to a lower 36% for white women (Fritz et al. 2020). Also, emotional interactions that include kissing within scenes were limited between racialized couples compared to those of their white counterparts (Fritz et al., 2020). They are suggesting that individuals of alternate races are stereotypically savage and hold less of an emotional connection between the sexes. These stereotypes of aggressive sexual acts and a common lack of intimacy have implications for their relationships and health (Fritz et al. 2020). Interracial relationships may be seen outside of pornography, as these stereotypes present. Anti-porn activists hope to move away from this hegemonic framework within porn and present a less stereotypical representation of these cultures in the twenty-first century (Fritz et al. 2020).

The adverse effects of porn are often negative views of individual sexuality. It turns relations with women into simple transactions devoid of any emotion. After pornography becomes an everyday use in someone's life, healthy views of individuals become distorted by sexual gratification, causing general respect for women to vanish (Fritz et al. 2020) in a society where men are not required to marry and form no connections to women because they see them as inferior, many issues arise. Without such obligations, harmful Western culture becomes prevalent as emotional connections are less expected and family life becomes less apparent. Dangerous archaic views of masculinity will not cease if women continue to be portrayed in a specific and demeaning way. Seeing black women as victims also affects consumers' views of those women entirely; without being aware of harmful stereotypes, such as those in pornography, individuals may assume them as reality. This unrealistic conceptualization

of both gender and race highlights how pornography condones sexism and follows patriarchal views.

Pornography is a true example of popular culture, where misogynistic ideals allow for persistent hegemonic gender differences in Western culture. These power relations are often unnoticeable as a consensus of the true extent of gender inequality is unknown. Yet I argue that popular culture, as it influences social attitudes, creates public discourse, allowing for the continued inferiority of women. This article reviews how women's sexuality is a symbol of agency and how pornographic sites contradict notions of female empowerment (Stache and Davidson 2019). No matter the advancements in so-called porn for women, Stache and Davidson (2019) argue the portrayed inferiority of women nonetheless. Reinforcement of such a gendered system continues through depictions of women, including that of pornography (Stache and Davidson 2019). Within this study, they (Stache and Davidson) critique a porn site that was created to provide a space of female empowerment (2019). The critique of this site shows more profound implications of culture and how a strive away from patriarchy still promotes women's inferiority. A review of the "marketing language, visual images, chat forum" (Stache and Davidson) and the model's perspective show a heterosexual male gaze (2019). Women's inferiority is presented through the personalities depicted in these scenes, where they react to men in submission (Stache and Davidson 2019). No matter the preference of such occurrences, this tends to follow a pattern of being the predisposition in most scenes (Stache and Davidson 2019).

Pleasure under patriarchy is no way for women to advance from previously

constricting ideals of a woman's place in society. Sex is seen as a commodity to be bought and sold, excluding the real intent of sexual relations and how it can be an affair of intimacy between two consenting adults. Rape, harassment, abuse, prostitution, and coercion are all justified by fantasies found in mainstream porn. This is because these practices are expressed as not degradation but satisfactory. That women will consent to being exploited in such gender roles and can be manipulated for the pleasure of men. As sites continue to disregard such allegations of patriarchal pornography, it is evident that Western culture is still heavily attached to such ideals (Stache and Davidson 2019).

The obstacle with many sex workers is the divide between needing the money that objectification gives and creating a world where sex is no longer a commodity of wealth. Srinivasan argues that pornography conditions women to sell sex under economic demand and that it does not allow the freedom of one's sexuality (2021:48). The "infrastructure of male domination" (47) does not allow women the right to be anything but inferior sexual beings as the basis of porn sites is the actions of women (Srinivasan 2021). Decriminalization would be an activist's reform for sex workers, yet porn stars are exempt from such fallbacks (Srinivasan 2021: 61). Sex is sold only to benefit the pockets of male business owners, exploiting women to the fullest and positioning them in a lesser stance of power. "A vexed question: when is being sexually or romantically marginalized a facet of oppression, and when is it just a matter of bad luck, one of life's small tragedies?" (Srinivasan 2021;103). This quotation allows the questioning of rape myth and how women are sexualized to benefit consumers of pornography. Women do not have the comfort of choosing in relationships how

they shall be perceived and have to work twice as hard to be noticed for more than their sexuality (Srinivasan 2021:103).

In the twenty-first century, sex is free, but it is not freeing; it is accessible not because it is equal but in the sense that it requires no financial compensation. Sex is a natural occurrence, which should be devoid of politics, yet sexuality is defined by society. A woman's sexuality is regulated by both patriarchal views and neoliberalism, which is the way politics legislates society. It redefines people in Western culture as consumers whose lives depend on commodities like pornography. This piece of work is essential in thinking critically as to how pornography affects women in many aspects of their lives. Whether it is their efforts to be perceived as emotionless and business-like or their hope to avoid sexual assault. Women are constantly avoiding these patriarchal consequences when popular culture like this continues to influence them.

Pornography is a socioeconomic issue because it reflects an unjust standard of treatment for women that is not regulated by political legislation. Ethics are challenged as the digital world is not policed well enough to avoid explicit material encouraging gender inequality. Digital technologies that allow pornography to flourish within its industry "create mechanisms for retrenching well-established patterns of inequality stratification and domination" (Daniels, Gregory and Mcmillan 2017: xvii). The transition into digitalization has allowed many social issues to transpire in unrecognizable ways (Daniels et al. 2017). A variety of influential media circulates throughout younger generations; sociological inquiry is crucial within disciplines to understand why sexual assault occurrences are so prominent in the Americas (Daniels et al. 2017). From a

structuralist perspective, human agency relies heavily on the neglect to situate sexual violence as unfavourable to public knowledge. It is a widespread assumption that gender-based violence is not essential in political discussions and that it does not stem from technologies but rather an inherent character trait of heterosexual men (Daniels et al. 2017). Daniels et al.'s use of the "white, male canon of literature" (xxi) can be used to argue that the pornographic industry generates such a substantial profit that it shall not be regulated to exclude preferences that sexualize violence (2017). Due to these beneficial contributions, one can assume that popular culture, like pornography, is a socioeconomic issue as it reflects societal values and creates a framework for society. External to Western countries, the initiative to limit access to these highly influential materials has already begun. The government of the United Kingdom has introduced the 2017 Digital Economy Act provision that requires a mandatory age of 18 to view explicit material over search engines (Yar 2019). It may be questioned why free online availability and the presence of such undeniably sexual content are not restricted when many other social media platforms must restrict such publications. As Yar argues, such attainable content has led to the "pornification of culture and everyday life" (2019:184). Applications like this must be implemented into Western society so that the culture can progress away from patriarchal views.

The porn industry is a substantial part of mass media that reflects cultural norms and makes allowances for oppressive views. It does so by creating a cultural acceptance of gender-based violence and victimizes women. The models of femininity within this content reflect ideal Western beauty, trapping women in unrealistic

expectations of how they should look and behave. It also limits empowerment as female counterparts consistently reflect inferior positions to men in pornography. Therefore, an analysis of porn highlights the restrictive attitudes and the continuation of gender inequality.

References

- Daniels, Jessie. 2017. "Introduction." Pp. xvii–xxvi in *Digital Sociologies*, edited by J. Daniels, K. Gregory, and T. McMillan
Cottom. Bristol, UK ; Chicago, IL ;;
Bristol, UK ; Chicago, IL :: Policy
Press.
- Fritz, Niki, Malic Vinny, Paul Bryant and Yanyan Zhou. 2021. "Worse than Objects: The Depiction of Black Women and Men and their Sexual Relationship in Pornography." *Gender Issues* 38(1):100-120
- Hill, Mary L. 2011. "Body Image and Internet Pornography use." Order No. 1509822 dissertation, University of Houston-Clear Lake, Ann Arbor
- Marshall, Ethan A., Holly A. Miller and Jeff A. Bouffard. 2021. "Crossing the Threshold from Porn use to Porn Problem: Frequency and Modality of Porn use as Predictors of Sexually Coercive Behaviors." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36(3-4):1472-1497

Stache, Lara C., and Rachel D. Davidson. 2019. "A Rhetoric of Contradiction: SuicideGirls, Female Empowerment, and Sexuality." *Sexuality & Culture* 23(4):1054-1071

Srinivasan, Amia. 2021. "The Right to Sex: Feminism in the Twenty-First Century." CA: Farrar, Stratus and Giroux.

Wright, P. J. 2011. "Mass media effects on youth sexual behavior: Assessing the claim for causality." *Annals of the International Communication Association* 35(1), 343–385.

Yar, Majid. 2020. "Protecting Children from Internet Pornography? A Critical Assessment of Statutory Age Verification and its Enforcement in the UK." *Policing* 43(1):183-197

Letter 2 My Mama: A Critical Media Analysis

By: Rachael Boyd

Shéyaa Bin Abraham-Joseph, commonly known as 21 Savage, released the song *Letter 2 My Mama* in 2018 as an ode to his mother and childhood. Through his lyrics, he outlines his mother's efforts in raising a respectful man despite facing many difficulties. Abraham-Joseph exclaims that after claiming his wealth and fame, everything he has done has been for his mother to thank her and give back to her. For instance, his lyric "I paid it off, ain't no mortgage or no rent due (facts), Yes, she got a Range Rover and a Benz, too (on God)" depicts his loving gestures of helping pay off his mother's debt and gifting her luxurious items—things she did not have while raising Abraham-Joseph (Abraham-Joseph and Bailey, 2018). However, Abraham-Joseph utilizes his adverse childhood experiences to establish a platform to dedicate his admiration toward his mother. *Letter 2 My Mama* is a significant piece of media that challenges the conceptual unit of a nuclear family idealized by society while objecting to society's gender stereotypes and providing insight into how marginalized groups often engage in deviant behaviours to attain the fundamental necessities to survive.

Abraham-Joseph released the song, *Letter 2 My Mama*, as a tribute to his mother to show appreciation and gratitude for her everlasting care and support. The stereotypical ideal family, also known as a nuclear family, consists of two biological parents and children (Popenoe 1987). Unfortunately, Abraham-Joseph was deprived of this seemingly perfect family unit as he grew up without a father, resulting in an upbringing in a single-family unit, where his mother was left to fulfill the role

of his primary and sole caregiver. Abraham-Joseph (2018) details in his song that he did not have a father figure through the line, "My daddy never was around, that n**** too lame (fuck him)." Within this line, Abraham-Joseph contradicts the idea of the stereotypical nuclear family by discussing how he did not have or need a present father to achieve his goals, ultimately demonstrating that the idealized nuclear family dynamic is unnecessary in raising successful children.

The ideal nuclear family also outlines specific roles each family member should fulfill based on gender. Traditionally, the men are expected to work outside the home or the public sphere, making money for the family to live off of, and the women are expected to fill the role of a housewife, care for their children, and act as the emotional support system, in the private sphere (Popenoe 1987). Further, Talcott Parsons's theory of instrumental and expressive functions provides a deeper understanding of the gendered stereotypes within a nuclear family unit, emphasizing a gendered dichotomy. Within his theory, the instrumental functions are assumed to be carried out by men, representing the acts of physically demanding jobs, providing income, and reinstating discipline within the family unit (Finley and Schwartz 2006). In contrast, the expressive roles are assumed to be carried out by the women, with tasks aligning with completing housework, providing childcare, and extending emotional support within the family unit (Erikson 2005). Furthermore, the lyrics Abraham-Joseph has presented explicitly contradict the theory proposed by Talcott Parsons and the idealized nuclear family unit, as he depicts his mother fulfilling both the expressive and instrumental functions.

Letter 2 My Mama rejects the notion of a nuclear family because Abraham-

Joseph's mother was a single parent, fulfilling both motherly and fatherly roles. His mother worked extremely hard to raise him to be a respectful young man while working to earn enough money to satisfy their family. The lyrics "You taught me how to be strong, gotta give praise" and "It's a hard job, but women raise men, too" demonstrate that his mother worked to raise him to be a strong, polite, and well-mannered man while addressing the difficulties single mothers endure while raising men (Abraham-Joseph and Bailey 2018).

While Abraham-Joseph's lyrics contradict the unrealistic societal expectation of a nuclear family, his lyrics support the literature brought forward by David Popenoe. Popenoe (1987) looked at the evolution of gender roles in a family, addressing that more women are joining the workforce rather than staying home and solely carrying out expressive functions. Through the lyrics "When the times got hard, you always made ways," Abraham-Joseph depicted his mother's hard work to sustain a gratifying and pleasurable life by performing both gendered functions (Abraham-Joseph and Bailey 2018).

Moreover, due to his experience with poverty, Abraham-Joseph grew up facing circumstances that went against the social class stereotypes embedded within society's norms. Before attaining fame, witnessing his mother's stressful financial situation led to his engagement in deviant behaviours to help support his mother financially. Abraham-Joseph claimed in his lyrics that watching his mother struggle was a traumatic experience for him. His lyrics, "I seen you struggling, I think it left a scar," display the adverse side effects he underwent while watching his mother cope with living in poverty as a single parent (Abraham-Joseph and Bailey 2018).

Ultimately, after observing these hardships, he turned to illegal practices, such as selling drugs and theft. These behaviours were expressed as he sang, "I'm the one that went and stole the neighbour's car ... Times got hard, started selling hard (selling hard) Before I see you stressing, Imma break the law" (Abraham-Joseph and Bailey 2018).

According to Amber Gazso (2018), the life course perspective approach analyzes the transitions, pathways, and trajectories that an individual experiences. Although a critical phase of the life course perspective is an individual's educational experience, this phase can be heavily influenced when growing up in a single-parent household. There are three crucial resources that a family unit needs to provide to their children for them to progress through different transitional phases of the life course perspective, which include sufficient financial resources, access to social resources, and parental involvement (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). When a family unit comprises a single parent or undergoes a separation, these resources are limited, hindering the child's projection through life course phases (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). Through his song lyrics, he uncovers the impending influence a single-parent family dynamic had on his projections through crucial life course stages. For instance, Shéyaa Bin Abraham-Joseph (2018) sings, "My daddy never was around, that n**** too lame (fuck him). I think that's why I quit school." These lyrics show the negative consequences of being raised without a father figure. Hence, this led to his failure to complete a crucial phase of life and his ability to attain a proper education.

Shéyaa Bin Abraham-Joseph has presented a song that is a critical work of art within mainstream media that has generated contradictions regarding idealized social

stereotypes found within societies. *Letter 2 My Mama* fosters a unique perspective of a family unit, demonstrating that a nuclear family is not ideal for many individuals; the song provides insight into the hardships and beneficial influences a single-family unit can have on an individual. Furthermore, Shéyaa Bin Abraham-Joseph's tribute to his mother speaks volumes about challenging societal stereotypes embedded in gender role discrimination, socioeconomic class, and the controversial aspects of a single-parent family dynamic on an individual's progression through life course phases.

REFERENCES

Albanese, Patrizia, Don Kerr, and

Joseph H. Michalski. 2018. *Canadian Families Today: New Perspectives*. Fourth edition. edited by P. Albanese. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press Canada.

Bailey, Ahmar and Shayaa Bin

Abraham-Joseph. 2018. "21 Savage - Letter 2 My Momma (Official Audio)." YouTube. Retrieved October 25, 2022 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdmrS0jOIbg>).

Erickson, Rebecca J. 2005. "Why Emotion Work Matters: Sex, Gender, and the Division of Household Labor." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67(2):337–51. doi: 10.1111/j.0022-2445.2005.00120.x.

Finley, Gordon E., and Seth J. Schwartz. 2006. "Parsons and Bales Revisited: Young Adult Children's Characterization of the Fathering Role." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 7(1):42–55. doi: 10.1037/1524-9220.7.1.42.

McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Popenoe, D. (1987). "Beyond the Nuclear Family: A Statistical Portrait of the Changing Family in Sweden." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 49(1), 173-183.

<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.2307/32681>

Road Safety and Cannabis: Canada's Questionable Use of a 'Per Se' Limit

By: Evelyn R. Tansley

Impaired driving is a threat to public safety that is extremely pressing. Driving is one of contemporary Canada's most prevalent methods of transportation and thus it is critical for public health that road safety be prioritized. However, it is difficult to ensure that each driver possesses autonomy and can make the decision to consume inebriating substances before driving. In 2018, the Government of Canada enacted The Cannabis Act (Bill C-45), which legalized recreational marijuana use. This presented a fascinating legal predicament in which several existing laws needed to be amended to compensate for the implications of Bill C-45. One specific piece of legislature that implemented new provisions related to is the Criminal Code of Canada. Section 320.14 outlines a 'per se' limit¹ on THC in the blood at the time of operating a motor vehicle. Given a lack of information about THC dose impairment relationships, a scientifically supported impairment threshold cannot be provided. Therefore, this use of a 'per se' limit potentially infringes upon Section 11(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which stipulates that everyone be assumed innocent until proven guilty. When impairment cannot be scientifically supported, there is not sufficient evidence to make a guilty conviction. Therefore, this enforcement of a 'per se' limit is potentially unconstitutional, and amendments to impaired driving legislation must be made.

To begin, this paper will consider the origins of law and how legislative processes are cultural. This relates to how public attitudes towards marijuana have influenced the action towards legalization in a Canadian context. Next, I will outline the history of cannabis regulation through the years until its official legalization in 2018. From there, I will explain the official provisions of Bill C-45 and demonstrate their necessity. Next, I will explain the need for drug-impaired driving legislation and how this is a contemporary threat to public health and safety. This will serve as an introduction to Bill C-46, where I will outline the gaps of this legislation in relation to its grounding in empirical research and explain the implications of these liabilities. Finally, I will make recommendations for changes to the official legislation. This essay will make frequent references to relevant sociological and legal concepts and demonstrate a thorough understanding of law and social structure.

ORIGINS OF LAW: CULTURE AND CANNIBUS

Culture refers to a set of commonly held norms or values held by a group, which influence behaviour, belief systems, language, and more. Another distinct feature of each culture is its law. Each nation has their own set of rules that govern them and a system to penalize those who do not comply. It is understood that culture and law interact constantly within society because the two phenomena influence each other. We are affected by the laws that are in place but also by cultural values reflected by the people we are surrounded with. Concerning marijuana, legalization could have been influenced by the commonly held positive

1

Per se regimes are defined as law enforcement strategies which focus solely upon a specific concentration of a substance in a person's body to establish impairment.

view of the substance. The Liberal party and Justin Trudeau played this interest in the 2015 election, stating that they were committed to decriminalizing the substance (Elliot, 2015 - CTV News). This is an example of how culture can influence law because this was an opportunity for the population to use democracy to make changes to the law in relation to commonly held beliefs.

Studies show that before legalization, public opinions of marijuana were generally favourable (Turna et al, 2020). This played a key role in the process of legalization because Canadians were familiar with the substance and most reported having consumed it at least once. (Turna et al, 2020). The conceptualization of marijuana as a relatively low-risk drug contributed to overall positive perceptions (Turna et al, 2020). This is important as it reflects how normalized the substance was in Canadian culture before legalization. Without this kind of support and awareness of the substance, legalization may not have been possible.

Kay Levine (2003) also discusses the relationship between culture and law and emphasizes culture as the basis for behaviour. She suggests that we act in compliance with what we are taught, often which reflects cultural values. This relates to law because, for criminal proceedings, people can argue that they are not guilty because of cultural defense. This defence relies on the basis that individuals act regarding their cultural beliefs and do not have criminal intent (Levine, 2003). The use of the cultural defence strategy suggests that while the law does govern individuals, culture is a leading influence on behaviour. In the case of marijuana legalization, it is important to consider how the positive perception of cannabis impacts not only the

creation of laws but also the enforcement of them.

The relationship between positive perceptions of marijuana and its eventual legalization is reflective of a moral functionalist perspective of law. Austin Turk (1976) argues in favour of consensus law, which contends that law reflects cultural consensus. This perspective explains the basis for democracy. To settle a dispute, the resolution must be based on public opinion and consensus. In Canada, we use a voting system to elect certain individuals to represent us in the House of Commons. The concept of consensus law reflects how culture and law interact to allow members of a society to advocate for what they believe in.

A HISTORY OF CANNIBUS AND CANADAIN LAW

Cannabis was initially criminalized in Canada in 1923 under the Opium and Drugs Act (GGS, 2022). This was Canada's first action towards prohibiting the use of drugs and it set the tone for years of controversy ahead. After the prohibition of marijuana use, the prevalence and popularity of the substance increased exponentially (GGS, 2022). This resulted in more research being conducted about cannabis and its effects on the mind and body. This was until 1987 when Canada's then Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, declared an official anti-drug movement by spending \$210 million on an anti-drug strategy designed to eradicate the use of drugs, in Canada (GGS, 2022). The plan entailed increasing the enforcement of drug-related laws and enhancing police capacity. The war on drugs continued until 1996 when it was determined that there are medicinal uses for marijuana (GGS, 2022). This led to the eventual legalization of marijuana for medical use only in 2000. These legal

stepping-stones were crucial for creating the perception of marijuana that we all have contemporarily.

Bill C-45 (The Cannabis Act) received Royal Assent on October 18, 2018. This Bill outlines the provisions by which Canadians can legally and safely consume marijuana. Bill C-45 enabled Canadians to buy the substance from licensed retailers, possess and share up to 30 grams of cannabis at a time with other adults, grow and cultivate up to 4 plants at home for personal use, and make cannabis products with legally approved ingredients (Government of Canada, 2021). There are strict age restrictions in place to prevent this substance from getting into the hands of minors. However, they are subject to provincial and territorial authority, which means that the age of legality depends on the location.

Although the substance is legal for recreational use, there are still criminal penalties associated with Bill C-45. These charges are given to offenders who violate the provisions of Bill C-45. Some examples of these criminal penalties are possession over the limit, illegal distribution, or sale of cannabis, cultivating the substance beyond legal limits, taking it across international borders, and giving it to those who are underage (Government of Canada, 2021). Some possible sentences include tickets for less serious offences, including tickets for small amounts, and between 1 and 5 days of jail time. For more serious criminal offences, the criminal penalties are a maximum of 14 days in prison (Government of Canada, 2021). These provisions are in place to keep Canadians who consume marijuana safe and violating them is against

the law and requires offenders to be held accountable.

Public attitudes towards marijuana and its use are positive in Canada after legalization. Canadians feel as though they can trust the products and information available to them (Wadsworth et al, 2022). This could be attributed to the legal regulations in place for producing cannabis from start to finish. For instance, there is a certification process for companies that grow and cultivate marijuana products that come from legal sources (Wadsworth et al, 2022). These companies must pass inspections to confirm that their products are pure and safe for consumption (Government of Canada, 2021). At the other end of the legalized marijuana process, it is also necessary that the people who sell the substance are educated and can give customers accurate information. This entails an educational course about marijuana, its consumption, safe consumption limits, and legal regulations². These measures help Canadians feel as though they are consuming cannabis in a safe manner, which contributes to positive attitudes towards the substance.

THE NEED FOR DRIVING IMPAIRED LEGISLATION

When driving, one needs to be alert and focused because of the many potential hazards and opportunities for harm to occur. It is proven that when under the influence of cannabis, individuals can experience a decrease in motor skills, reaction time, short-term memory, and concentration (Government of Canada, 2022). These impairments make it difficult to respond to stimuli appropriately and make informed

² CannSell is the educational program required to sell marijuana in Canada. This program is similar to a Smart Serve license, for which participants must possess a comprehensive knowledge of the substance they are selling and how it is to be consumed.

decisions, inhibiting the ability to operate a vehicle safely. In 2020, 7,310 cannabis-impaired driving incidents were reported (Government of Canada, 2022). Therefore, when legalizing marijuana in Canada, lawmakers had to make amendments to impaired driving legislation and find ways to deter individuals from this behaviour.

According to a survey conducted by the Government of Canada, one in four respondents indicated that they have operated a motor vehicle under the influence of cannabis (2022). Additionally, one in three respondents indicated that they have knowingly been driven by someone under the influence of the substance (Government of Canada, 2022). In 2020, roadside surveys showed that approximately 10% of drivers on the road were under the influence of marijuana (Government of Canada, 2022). These statistics exemplify that marijuana-impaired driving is an issue that is currently occurring in Canada and that preventative action needs to be taken by the government.

THE 'PER SE' LIMIT

The 2018 amendments to Bill C-46 included a variety of new regulations for Canadians who use marijuana to abide by. The most prominent of which is an enforced 'per se' limit on THC content in the blood. According to the new legislation and additions to the criminal code, the limit of impairment when operating a motor vehicle is 2 nanograms per millilitre (ng/ml) of blood within a two-hour time limit (Government of Canada, 2021). At this level or up to 5ng/ml of THC in the blood within two hours of driving it is a summary conviction offence. Over 5ng/ml THC blood concentration is a drug-only penalty. Over 2ng/ml of THC in the blood combined with 50 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood is a drugs-with-alcohol hybrid offence (Government of Canada, 2021). Penalties

for these offences include fines up to CAD 5000 and possible jail time. These provisions are meant to deter Canadians from committing dangerous acts and positively influence overall health and safety.

The amendments to Bill C-46 might potentially violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms because the accused cannot be proven guilty. Section 11(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms stipulates that individuals are to be assumed innocent until proven guilty. In this case, impairment cannot be accurately detected, and a guilty verdict is not supported by scientific research – which ought to be the basis of the criminal offence. Therefore, it could be viewed as unconstitutional to make a conviction on this basis. Upholding the charter is essential for maintaining the Rule of Law. The Rule of Law stipulates that everyone is subject to the same laws, the government must be accountable, and that the legal system is fair and just (United Nations, 2023). Therefore, the courts must have empirical evidence to support a guilty conviction.

The limited knowledge about THC dose impairment relationships is a major fault of the implementation of a 'per se' limit (Valentine, 2019). It has been proven that individual factors, such as weight, age, gender, and tolerance impact how the body's endocannabinoid system processes THC (Government of Canada, 2021). However, researchers do not know to what extent these characteristics or what can influence impairment. Additionally, scientists have no information about exactly how much marijuana consumption influences impairment for many reasons; such as the varying methods of consumption, the exact THC content in specific products, and individual characteristics (Valentine, 2019). Without this crucial knowledge, it is not

possible to make an informed decision as to the limit of THC concentration in the blood to constitute impairment.

It could be argued that the amendments to Bill C-46 concerning marijuana legalization are closely based on alcohol-impaired driving laws. There is a 'per se' limit in place for alcohol, which is a blood alcohol content of 0.05 to drive. This is logical because of the information available about alcohol dosage impairment relationships. It is widely understood that impairment begins around one drink and that when blood alcohol content reaches 0.05 one is too inebriated to drive. Impairment can be detected at the roadside, and the limits in place have been proven to decrease the number of impaired driving-related deaths. The same claims cannot be made for marijuana because they are entirely different substances. However, as alcohol and marijuana are both inebriating substances, they are often closely compared. It is important to distinguish their differences both in terms of chemical compounds and related legal systems.

There are clear logistical issues with the conviction process of the enforced 'per se' limit. Bill C-46 clearly states that one must not exceed the limit within two hours of operating a motor vehicle (Government of Canada, 2021). Under these regulations, impairment would need to be proven within that time limit. The problem is that for these regulations to be enforced, police must first use reasonable suspicion to detect impairment at the roadside. Next, they must perform a Standard Field Sobriety Test (SFST). Upon detection of marijuana impairment from the previous test, oral fluid screening testing will be conducted. It is stipulated that roadside tests are not sufficient and that a Drug Recognition Evaluation (DRE) must also be conducted before conviction. DRE testing is hard to

come by in Canada because of shortages in law enforcement resources (Valentine, 2019). Given the time constraints outlined in the provisions and the lengthy nature of this process, it is not attainable to enforce a 'per se' limit for marijuana-impaired driving.

IMPACTS OF THE ENFORCED 'PER SE' LIMIT

The clear faults of the amendments to Bill C-46 in relation to marijuana legalization have unfortunate impacts on certain groups. The people who regularly consume marijuana and drive can be criminalized even if they are not impaired at the time of driving. Blood tests can detect THC in the bloodstream for up to 28 days after consumption (Valentine, 2019). When these laws are enforced, people who frequently consume marijuana for any reason (recreation, pain, etc.) are at a disproportionate rate of risking criminalization. This group risks criminalization each time they operate motor vehicles. It could be argued that to remain under the legal limit, cannabis users should refrain from driving for up to a month after consumption (Valentine, 2019). Therefore, the use of a 'per se' limit is restrictive upon individuals who have the biological make-up to retain cannabis in their bodies for extended periods.

There are reports of Canadians being wrongfully convicted of impaired driving under this legislation (Cox 2022 – CBC News). In early 2021, Pam Staples-Wilkinson failed an SFST test after a minor car collision. She had her license suspended and was charged with marijuana-impaired driving. After a urine sample, it was concluded there was no THC in her system at the time of the accident. The charge was not dropped until 9 months later (Cox 2022 – CBC News). This demonstrates that the current marijuana-impaired driving

legislation does not use accurate testing to determine impairment, which has led to the criminalization of innocent Canadians.

Without the ability to empirically improve impairment, certain demographics will be unequally penalized. Racialized minorities specifically black individuals are subject to increased law enforcement investigating, such as roadside testing, street checks, and at one point even carding. This group is disproportionately represented in conviction rates for drug-related offences (OHRC). This is because of systemic racism and the demonstrated racial biases in policing (McKay, 2021). It is important to consider that these factors are present in policing in Canada and without the ability to empirically improve impairment, certain groups have the potential to be unequally penalized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The first step in the process of amending Bill C-46 would be to eliminate the 'per se' limit for THC. Without proper information about THC impairment, we cannot make informed decisions about what limits to set on marijuana consumption. There is significant research to suggest that because impairment cannot be detected via ng/ml in the blood, the enforced 'per se' limit is ineffective (Arkell et al, 2021). In a study conducted among 14 irregular cannabis users who tested above the legal limit on both blood and oral fluid sample testing kits before driving, more than half of the participants were not detected for impairment by standard field sobriety tests (Arkell et al, 2021). This demonstrates that regardless of what we know about dose impairment relationships, a 'per se' limit does not serve to deter cannabis users from driving while under the influence.

The second step towards a change to the legal framework of Bill C-46 would be a

large-scale investment in scientific research about marijuana and THC dose impairment relationships. Throughout this essay and in the development of these laws, the theme of not knowing how much cannabis consumption constitutes impairment has come up frequently. Investing in scientific research on this topic would eliminate this issue by providing the necessary information. Access to this kind of knowledge would allow policymakers to make provisions that are accurate and informed, thus leading to an improvement in the issue.

Finally, the development of accurate impairment testing technology for marijuana is necessary. For an impaired driver to be convicted, it needs to be empirically proven that they are driving under the influence. Officers must have a method of gauging impairment accurately at the roadside. There has been research and development put into oral fluid sampling test kits for police to use. However, additional confirmation is still needed before a conviction can be made. One example of this type of development made for alcohol impairment detection is the breathalyzer. This machine gets an accurate blood alcohol reading based on the recognition of ethanol on the breath (McVean 2018 - McGill). Some qualities that it possesses are accuracy, portability, quick response time, and ease of use. It would be advantageous to invest in the development of tools for marijuana impairment detection that possess these same characteristics.

CONCLUSION

I have presented evidence to suggest that Canada's use of a 'per se' limit under Bill C-46 Section 320.14 of the Criminal Code of Canada is an infringement upon the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There is simply not enough evidence about

THC impairment to officially detect that an individual is impaired. Therefore, they cannot be proven guilty under Section 11(d) of the Charter. This essay has outlined the history of Cannabis legalization in Canada and explained how cultural values led to this legislation. I explained what provisions have been implemented, with emphasis on section 320.11 of the criminal code which stipulates a 'per se' limit. I have demonstrated numerous faults associated with the 'per se' limit, such as the disproportionate impact on frequent marijuana users and racial minorities. Furthermore, I made recommendations to amend this legislation and suggested action toward improving the societal issue of impaired driving.

Conclusively, the implications of implementing a 'per se' limit speak for themselves. This method risks the wrongful and unconstitutional criminalization of Canadians without sufficient evidence to prove guilt. This has severe and disproportionate impacts on certain groups and can lead to the criminalization of innocent people. The Government of Canada must address this violation of rights with the utmost consideration, but keep in mind the dire need for road safety to drug-impaired driving. Amendments to legislation and more research about marijuana impairment will lead to educated policy decisions about this important topic and an overall increase in knowledge about how the legalization of this substance impacts the lives of Canadians.

References

42nd Parliament 1st Session. Bill C-45: Cannabis Act. Open Parliament Page 13. Retrieved October 26, 2023.

(<https://openparliament.ca/bills/42-1/C-45/?page=13>).

Arkell, Thomas, Tony R. Spindle, Richard C. Kevin, Ryan Vandrey, and Iain S. MacGregor. "The failings of per se limits to detect cannabis-induced driving impairment: Results from a simulated driving study". Retrieved October 24, 2023. (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15389588.2020.1851685>).

Bochmann, Annett. 2023. "Pluralism and Local Law in Extraterritorial Spaces." *Law & Society Review* 57(1): 83–102. doi: 10.1111/lasr.12641.

Calavita, Kitty. 2016. *Invitation to Law and Society: An Introduction to the Study of Real Law* (Second edition), Chapter 6, "The Talk Versus the Walk of Law," pp. 109-134. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Campbell, Kathryn, and Myriam Denov. 2023. "Miscarriages of Justice: The Impact of Wrongful Imprisonment". Government of Canada. Retrieved October 26, 2023. (<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/jr13/p5a.html#:~:text=The%20Long-term%20Effects%20of%20Wrongful%20Imprisonment&text=These%20Effects%20include%20issues%20of,%20imprisonment%20despite%20their%20release>).

Cox, Aidan. 2022. "Woman's wrongful arrest highlights pitfalls of policing cannabis impairment, experts say". CBC News. November

- 7, 2022. Retrieved October 21, 2023. (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/fredericton-cannabis-police-arrest-1.6640817>).
- Cunningham, John. 2020. Beliefs about cannabis at the time of legalization in Canada: results from a general population survey. *Harm Reduction Journal*. Retrieved October 23, 2023. (<https://harmreductionjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12954-019-0353-z>).
- Department of Justice. 2021. "Cannabis Legalization and Regulation". Government of Canada. Retrieved October 20, 2023. (<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/cannabis/#:~:text=standardized%20oserving%20sizes%20and%20potency,out%20of%20the%20illegal%20market>).
- Department of Justice. 2021. "Drug-Impaired Driving" Government of Canada. Retrieved October 22, 2023. (<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/policing/police/community-safety-policing/impaired-driving/drug-impaired-driving.html>).
- Doggett, Amanda, Kate Battista, Ying Jiang, Maragret De Groh, and Scott T. Leatherdale. 2022. "Patterns of Cannabis Use among Canadian Youth over Time; Examining Changes in Mode and Frequency Using Latent Transition Analysis". Retrieved October 25, 2023. (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10826084.2021.2019785>).
- Elliot, Josh. 2015. "Liberals Committed to Legalizing Marijuana: Trudeau". Retrieved January 15, 2024. (<https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/election/liberals-committed-to-legalizing-marijuana-trudeau-1.2588260?cache=ngyhfxv>)
- GGs. 2022. "A Timeline of Canadian Cannabis Legalization". GGS Structures. Retrieved October 26, 2023. (<https://ggs-greenhouse.com/marijuana/blog/a-timeline-of-canadian-cannabis-legalization>).
- Government of Canada. 2023. "Five years since legalization, what have we learned about cannabis in Canada?". Retrieved October 20, 2023. (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231016/dq231016c-eng.htm>).
- Health Canada. 2022. "Health Effect of Cannabis" Government of Canada. Retrieved October 21, 2023. (<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/sidl-rlcfa/c46/p3.html>).
- Levine, Kay. 2003. "Negotiating the Boundaries of Crime and Culture: A Sociolegal Perspective on Cultural Defense Strategies." *Law and Social Inquiry* 28: 39-86.
- McGill University. 2023. "From Bottle to Blood to Breath: How Breathalyzers Work". Retrieved October 26, 2023. (<https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/did-you-know/did-you-know-breathalyzers-dont-directly-measure-your-blood-alcohol-concentration>).

Perreault, Samuel. 2021. Impaired Driving in Canada, 2019. Cat. No. 85-002-X. (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00012-eng.htm>). Ottawa, Ontario. Statistics Canada.

Turna, Jasmine, Iris Balodis, Michael Van Ameringen, Jason W. Busse, and James MacKillop. 2022. "Attitudes and Beliefs Toward Cannabis Before Recreational Legalization: A Cross-Sectional Study of Community Adults in Ontario". *Cannabis Cannabinoid Res.* 2022 Aug;7(4):526-536. doi: 10.1089/can.2019.0088. (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33998851/#:~:text=Conclusion%3A%20Before%20legalization%2C%20attitudes%20toward,favorable%2C%20particularly%20for%20medical%20cannabis>).

Turk, Austin T. 1976. "Law as a Weapon in Social Conflict." *Social Problems* 23(3): 276-291.

Turnbull v. Canada, 2019 FC 224 (CanLII), <https://canlii.ca/t/hxs2f>, retrieved on 2023-10-26.

Valentine. 2019. "Road Safety and the Lifeworld". Retrieved October 21, 2023. (<https://onq.queensu.ca/d2l/le/content/837012/viewContent/5010183/View>)

United Nations. 2023. "What is the Rule of Law". Retrieved October 20, 2023.

(<https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/what-is-the-rule-of-law/>).

Unknown. 2015. "Pot policy:

Harper, Trudeau clash over marijuana legalization". CTV News. October 3, 2015. Retrieved October 20, 2023

(<https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/election/pot-policy-harper-trudeau-clash>)

Where are You Going, Where Have You Been? Placing Approaches to the Aging Process in Context Through Whole-Life Review

By: Margaret Shen (Jitong)

INTRODUCTION & METHODS

The humble story is one of the fundamental forces that shape our understanding of the world. The power of stories, be they fictional stories or true, or stories about places, events, history, and people, all provide a frame of reference that allows us to comprehend the world in which we live and operate. However, human stories are often dominated by a few narratives that are not consistently representative of the full breadth of the human experience. While stories of famous or exceptional people are popular and widely available, they do not encompass the whole human experience. This life review project presented an opportunity to expand the canon of human stories by interviewing and reflecting on the life of an older adult, one who is likely not a well-known public figure, and their thoughts on the aging process, shining a light on a cohort within society who are not always well-represented in mainstream stories or prominently visible in society.

For this project, I identified my 77-year-old maternal grandmother as a suitable subject. Following this, we arranged a time for an interview by phone, and at the beginning of the call, consent for participation was received after the purpose and methods of the project were explained. The format of the interview was one where the conversation was led and directed by the subject. As the interviewer, I provided broad questions that would serve as jumping-off points for the subject to begin with. After every question, I would ask clarifying

questions and advance the interview to the next central question. At the end of the interview, I also provided time for the subject to give open-ended and unprompted answers and observations. Through this interviewing format, the subject could broadly tell their own story in their own words while I could prompt them to give their thoughts on the major topics of the project, in particular, their attitudes and perceptions of the aging process. Throughout the interview, lasting almost two hours, the subject's life was traced from the beginning until the present day, laying out the experiences that shaped their life and sense of self. This life path was then used to understand the subject's attitudes regarding the aging process, mainly how their past attitudes towards other matters were seen again in their attitudes towards aging and how their experiences in life informed their personal approach towards the aging process and their current stage in life.

EARLY YEARS AND WORKING LIFE

Chai Fengyun was born in 1946, three years before the official founding of the People's Republic of China, or PRC, in what became the northern province of Liaoning. She was born the oldest of five children in a family of sesame product merchants. As with most toddlers, Chai's memory of these early years is hazy, although she recalled the helpfulness and politeness of the Red Army soldiers when they stayed at her village for a night. After the founding of the PRC, her family switched to farming, working as part of a 生产队 (sheng'chan'dui), or communal production unit, eventually receiving rural hukou's. Over the following decades, Chai and everybody else in her family, except her mother, would switch to urban hukou's

through education, employment, and military service.

In 1955, at the age of nine, Chai began attending school, graduating elementary school in 1961 and middle school in 1964. After nine years of school and at the age of eighteen, Chai began to work in a sheng'chan'dui as a farmer. Her time with the sheng'chan'dui would not be long, being reassigned to teaching in 1966 as a 民办教师 (min'ban'jiao'shi), a position which did not change her hukou status. Perhaps more crucially, as a min'ban'jiao'shi, she did not draw a significant salary, earning around five yuan a month, and was instead expected to support her family using a plot of farmland assigned to her. As a teacher, she would teach elementary school students for the next three decades of her life, specializing in Chinese language and mathematics, but also teaching music and science courses.

In 1981, after years of self-study and continuing education, Chai passed examinations which conferred upon her formal teaching certifications in the form of graduation from 中等师范 (zhong'deng'shi'fan). This allowed her to advance her career, and she was selected, one of just three successful applicants in her town, for conversion to 民办教师 (min'ban'jiao'shi). However, due to the hukou system, which ties a person's status to their job classification, the effect of this career advancement had rippling effects throughout Chai's life. From this conversion to min'ban'jiao'shi, she converted her hukou and the hukou of her children to urban hukou status. Furthermore, from this point on, Chai would earn a salary of 36 yuan monthly and would receive rations of food and other living supplies from the state rather than support herself with a farm plot.

Chai would continue to work as a teacher, transferring to a school for mute and deaf children in 1988 and rising to a head teacher position of 教导主任 (jiao'dao'zu'ren) at the school before returning to a regular school in 1996 and retiring from teaching in 2001.

PERSONAL LIFE AND RETIREMENT

A person's life cannot be thoroughly mapped only through one facet of their experiences, and a life review must look beyond employment history. In her personal life, Chai was introduced to her future partner in 1969 through neighbourhood connections and meetings arranged by the parents of both sides. This method of parental arrangement was usual and expected at the time, with very few people meeting romantic partners by themselves. At that time, the legal age for marriage was 18 for women and 20 for men, with most young people marrying between 18 and 25. After a year, Chai would marry Li Xue in 1970. Li was born in 1946 and also completed middle school before enlisting in the People's Liberation Army, or PLA, in 1965. After being discharged from the PLA in 1969, he began working at a state-owned factory, continuing to work there until 1997. The couple would have three children together, with the three daughters being born in quick succession in 1971, 1973, and 1975. All three would go on to earn university degrees and eventually emigrate to North America in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In retirement, Chai has sought to remain active, engaged, and involved. At home, she holds herself to a daily routine that is filled with activity rather than idle time. Currently, a typical day starts early, around 4 am or 5 am, and begins at the local park. Here, she uses exercise equipment, walks on a running track, and Tai Chi practice to engage in healthy physical

activity. Outside of physical fitness, Chai engages in household tasks, including purchasing groceries at the local market, cooking, and caring for her home. The ability to easily access and afford nutritious food has been a major factor in managing her aging process, allowing her to avoid the pitfalls associated with malnutrition and enabling other healthy aging activities such as exercise. Indeed, as researchers in India have found, malnutrition is associated with a host of health issues that are commonly conflated as being inevitable signs of aging, including “decline in functional status, impaired muscle function, decreased bone mass, immune dysfunction, anemia, reduced cognitive function, poor wound healing, delayed recovery from surgery, higher hospital readmission rates, and mortality” (Amarya et al., 2015, p. 78). Other than physical exercise and housekeeping, a typical day may include other activities such as socializing with friends or continuing education in the form of learning English. With family living abroad, part of life in retirement has been spent visiting and spending time with family overseas in Canada and the United States. For her, this has necessitated remaining technologically adept, particularly for communicating with either friends back home or family abroad, depending on whether she is at home or visiting North America.

PERSPECTIVE ON AGING

Over the course of the interview, Chai gave a biography of her life before transitioning into a discussion of retirement, retired life, and her attitudes towards aging and the aging process. The interview revealed an attitude that treated aging as a challenge akin to previous difficulties that she had faced in her life, albeit aging is ultimately an undefeatable challenge. While the task is daunting, Chai is not dissuaded by aging problems and does not consider the

aging process to be an uncontrollable challenge. Her response to aging is representative of her closely held values and priorities. Like how Chai credits her hard work with advancing her career and improving her life, she believes that the aging process can maintain her physical ability and mental acuity even as she grows older. In her own words, her philosophy for proactively managing and countering aging is centred on three pillars: learning new knowledge, exercising the body, and staying involved socially with friends and within the community. Chai’s three personal pillars are broadly aligned with the MacArthur model of successful aging, with its three core components of “low risk of disease and disease-related disability; maintenance of high mental and physical function; and continued engagement with life” being matched by Chai’s three personal pillars for successful aging, Chai having independently come to the same conclusions for healthy aging (Rowe & Khan, 2015, p. 593). In addition, she also considers maintaining an independent, active lifestyle and a positive outlook to be important determinants of well-being while aging. More succinctly, she termed her attitude towards the aging process to be one where she 改变自己的老龄化 (gai’bian’zi’ji’de’lao’ling’hua), or one where she controls her own journey into aging.

As she experiences the process of aging, Chai feels that it is important to remember her blessings in life in the face of the unavoidable physiological realities of aging. This outlook is informed by the vast transformation of Chinese society that she has witnessed and participated in throughout her lifetime. From an impoverished agrarian nation in her early years to a developing economy in her working years and finally to an economic powerhouse in her retired

years. She is mindful of how fortunate she is to be old at this time in history and to have such a high standard of living even in old age, enabled by China's economic growth and social welfare policy. Chai's observation is supported by empirical data studying older adults in Shanghai, which found that older adults from 1998 to 2008 were less and less likely to suffer activities in daily living disabilities over the years, as "rapid economic development in a developing society may lead to substantial improvement in the functioning health of the elderly population" (Feng et al., 2013, p. 481). Compared to previous generations of elders, she is thankful for her pension, which allows her to enjoy a high standard of living into retirement, a solid medical system with affordable and accessible care, a prosperous and stable society that allows her elderly years to be free from critical stressors, and the significantly increased life expectancy enabled by decades of economic growth, improved living standards, and a robust medical system.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Familiar narratives surrounding aging frequently treat being old as the result of passing certain milestones in life, typically retirement from work. In these narratives, becoming old is an event rather than a process. However, aging is not an event but a process, one which is not isolated from the rest of a person's life, and indeed, intersectional approaches to aging have been proposed by Julie Ann McMullin to improve research in the field of gerontology as McMullin argues that age must be considered in tandem with other factors in order to create a complete picture of aging (McMullin, 2000). The strength of this interconnected approach to studying aging is demonstrated in this project as, over the course of the life review, it became clear how a person approaches the aging process

and is informed by their experiences throughout life.

By seeking to understand attitudes and perceptions on aging through the context of a whole-life review, an individual's approach to aging can be placed within the greater context of their life, and the aging process can be understood as a natural evolution growing out of a person's previous life experiences and stages. In Chai's case, her approach to the aging process is strongly informed by her experiences in the working world. The meritocratic advancement system at work, where personal effort and hard work are rewarded with promotion, has, in retirement, led to a personal belief that proactive individual behaviour will allow her to control how well she ages as she continues through the aging process. Further, her career as an educator has allowed her to witness the transformative effects of education, both in her own life and in the lives of her students. As a result, her approach towards aging centers on aging as one of the critical elements for controlling the aging process. Chai believes that being a lifelong learner and continuing to study new knowledge is vital to maintaining mental acuity and exercising the brain as one would exercise the body. Through a qualitative analysis of one person's life and aging journey, human details that would have been missed in the bigger picture or quantitative studies can come to light and inform understanding of how the aging process is not the beginning of a new journey but a continuation of a person's ongoing life course.

While Chai primarily focuses on her efforts to control the aging process and the services provided by the state, one area that was less mentioned was the role of the built environment around her and how it has enabled her specific aging process.

Researchers studying how neighbourhoods can affect cognitive aging have found that a neighbourhood's cognability, or availability of features that protect cognitive health, is a crucial factor in retaining mental ability (Finlay et al., 2022). In this case, the availability of cognability factors, such as parks, which double as informal senior centres and grocery markets, have enabled Chai's approach to aging. Similar to how the project interview used previous questions to inform upcoming questions, potential future points of study can be found through the conclusions of the project. Many daily activities Chai participates in occur in person in her local community. A potential pivot into a macro view of aging could be accomplished by studying aging through a human geography perspective and understanding how an older adult's built environment may constrain or enable certain attitudes or approaches toward the aging process. While this would overlap with countability research, a potential approach that continues to focus on qualitative work may differentiate itself from the more quantitative work of Jessica Finlay and her co-researchers in their study of neighbourhood countability.

Rather than sitting idly by waiting to die, Chai Fengyun takes a proactive approach to the aging process that seeks to manage her aging process actively. This attitude towards the aging process is informed by her experiences through life, where personal effort and taking the initiative enabled her to improve her quality of life and ensure the best outcomes for herself and her family. Her approach towards aging is facilitated by more prominent socioeconomic factors, which help to provide a decent standard of living for older adults. In doing so, she presents a path into aging that counters many traditionally held narratives surrounding

aging. Her lifestyle demonstrates alternatives to narratives on aging centred on uncontrollable physical and mental decline, social isolation, and poor mental health. Instead, aging can be a process where the older adult negotiates a path built upon their previous experiences throughout their life.

REFERENCES

- Amarya, S., Singh, K., & Sabharwal, M. (2015). Changes during aging and their association with malnutrition. *Journal of Clinical Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 6(3), 78-84.
- Feng, Q., Zhen, Z., Gu, D., Wu, B., Duncan, P. W., & Purser, J. L. (2013). Trends in ADL and IADL disability in community-dwelling older adults in Shanghai, China, 1998-2008. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B*, 68(3), 476-485.
- Finlay, J., Esposito, M., Langa, K. M., Judd, S., & Clarke, P. (2022). Cognability: An Ecological Theory of neighborhoods and cognitive aging. *Social Science & Medicine*, 309, 115220.
- McMullin, J. A. (2000). Diversity and the state of sociological aging theory. *The Gerontologist*, 40(5), 517-530.
- Rowe, J. W., & Kahn, R. L. (2015). Successful aging 2.0: Conceptual expansions for the 21st century. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B*, 70(4), 593-596.

Fraternity Culture and Sexual Assault: Examining the Factors Contributing to a Pervasive Issue on College Campuses

By: Vienna Wiens

Sexual assault and harassment have been ongoing issues in college fraternity culture for many years. Despite efforts to raise awareness and implement measures to prevent these incidents, they still occur at alarmingly high rates. Fraternities, known for their close-knit communities and social events, can create a culture that can be conducive to instances of sexual assault and harassment. The problematic attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate these crimes have been sustained by a lack of accountability and a disregard for the impact that these incidents have on survivors. This essay will argue that fraternity culture and party scenes at American colleges and universities create a high-risk environment for sexual assault and harassment of female students. This is due to power imbalances, societal gender stereotypes, heavy alcohol consumption, sexual aggressiveness promoted in fraternities, and the objectifying atmosphere at fraternity parties, which have all been reinforced by fraternity culture and norms in the past two decades. It is further perpetuated by the fraternity's male-dominated atmosphere that encourages certain behaviours and conducts deemed permissible and desirable by the group, although such actions may be criminal.

The purpose of this essay is to examine the issue of sexual assault and harassment within college fraternity culture. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this topic, I have thoroughly reviewed various academic sources, including peer-reviewed articles and books. These sources provide insights into the factors that

contribute to the prevalence of sexual violence in fraternities, such as toxic masculinity, binge drinking, and a lack of accountability. Through this analysis, I aim to shed light on the severe consequences of such behaviour and the importance of addressing this issue. The topic of sexual assault and harassment in college fraternity culture is a complex and multi-layered issue that is influenced by several factors. In this essay, I will delve into the main contributing factors to this issue, including power imbalances, societal gender stereotypes, heavy alcohol consumption, sexual aggressiveness, objectifying atmosphere at parties, fraternity culture and norms, and the male-dominated environment at fraternity houses and parties. These factors all play a significant role in creating a culture that allows for sexual assault and harassment to occur and go unnoticed. By examining each of these factors in detail, I hope to shed light on the root causes of this problem and provide insight into potential solutions that can help mitigate it.

Rape and sexual assault are pervasive problems on college campuses, particularly in fraternities. According to Boswell and Spade (2001:175), "1 out of 4 college women say they were raped or experienced an attempted rape, and 1 out of 12 college men say they forced a woman to have sexual intercourse against her will." These statistics highlight the serious issue of sexual violence that college students face. Additionally, the concept of rape culture, as described by Boswell and Spade, further reinforces this problem. Rape culture is "a set of values and beliefs that provide an environment conducive to rape" (Boswell and Spade 2001:175). In this environment, college women are at a greater risk for rape and other forms of sexual assault than women in the general population or a comparable age group, according to

Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006:483). Fraternity culture plays a significant role in perpetuating this culture of sexual violence. Research conducted by Murnen and Kohlman (2007:150) found a significant association between fraternity membership and rape myth acceptance. This acceptance of rape myths creates an environment where sexual assault is seen as a consequence of widespread belief in 'rape myths,' or ideas about the nature of men, women, sexuality, and consent that create an environment conducive to rape. Despite the prevalence of sexual violence, Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006:484) note that students often blame the victims rather than criticize the party scene or men's behaviour. These factors, combined with formal social institutions such as fraternities, contribute to the perpetuation of adverse ideologies, prompting members to deem it appropriate to perpetrate sexual assault.

Power imbalances refer to unequal authority, resources, and influence distribution among individuals or groups. In fraternity culture, power dynamics are often heavily skewed in favour of male members, with self-governing all-male fraternities controlling much of the party life on some campuses. This creates an environment in which male fraternity members feel entitled to assert their dominance and control over female guests, resulting in a culture that contributes to sexual assault and harassment. As one senior Greek man stated, "It is our party, with our rules and our beer. We are allowing these women and other men to come to our party. Men can feel superior in their domain" (Boswell and Spade 2001:179). A female senior student agreed, stating that "men are dominant; they are the kings of the campus. It is their environment that they allow us to enter; therefore, we have to abide by their rules" (Boswell and Spade 2001:179). The power imbalances in

fraternity culture are particularly evident in how dating occurs on campus, with fraternity members dictating what is considered cool and acceptable. Another senior stated, "Guys dictate how dating occurs on this campus, whether it's cool, who it's with, how much time can be spent with the girlfriend and with the brothers" (Boswell and Spade 2001:179). The privileged social position of fraternity members is also a factor in shaping the sexual expectations of many young men, whether or not they join fraternities. The sexual ethos publicly displayed during some fraternity parties may play an essential role in this regard. This ethos includes denial of any responsibility for sexual abuse that might take place at parties or in the dorms, with the fault being projected onto the women who come to the parties (Sanday 2007:54). As Sanday (2007:56) notes, "fraternity brothers respond to complaints regarding their privileged residential status by pointing out that the houses are supported by many rich alumni who donate money to the university and who wield considerable political influence." This financial and political influence allows fraternities to control every aspect of parties at their houses, including "themes, music, transportation, admission, access to alcohol, and movement of guests. Party themes often require women to wear scant, sexy clothing and place women in subordinate positions to men" (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006:489), further perpetuating the unequal power dynamics in fraternity culture.

Heavy alcohol consumption is a significant factor in promoting sexual assault and harassment in fraternity culture. Alcohol use is a central feature of fraternity parties, with alcohol often flowing freely and to excess. Boswell and Spade (2001:176) note that students who consume higher doses of alcohol and drugs and value

social life at college are more likely to accept rape myths and engage in sexually aggressive behaviour. Heavy drinking also serves as a social aid, with men using alcohol “to find a willing sexual partner” (Sanday 2007:58). Drinking can be used to lure women into private spaces of fraternities, with the promise of more or better alcohol often used as a means of coercion (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006:490). In many cases, alcohol is consumed to the point of blackouts, which can lead to a lack of clarity about what happened and an inability to resist unwanted sexual advances. According to Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006:483), “as many as three-quarters of the sexual assaults that occur on college campuses involve alcohol consumption on the part of the victim, the perpetrator, or both.” They also note that women's intoxication can undermine their ability to resist sexual advances, their clarity about what happened, and their feelings of entitlement to report it (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006:491). Thus, heavy alcohol consumption in fraternity culture plays a significant role in promoting sexual assault and harassment by impairing judgment, reducing inhibitions, and facilitating coercive behaviour.

Sexual aggressiveness is a behaviour that is commonly promoted in fraternity culture and often leads to sexual assault and harassment. Sexual aggression is a learned behaviour and not a pre-existing attitude (Boswell and Spade 2001:176), and fraternities are an environment where such behaviours are often reinforced. Men in fraternities can be openly hostile, physically aggressive, and intimidating, which makes the high-risk parties feel threatening to women (Boswell and Spade 2001:177). According to Sanday's (2007:53) study, 44% of women reported that they had given

in to sex play that they did not want because of a man's continual arguments and pressures. In addition, 15% said they had experienced attempted intercourse by threat of force, and 12% said they had experienced attempted intercourse by the use of alcohol or drugs (Sanday 2007:53). Fraternity men have been reported to receive significantly greater levels of peer pressure from their friends to have sex, consume higher doses of alcohol, and consume pornography with greater frequency (Franklin, Bouffard, and Pratt 2012:1467). The combination of “low-level forms of coercion—a lot of liquor and persuasion, manipulation of situations so that women cannot leave, and sometimes force” (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006:492) leads to party rape. Such situations start as fun and shift gradually or quite suddenly into coercive situations, which makes women vulnerable to sexual assault (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006:490). Additionally, regular pornography consumption may condition men to hold adverse beliefs about women, which could increase their likelihood of committing sexual assault (Franklin, Bouffard, and Pratt 2012:1466). The normalization of sexual aggressiveness in fraternity culture is a significant contributing factor to sexual assault and harassment.

Societal gender stereotypes, or the set of expectations and assumptions about gender roles and behaviours, are deeply ingrained in fraternity culture and contribute to sexual assault and harassment. These stereotypes perpetuate the notion that men are dominant and entitled to sex while women are passive objects of male desire. In this environment, women are often objectified and dehumanized, with their value reduced to their physical appearance or sexual availability. This dynamic is evident in the high rates of sexual assault and harassment reported in fraternity

culture, which is often seen as a reproduction of gender inequality (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006:484). As Sanday (2007:57) notes, fraternities display “white, male, middle-class privilege” (Sanday 2007:57), and this reinforces the notion that women are inferior and unworthy of respect. The continued perpetuation of gender inequality is a result of the socialization processes that influence gendered selves and cultural expectations that reproduce gender inequality in interaction. Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006:485) argue that “sexual assault is seen as a consequence of widespread belief in 'rape myths,' or ideas about the nature of men, women, sexuality, and consent that create an environment conducive to rape.” These myths include the idea that women are responsible for preventing sexual assault and that men cannot control their sexual desires. The culture of fraternities, which reinforces these myths, contributes to a hostile environment for women, where they are vulnerable to harassment and assault. Ultimately, to address the issue of sexual assault and harassment in fraternity culture, it is necessary to challenge and change the societal gender stereotypes that reinforce this behaviour.

Fraternity parties have long been notorious for their objectifying atmosphere that contributes to the promotion of sexual assault and harassment. Fraternity brothers often discuss their sexual exploits, and stories of sexual conquests are shared and bragged about at parties (Boswell and Spade 2001:177). Boswell and Spade (2001:179) also documented that women are seen as sexual outlets, and men treat them disrespectfully in groups. Fraternity brothers come out on the porches of their houses the night after parties and heckle women who walk by (Boswell and Spade 2001:180).

Sexual exploitation of women is normalized in the frat culture, and Sanday (2007:59) notes that the whole idea is that women come cheap, and men do not ever need to see them again unless they want to. This objectifying culture in fraternities has serious consequences. When women are objectified, it shifts responsibility from predators to victims, as Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006:485) point out. Fraternity men have more traditional attitudes towards women, a more sexually permissive peer group, stronger beliefs in male dominance, and greater belief in rape myths compared to non-fraternity men, which increases the likelihood of engaging in sexually predatory behaviour (Murnen and Kohlman 2007:147). The group mentality of fraternities “facilitate[s] hypermasculinity, group secrecy, the sexual objectification of women, and excessive alcohol consumption - all of which may foster sexual assault” (Franklin, Bouffard, and Pratt 2012:1461).

The culture of college parties varies greatly between low-risk and high-risk environments. Low-risk parties tend to be more inclusive, with an equal ratio of men and women. The social atmosphere is friendly, and there is considerable interaction between men and women (Boswell and Spade 2001:176). Couples dance and display affection towards each other, creating a welcoming environment for all. On the other hand, high-risk parties often have skewed gender ratios and gender segregation. Men and women rarely engage in one-on-one conversations; when they do, it is strictly flirtatious (Boswell and Spade 2001:176). Men attending these parties often treat women disrespectfully, rating them based on their physical appearance, making jokes and engaging in conversations that degrade women. High-risk parties usually have a hostile atmosphere, with touching,

pushing, profanity, and name-calling (Boswell and Spade 2001:177). Fraternities, which are predominantly self-governing, are often the primary focus of party life on college campuses because they control much of the party life on some campuses. They are more numerous than sororities, and there are usually no other places on campus to party (Sanday 2007:54). Unfortunately, high-risk parties can also create power imbalances that support sexual assault; “the clustering of homogeneous students intensifies the dynamics of student peer cultures and heightens motivations to party” (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006:488-9). Fraternities police the door of their parties, allowing in desirable guests, such as first-year women, and turning away others, such as unaffiliated men (Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006:490). In some fraternities, brothers watch women engaging in sexual activity through open blinds or from a terrace that runs around the second floor of the house, a practice called ‘beaching.’ As Sanday explains, “Beaching a girl means watching a brother or a male guest have sex from this vantage point. The view into the windows is evident, but seeing the people on the beach is not so easy. Thus, the girls involved do not know they are being watched; usually, the male is aware of this. Indeed, he may communicate his intention to the brothers and leave the light on to make it easier for brothers to watch from the beach” (Sanday 2007:60). Sanday continues that “party sex is the glue that binds the brothers to the fraternity body” (Sanday 2007:64). As a result, many sexual assaults that occur on college campuses are ‘party rapes,’ which are supported not only by the generic culture surrounding and promoting rape but also by the specific settings in which men and women interact; “both partiers and non-partiers agree that one is ‘supposed’ to party in college,

according to Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006:487). Thus, it is crucial to create a safe and inclusive party culture to prevent sexual assault and support all students in their college experience.

Fraternity culture is a breeding ground for hypermasculine behaviours and values, which have been linked to sexual aggression toward women. College men in fraternities are more likely to adopt hostile masculinity or hypermasculine attitudes, which emphasize the sexual conquests of women as an essential aspect of performing masculinity. Thompson and Ortiz (2016:1) state that fraternity men are three times more likely to commit sexual assault than other college men. Franklin, Bouffard, and Pratt (2012:1459) support this claim by asserting that formal social institutions such as fraternities and athletic teams foster sexual assault by conditioning adverse ideologies and reinforcing attitudes and behaviours that are socially desirable and appropriate according to the group. Murnen and Kohlman (2007) support these claims by stating that “hypermasculinity develops in a culture where there is a fear of femininity” (Murnen and Kohlman 2007:155), and the male peer support model holds that men engage in sexually predatory behaviours because they belong to male-only peer groups that reinforce their behaviour. These behaviours are reinforced by societal gender stereotypes that legitimize the use of violence against women, perpetuating common rape myths, which can lead to risky sexual behaviours. It is essential to address these attitudes and behaviours as they are often more socially acceptable than actually committing acts of sexual aggression.

In conclusion, sexual assault and harassment within college fraternity culture is a complex and multi-layered issue that is influenced by several factors, such as toxic masculinity, binge drinking, and a lack of

accountability. Fraternity culture and party scenes at American colleges and universities create a high-risk environment for sexual assault and harassment of female students, perpetuated by power imbalances, societal gender stereotypes, heavy alcohol consumption, sexual aggressiveness, the objectifying atmosphere at parties, fraternity culture and norms, and the male-dominated environment at fraternity houses and parties. The statistics and evidence presented in this essay reveal that this is a pervasive problem on college campuses, particularly in fraternities, where rape myth acceptance is often normalized. Rape culture is a set of values and beliefs that provide an environment conducive to rape. It is time to shift sexual assault education in emphasis from educating women on preventative measures to educating both men and women about the coercive behaviour of men and the sources of victim-blaming. It is crucial to address this issue to prevent further harm to individuals and create safer campus environments. Educational institutions must implement measures to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, provide support and resources for survivors, and develop a culture of consent and respect. As Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006:493) explain, "instructing women to watch their drinks, stay with friends, and limit alcohol consumption implies that it is women's responsibility to avoid 'mistakes' and their fault if they fail." It is the responsibility of educational institutions to make structural changes to prevent sexual assault rather than putting the burden on individual students. Ultimately, the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment in fraternity culture is a significant problem that requires attention and action. While this essay has only scratched the surface of this issue's complexities, I hope it will serve as a starting point for further discussion and

action to create safer campus environments for all students.

REFERENCES

- Armstrong, Elizabeth A., Laura Hamilton, and Brian Sweeney. 2006. "Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape." *Social Problems* 53(4):483-99.
- Boswell, A. A., and J. Z. Spade. 2001. "Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture." Pp. 175-81 in *Sociological odyssey: contemporary readings in sociology*, edited by P. and P. A. Adler. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Franklin, Cortney A., Leana Allen Bouffard, and Travis C. Pratt. 2012. "Sexual Assault on the College Campus: Fraternity Affiliation, Male Peer Support, and Low Self-Control." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 39(11):1457-80.
- Murnen, S.K., and M.H. Kohlman. 2007. "Athletic participation, fraternity membership, and sexual aggression among college men: A Meta-Analytic Review." *Sex Roles* 57:145-157
- Sanday, Peggy R. 2007. "Campus Party Culture." Pp. 53-65 in *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus*. Vol. 2nd ed. New York: NYU Press.
- Thompson, B. A., & Ortiz, R. R. 2016. "Frat Daddies and Sorostitutes: How TotalFratMove.com and Greek Identity Influence Greek Students' Rape Myth

Acceptance.” *Sexualization, Media, & Society*, 2(4):1-9.

Racism, Classism and the Thin Ideal: How are TikTok and Instagram's Popular Beauty Trends Hurting the Advancement of Women?

By: Shannon Mahoney

ABSTRACT

Recent research suggests that newer social media adaptations such as TikTok and Instagram are responsible for the expanding influence of micro beauty trends on viewers. The apps have become very intertwined with beauty culture and the concept of always wanting to look and feel like your best self. This paper examines how many statistics and articles show that the frequent consumption of social media content can lead users, especially teenage girls, to be negatively affected by the mass amounts of micro beauty trends and standards that constantly circulate on their technology screens. This paper argues that the popularity micro trends have gained on newer forms of social media is harmful to people of colour and the body positivity movement and is overtly classist. This paper is taken from a feminist standpoint, examining how the advancement of women worldwide is prohibited because Eurocentric beauty standards are being reinforced in the trends circulating in the media. Research finds that there is undoubtedly a direct link between the frequent use of TikTok amongst teenage girls and feelings of insecurity because these beauty standards do not categorize them. This paper also examines how consumer culture is at an all-time high because these media forms influence viewers. Analyzing the outcomes of various quantitative studies that I have researched, there is a correlation that exists between teenage girls being TikTok's largest audience group and that leading to the

overconsumption of goods due to the desire to modify their appearances to look like the influencers as the face of these micro beauty trends. Contrary to what most people believe about these media platforms being a safe space for women to express themselves, the rise of consumer culture, racial discrimination and anti-body positivity motives all reveal how these trends are harmful, reinforcing gender norms and the praise for white beauty standards.

INTRODUCTION

Beauty standards have been embedded within our society and our brains. The media has always been responsible for pushing these standards onto viewers, particularly young women. The question remains: how does this generation's obsession with physical appearances stem from new media sources? I argue in this paper that micro-beauty trends are inherently problematic to women as they reinforce sexism and gender norms. In addition to this, I will also be arguing that not only does new media's portrayal of beauty standards harm one's self-image, but it also causes the influence to support capitalism and consumerism. My research findings suggest how recent social media establishments such as TikTok and Instagram implement pressure to be attractive and fit into whatever current micro trend is circulating.

Furthermore, my findings will also touch on how there is a direct link between micro beauty trends and consumerist and capitalist culture. First, looking through an intersectional feminist lens, I will argue how social media's influence on beauty trends fails to include people of colour. Next, I will discuss how new media neglects the importance of body positivity and inclusivity due to how micro-beauty trends are created with inspiration from Western

beauty standards. Lastly, I will explore how those who are easily influenced by beauty trends seen in social media are becoming intertwined in the world of consumer culture and capitalism and use their privilege to exploit others. This paper mainly seeks to answer the question: Many statistics and articles show that the frequent consumption of social media content can lead users, especially teenage girls, to be negatively affected by the mass amount of micro beauty trends constantly circulating on their technology screens. With this, microtrends seen on newform social media are exclusive in terms of class, race and body type, negatively reinforce Eurocentric beauty standards and contribute to consumer culture at an alarming rate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conducting this research from a feminist perspective, my paper seeks to understand how the domination of Westernized beauty trends on new social media lacks inclusivity for women of colour, plus-sized women and those of a lower socioeconomic status. These trends are incredibly harmful to one's self-esteem because beauty standards are rooted in Eurocentrism, failing to incorporate intersectionality. What we want for all women is to advance from the unhealthy fascination with our appearances and the pressure to have our patriarchal society deem us as "attractive." My findings demonstrate that beauty trends in new forms of media are straying society away from more inclusive beauty. This argument will be supported with the aid from Anoushka Benbow-Buitenhuis's article "[A feminine double-bind?: Towards understanding the commercialization of beauty through examining anti-ageing culture](#)" as well as Piyali Sur's "Beauty and the Internet: Old wine in a new bottle." Both of these works

provide multiple insights on why new media is detrimental to the progression of women. They both make similar arguments and share a general theme of how beauty standards are socially damaging (Buitenhuis:2014: 48). Qualitative study results found that females within the age group of 15 to 19 of different classes using fashion and beauty internet media blogs showed a difference in the impact of beauty blogs (Sur: 2017:5).

In this argument I will also be including points from *Beholding the beauty of self: The psychological integration of the Afrocentric-self among African -American females socialized in a Eurocentric aesthetic* by Donna Lynn Cook, as I am looking at this phenomenon from an intersectional feminism perspective. Cook explores how, from a Black feminist point of view, beauty discriminates (Cook: 2007: 1). Using these peer-reviewed sources, I will argue that newer media platforms promote the idea that beauty is something that can be obtained for the improvement of women, but instead draws a more significant divide between racialized women and white women.

The second argument highlights the ongoing issue of how body positivity (primarily plus-sized women) is a much more complex concept to grasp when beauty trends seen on TikTok and Instagram are targeted towards and mainly influenced by skinny, white and attractive influencers. Josee Johnston's and Judith Taylor's article "[Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign](#)" provides us with the definition of "Feminist consumerism" (Johnston et al.:2008: 943). This article examines how women in our society are often penalized for not living up to beauty standards and this leads to eating disorders, diet culture, and over-exercise. This article also ties into "[Shaping the online fat acceptance](#)

movement: talking about body image and beauty standards” by A. Adwoa Afful and Rose Ricciardelli, highlighting how women involved in fat activist (FA) movements in Canada and the United States have been among the first to recognize how health is narrowly defined within current beauty standards (Afful et al. 2015: 453). With aid from both of these works, I will argue for the narrative that under a feminist lens, micro beauty trends ultimately reinforce the idea that thin is the only healthy and attractive body type.

My final argument will be speaking on the consumerist and capitalist influence derived from the micro beauty trends, reinforcing the idea that to be “feminine,” women need to buy certain products. My research finds that newer social media platforms heavily support consumerist culture, as statistics show that teenage girls are TikTok’s most frequent users and, therefore, the prime targets for consumerism. This argument will include the reference to “Consumption Ideology” by Oxford University Press, which provides a definition that explains how consumerism is expressed within society as well as consumer conflicts versus desires. The article offers many claims on how “In a capitalist--consumerist marketplace, internal needs are transformed instantly into desires for specific products and brands because the market offers an endless variety.” (2022:17). This article also chimes in on how TikTok has caused a revolution in terms of consumerist culture and capitalism, noting its most significant influence being teenage girls, the most valuable and loyal customers to consumerism. I found that data collected from global research confirms that TikTok consumer behaviour is causing many products to become sold out almost instantly, driving demand for more to be created and supporting capitalist culture.

In summary, key findings contribute to the significance of my research topic. My literature helps inform my approach to this topic, as the common theme strung across many of my conclusions revolve around the idea that there is a divide amongst women across micro beauty trends on new forms of social media. The growing issue of consumption and capitalism is addressed within my findings, also highlighting similar notes from other readings that consumerism is fed from women's low self-esteem and striving to be attractive.

HOW MICROTRENDS ON TIKTOK

DISCRIMINATE AGAINST PEOPLE OF COLOUR

Beauty standards have never failed to discriminate against people, as it is a socially constructed phenomenon designed to rank people based on their looks. Typically, women have no control over being subjected to the Western views of what is deemed as attractive, healthy and desirable. With the rise of new social media, such as TikTok and Instagram, young female audiences are the prime target of micro beauty trends. The question that arises is how these trends are inherently problematic; Donna Lynn Cook argues in her dissertation that “In Euro-American culture, media images of femininity and physical attractiveness reinforce generally held perceptions of the idealized female beauty as tall, white, slender, and often blond and blue-eyed” (Cook 2007:5). The author's work from the lens of a Black feminist is hugely significant within this topic as we can note that the beauty standards in our society neglects an intersectional focus. The damage of these beauty trends being popularized certainly reinforces how women respond to beauty cultural messages within advertising and problems associated with the dominant

commercialized beauty narrative (Buitenhuis:2014:44). The consistent swarm of micro beauty trends has shown a pattern of reinforcing Eurocentric beauty standards and the idea that women are constantly needing to fit into a specific aesthetic, rather than just simply existing.

“Clean girl aesthetic” Trend Controversy

In 2022, TikTok was utterly dominated by the “clean girl aesthetic,” which revolved around achieving makeup that attempts to promote natural beauty and “flawless skin,” aligning with European beauty standards. Some may argue that this trend is a positive beauty reinforcement, but what they fail to notice is how this trend inherently discriminates against people of colour. The influencers involved in this particular trend are mostly White female celebrity content creators such as Hailey Bieber, Matilda Djerf, etc. Content consisting of women with flawless white skin, slicked back hair, oversized hoop earrings, and hair oils, amongst many other products, this trend features became oriented as a way for eurocentric beauty standards to have viewers in a chokehold. There are various problems with this focus, instilling that an idealized vision of female beauty is not inclusive of other races, sizes and classes, as well as the fact that the inspiration behind the “clean girl aesthetic” stems from Black and Latinx culture. The controversy surrounding the popularity of this trend is that it is promoted by white women, for white women, yet culturally appropriates the beauty methods that Black and Latino people have been doing for many years, which they faced backlash for. It is important to note that there is an apparent double standard that comes with beauty trends and race, as Western culture deems big hoops, slicked-back hair and glossy lips as “trashy” and “grimy”, yet for white females, it is the idealized beauty standard.

It is an unfair bias, as for many years women of colour who began using these beauty methods were faced with cruel judgment, affecting how they were viewed in society. This example of cultural appropriation within new media reveals how exactly society continues to favour eurocentric beauty standards, completely disregarding people of colour and their contribution to the trends that white women thrive off of today.

Beautyism

From a feminist approach, we can account for how “Beautyism” (Stefani: 2019:6) is intertwined with how most white influencers and followers' beauty trends on social media are equated with privilege based on physical appearances. Whitney Stefani refers to this term in her dissertation [“Beyond the Thin Ideal: Women's Perceptions of and Experiences with Beauty Standards and Beautyism”](#) where she examines how “beautyism is generally conceptualized as conferring privilege to more attractive people (Rhodes,2010). However, there are some contexts where unattractive women may be privileged over attractive women” (Stefani:2019:6). As noted, society reduces women to their appearance, looking through a lens of Eurocentrism, which highly favours white beauty culture. This also explains why white women alone are privileged to be able to be seen as the beauty standard when they are the face of beauty trends on social media that use methods from other races, who were faced with shame and racism. The implication that true femininity is equated with this aesthetic is very harmful, as most would describe this aesthetic with terms such as girly, pink, soft, gentle, etc. However, women of colour, who were the original creators behind the trend, were taunted and now are excluded overall. Stefani’s work also highlights how “Qualitative and exploratory research can

help to build intersectional feminist theory by highlighting women's experiences and perceptions related to beautyism" (Stefani:2019:8). In summary, research goes to show how microtrends on newer forms of social media directly discriminate against people of colour, as their target audience is white women because these trends are rooted in Eurocentric beauty standards. From an intersectional feminist lens, the beauty side of TikTok reveals how trends are made for white women's benefit and advancement. Hairstyles, makeup looks, and other products to support the idea that being "clean and effortless" is the most desirable thing for women to be is very harmful, as it excludes women of colour, causing a further divide between women.

ANTI-POSITIVE BEAUTY TRENDS

In this section, I will show how improving one's self-esteem and self-image is not readily achievable for users of these apps, as the idealized picture of beauty is thin. Piyali Sur's article "Beauty and the Internet: Old Wine in a new bottle" argues that social media platforms are being referred to as this generation's replacement for fashion magazines (Sur:2017:1), as well as how the app leads to young girls becoming fascinated with their physical appearance and attempt to conform to socially constructed [beauty](#) standards, as well as gender ideologies (Sur 2017:1). When viewers become involved within the swarm of micro beauty trends on these platforms, they can notice how they are attempting to teach women and young girls how to do femininity. We can observe how trends such as the "clean girl aesthetic," as well as the "pink pilates girl" or "ballerina girl aesthetic," all promote images of idealized beauty standards and body types containing thin white women. This shows how these trends reinforce the image of

skinny being healthy, attractive, and more feminine than other body types. Sur mentions that social media has replaced fashion magazines in promoting beauty trends and health tips to maintain a "desirable" figure. Data collected from an American infographic website *Statista*, found that the largest age group infiltrated with TikTok is 10-19. In terms of gender and viewer numbers, females were ranked higher than males at 61% compared to 39% (Statista 2021). From this quantitative study, we can establish that if TikTok's majority of users are teenage females, they will likely be faced with a sort of beauty trend circulating within the app at one point or another. The question arises as to how these statistics are significant to my argument, which my findings respond to by explaining how "women may experience anxiety, disordered eating, self-objectification, and other problems in response to narrow or unrealistic beauty ideals that are communicated interpersonally and through media" (Stefani: 2019:1).

The pressure that teenage girls put on themselves to fit into the beauty narratives is highly unhealthy to the mind, and physical well being, as noted in Stefani's text. The advancement of women is at stake due to how they are the prime target of beauty and fitness culture. Shown through these forms of social media and their strong tendency to promote content that exclusively features thin, white, and naturally beautiful individuals, they attempt to persuade women that this body type is something that women should strive to achieve instead of being happy with how they naturally appear. From the standpoint of feminist theory, this is precisely what we do not need for the advancement of women.

The stigma surrounding obese women

In Adwoa Afful and Rose Ricciardelli's article "Shaping the online fat

acceptance movement: talking about body image and beauty standards,” they examine how four female self-identified fat acceptance (FA) bloggers discuss beauty standards and body image as a means to challenge these discourses (Afful et al. 2015: 453). They make several points analyzing how body positivity activists in Canada and the US have been the first people to truly realize that health seems to be defined within current beauty standards (Afful et al. :2015: 453). It is also important to acknowledge how there is a powerful stigma surrounding obesity, especially obese women whom society willingly stereotypes as less feminine, lacking attractiveness, or are “known’ to be lazy, lacking willpower, and (sexually) out of control” (Afful et al. 2015: 455). Grace Barker and Veya Seekis state in their article [“Does #beauty have a dark side? Testing mediating pathways between engagement with beauty content on social media and cosmetic surgery consideration”](#) that Western culture advocates for beauty standards, including a thin and toned body, complemented by a symmetrical face with high cheekbones, elongated features, a petite nose, and full lips (Barker et al. 2022: 2).

Brandy Melville controversy

A common factor noticed within these TikTok micro beauty trends is that they feature fashion consisting of brands that have a negative attitude towards plus sized bodies. For example, Italian clothing brand Brandy Melville is extremely popular amongst young women and is known for its “one size fits all” motto. The brand claims that it only makes its clothes one size for economic and environmental purposes, but some theorize that its goal is to promote the aesthetic of being skinny, white, and blonde with blue eyes. This is exceptionally discriminatory to other body types, to begin with, and its popularity on newform social

media can cause young female viewers to have a negative outlook on beauty culture and their bodies. To quote Adwoa Afful and Rose Ricciardelli’s work, “this stigmatization of fat bodies encourages the use of self-disciplinary practices (e.g., extreme dieting and exercise) to achieve a socially desired version of selfhood” (Afful et al. 2015: 457).

In summary, we can take into consideration how these findings all remind us of the fact that beauty standards integrated within social media are all traced back to sexist gender norms. From a feminist perspective, the division amongst women of different body types that these beauty trends cause shows how society favours the “skinny” frame. Josee Johnston and Judith Taylor state in their article, “Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign” that “beauty ideology works to reproduce and legitimate gender inequality” (Johnston et al. 2008: 963). We must remember that the more we give into beauty standards, the more we damage ourselves and the advancement of all women.

CLASSIST BEAUTY TRENDS & HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TO CONSUMER CULTURE AND CAPITALISM

In this section, I will be arguing that from a sociological perspective, these popular beauty trends promoted by TikTok are not only racist and body positivity but classist and contribute to consumer culture. As noted previously in this paper, the primary audience being influenced by these trends is teenage girls. In this highly vulnerable age, they are very critical of self appearance and status. The beauty trends that target this group have the power to reinforce the idea that beauty is achievable if you buy certain products. This marketing

tactic is a scam, as most young female TikTok users are faced with a new trendy aesthetic each month, laying the old one to rest and making it “out of date.” According to a global research study conducted by *Search Engine Journal* to try to identify TikTok influence on consumerism, they found that “35% of TikTok users buy something they see on the platform. 29% of users say they weren't able to buy a product they discovered on TikTok because it was sold out. 39% of TikTok users say “lifting spirits” is a key factor when they decide to buy a product” (Southern 2022). In a sociological framework, this ties into Marxist conflict theory, which claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources and emphasizes the role of power between different economic groups (Golriz 2022). Conflict theory also proposes that society is comprised of unequal groups, where the most privileged exploit the underprivileged (Golriz 2022).

Consumption Ideology

In an article derived from Oxford University Press titled “Consumption Ideology,” they examine how we live in a consumerist society, so consumers knowingly or unknowingly act as ideologues (Bernd et al. 2022: 6). This article does an exceptional job at articulating how the system of consumerism is deeply embedded in our society, as well as how the concept of consumption ideology “originates from conflicts between consumer desires and the system of consumerism. It is reflected in consumers’ lived experiences and expressed in social representations and communicative actions related to status-based consumption, brand affinity and antipathy, performed practices, and political consumption” (Bernd et al. 2022: 1). We can tie this to how the average consumer will experience feelings of desire and vital need for products that are

marketed to them in the form of media advertisements. As seen in TikTok videos, popular influencers will drive the idea into their young female audience that if they strive to be more beautiful, skinny, and trendy, they need to buy certain products. Bernd goes on to further state that “when consumers turn products and brands into sublime objects of desire, they create ideological fantasies about the desire to consume (e.g., “I need this now”), about outcomes of consumption (e.g., “it will satisfy me; it will make me happy; I will gain recognition from others”), and about the presumed benefits of consumption (e.g., “it is healthy; it is sustainable; it elevates my social status”)” (Bernd et al. 2022: 24).

Privilege and Conflict Theory

The overconsumption of these products is not only an issue for our environment but also because of those who are privileged enough to purchase these items. The privileged are ultimately exploiting people of lower socioeconomic status, who are likely not able to buy trendy beauty items. It is important to note that a large majority of the products creating influence on consumers are not affordable, as the top-ranking items consist of \$40+ tiny lip oils, \$50 hair masks, and fashion pieces from brands such as Brandy Melville and Aritzia, which extremely overpriced. Essentially, the faster the influenced consumers sell out these beauty products, the more labour the lower-class workers will be put through, barely getting enough money for their job, but at the same time benefiting the upper-class consumers. Beauty trends reflect the idea that class status can drive a wedge between appearances and value. This leads to how society ranks citizens based on appearances, in terms of getting jobs, who gets to be the face of beauty standards, income, etc.

In a 2022 article derived from *Dazed Digital*, they write, “‘Poorly groomed’ women stand to earn 40 percent less than their beautified counterparts, while attractive people are over 20 percent more likely to be called back for a job interview and are perceived to be more socially skilled, trustworthy, confident and competent” (Atlanta 2022:6). We can also tie this into “Consumption Ideology” as they argue “First, bringing to bear the Marxist notion of class conflict, we propose that one source of conflict is that oppressed, disadvantaged, or marginalized consumers may have a strong desire for certain products or brands but cannot afford or consume them” (Bernd et al. 2022: 34). This statistic ultimately reveals the declining social advancement for all women, and how the lower class are left to deal with the burdens of consumer and capitalist culture. This also ties into how our society is systemically racist, ranking lower-class women of colour near the bottom, causing them to fall under the lower socioeconomic class status as they are excluded from beauty standards. They are also unable to purchase the products that social media influences because of mass consumerism, and the beauty standard is used as a tool to keep those of lower economic status at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

To conclude this section of my paper, we must realize how micro beauty trends are scams, discriminate against those of the lower class, and contribute to an unhealthy consumerism culture and capitalism. My findings all demonstrate a similar theme of how these trend creators and influencers use the vulnerability of young, naive teenage girl audiences to reinforce the idea that they need to buy certain products to fit societal beauty narratives. The way that consumer culture, with the association of Marxist conflict

theory, leads to a limit of resources that most TikTok users believe is crucial for benefiting their appearance and health exploits the underpaid lower class to work harder to serve the needs of those privileged enough to purchase products in the first place.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, I have argued that this generation's frequent use of new-form media is dangerous to women's self-esteem and the stigma around class status. I have demonstrated with the research conducted that many people of colour (specifically young teenage girls) feel that they are excluded from these micro beauty trends, as they primarily focus on accentuating and admiring white features. This is an ultimate reinforcement of how our society displays that eurocentric features are ideal beauty. The privileges that white female influencers have to be able to exhibit these micro beauty trends, as well as profit off of them, when in reality they trace back to Black and Latinx beauty methods that were faced with backlash, demonstrate how the standards are incredibly problematic and lack intersectionality. Research also finds that these trends attempt to evoke the idea that health is presented through beauty culture. Many of these works found that beauty trends on TikTok are essentially equating femininity with being thin, which is causing the audience of young teenage girls to absorb this and create a negative self image, amongst other issues. The majority of these trends are exclusive to bigger bodies, as society has constructed the idea that more prominent women are seen as less feminine, lazy, and unhealthy.

From a feminist standpoint, we can note that these trends inherently prohibit the advancement of women to move beyond societal beauty expectations equated with

being thin and white. My last section demonstrated that from a Marxist view, these micro trends contribute to mass consumerism and capitalism by limiting the number of products available on the market due to the belief that beauty is achievable if you purchase certain products. Marketing to a group of individuals at an age where social status and appearance can be common insecurities contributes to mass consumerism, which feeds their need to fix their appearance for societal value. Privilege within beauty culture and consumerism is very prevalent. It ties into how conflict theory proposes that the privileged exploit the underprivileged, and in this case, for their benefit, to become more attractive in society. I will draw one final quotation from Donna Lynn Cook's dissertation to finish my paper. It reads, "At its best, beauty celebrates. At its worst, beauty discriminates"(Cook 2022: 1).

REFERENCES

- Afful, Adwoa A., and Rose Ricciardelli. 2015. "Shaping the Online Fat Acceptance Movement: Talking About Body Image and Beauty Standards." *Journal of Gender Studies* 24(4):453–72. doi: 10.1080/09589236.2015.1028523.
- Anoushka Benbow-Buitenhuis. 2014. "A Feminine Double-Bind?: Towards Understanding the Commercialisation of Beauty through Examining Anti-Ageing Culture." *Social Alternatives* 33(2):43–49.
- Southern, Matt G. 2022. "TikTok A Key Part Of Consumers' Path To Purchase" *Search Engine Journal*. Accessed March 13, 2023. (<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/tiktok-a-key-part-of-consumers-path-to-purchase/437912/#close>).
- Cook, Donna Lynn. 2007. "Beholding the Beauty of Self: The Psychological Integration of the Afrocentric-Self Among African -American Females Socialized in a Eurocentric Aesthetic." *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*.
- Dixon, S. 2021. "Distribution of monthly active TikTok users in the United States as of March 2021, by gender." *Satista*. Accessed March 13, 2023. (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1095201/tiktok-users-gender-usa/>).
- Johnston, Josée, and Judith Taylor. 2008. "Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33(4):941–66. doi: 10.1086/528849.
- Atlanta, Ellen. 2022. "Not ugly, just poor: how the beauty industry is widening the class divide". *Dazed Digital*. Accessed March 13, 2023. (<https://www.dazeddigital.com/beauty/article/55974/1/not->

ugly-just-poor-how-the-beauty-industry-is-widening-the-class-divide).

Schmitt, Bernd, J. Joško Brakus, and Alessandro Biraglia. 2022. "Consumption Ideology." *The Journal of Consumer Research* 49(1):74–95. doi: 10.1093/jcr/ucab044.

Seekis, Veya, and Grace Barker. 2022. "Does #beauty Have a Dark Side? Testing Mediating Pathways Between Engagement with Beauty Content on Social Media and Cosmetic Surgery Consideration." *Body Image* 42:268–75. doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.06.013.

Stefani, Whitney. 2019. "Beyond the Thin Ideal: Women's Perceptions of and Experiences with Beauty Standards and Beautyism." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Sur, Piyali. 2017. "Beauty and the Internet: Old Wine in a New Bottle." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 18(4):278–91.

The Environmental Repercussions of *Barbie*: A Current Events Analysis

By: Hannah Oommen

To apply the core conceptualizations of this course to the world around us, I would like to focus on a particularly prominent media piece that recently garnered international attention: the *Barbie* movie. However, my analysis will not centre the film but rather on the contents of the following article: “In a Barbie world ... after the movie frenzy fades, how do we avoid tonnes of Barbie dolls going to landfill?” (Pears, 2023). After briefly summarizing this article, which examines the environmental impacts of Barbie dolls, I will further reflect on these impacts by examining relevant course concepts such as the interconnectedness of *capitalism* and *environmental movements*, the *co-presence* of social movements, and *call-to-action*. My analysis aims to establish the necessity of knitting together various social movements so that one is not favoured while the other is ignored.

Like many others, I was incredibly excited to watch *Barbie*- and it did not disappoint. It had a wonderful feminist message, powerful allusions to the experience of being a woman, and carried a great sense of childhood nostalgia. However, despite the essentiality of *Barbie*'s message, its high profile resulted in increased production and consumption of promotional products like clothing, makeup, and, perhaps most importantly, the original Mattel Barbie dolls. This article examines the impact of *Barbie* becoming a cultural phenomenon, subsequently triggering a surge of purchases surpassing the approximately 60 million Barbie dolls already sold annually (Pears, 2023). It

discusses several ways these dolls cost the environment, such as not always being recyclable and contributing to around 660 grams of carbon emissions per 182-gram doll (Pears, 2023). As such, it is evident that while these dolls already negatively impact our climate and environment, these impacts only become more significant after the movie's release. After delineating these environmental impacts, Pears (2023) proposes ways with which we can attempt to cut emissions without banning toys altogether; potential solutions include using low-carbon materials and supply chains, as well as enforcing government penalties for using cheap and high-environmental impact plastics. Finally, the article ends by urging consumers to be more attentive when purchasing toys by paying attention to durability, less complexity in materials, and sourcing second-hand where possible. We can deduce this urging to be a call-to-action of sorts, as it places accountability in the hands of the consumers and their actions henceforth.

Moving on to the analysis, the particular focus on the role of capitalistic ideals and their impacts on our environment within this article closely mirrors several concerns within our course book, *Kraken Calling*. The book discusses how capitalism is not perceived to be a threat by many as they do not consider it harmful to their personal lives. They *like* capitalism regardless of its detriment to the planet or the climate disasters threatening poorer countries (McBay, 2022). The same notion applies to the issue of Barbie dolls contributing to carbon emissions and ending up in landfills. Since they are not perceived as a personal or imminent threat, their impacts on our environment and general climate are disregarded. However, the carbon emissions from these dolls contribute to the general decline of our planet;

moreover, the landfills they end up in are more likely to affect lower-income populations. Therefore, what most don't *perceive* as a threat harms several underprivileged populations and our planet.

Furthermore, this perception of what is and isn't a personal threat is quite significant – many pick and choose the social movements they want to be a part of based on such perceptions. They don't realize how each social movement is interconnected and the importance of acknowledging their relativity and co-existence. In *Kraken Calling*, Apollo addresses these relationships between different social movements by stating that it is essential to connect minor struggles to more significant struggles; “you have to knit different movements together” (McBay, 2022). Doing so is critical for preserving the purposes and aims of all these social movements and creating the necessary social change they strive for. In the case of *Barbie's* release and the subsequent surge of doll purchases causing environmental harm, we must be conscious that we cannot appreciate and partake in one movement while disregarding the other. I believe that the ecological impacts of these dolls have been quite secondary to *Barbie*; the coverage of this issue is far less than the movie and its critical message. The message of *Barbie* was indeed powerful regarding things like the harmful consequences of patriarchy and inciting discussions surrounding gender roles. As such, it has situated itself as a *feminist* cultural phenomenon.

However, that does not mean we should disregard the environmental concerns arising from this film's production; the movement to end the climate crisis is just as essential as the feminist movement; they are interlinked. To avoid disregarding these environmental concerns, we must take direct

action. Taking action could mean interfering in production or consumption processes (Tomas, 2023). As stated earlier in the article, this means opposing and changing the materials used to produce these dolls or changing our consumption habits. Direct action is an integral part of knitting these movements together; by doing so, we hold ourselves accountable for our ignorance and partake in both movements to the fullest.

Conclusively, this analysis of the environmental impact of Barbie dolls in the context of broader societal and ecological issues emphasizes the need to recognize the interconnectedness of various social movements. As we immerse ourselves in cultural phenomena like the Barbie movie, we are fascinated by the powerful messages they convey, such as feminism and gender equality. While they are crucial and deserve our attention, it is equally vital to acknowledge other movements that address additional important issues that often accompany such phenomena.

REFERENCES

- McBay, A. (2022). *Kraken Calling*. Seven Stories Press.
- Pears, A. (2023, July 17). In a Barbie world ... after the movie frenzy fades, how do we avoid tonnes of Barbie dolls going to landfill?. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/in-a-barbie-world-after-the-movie-frenzy-fades-how-do-we-avoid-tonnes-of-barbie-dolls-going-to-landfill-209601>
- Tomas, A. (Professor). (2023). Week 2: “The Age of Revolutions” <https://onq.queensu.ca/d2l/le/content/827918/viewContent/5030030/View>

The Illusion of Safety: Examining Police Strength's Impact on Crime Reduction By: Nicholas Lykopoulos

In an era marked by complex social dynamics, the apparatus of policing and its relationship to crime has been a critical feature questioned in policy development. Politicians and the media, both historically and in contemporary times, have effectively influenced public perception by crafting an image of rising crime rates. This deceit has informed policymaking for years, as many argued that the only way to prevent threats to social control was by necessitating enhanced social control measures (Huff and Stahura 1980:461). Traditional methods of crime control have centred on expanding police employment, while recent social movements and scholars have been suggesting alternative services intended to reduce crime through different means. Through empirical analysis, this study establishes that an expanding police force does not yield a substantial deterrence effect or a reduction in crime rates; instead, reallocating these resources towards reshaping the role of police and bolstering their legitimacy is advocated. This paper begins by exploring how greater police strength fails to augment perceptions of arrest risk, weakening the deterrence effect. Subsequently, an empirical analysis indicating police strength's null relationship with crime rates leads one to the conclusion bigger is not better. The study concludes by endorsing a redefined police culture that promotes their legitimacy.

To ensure a safe functioning of society, the established operational framework of policing is grounded by an overarching objective of achieving a

deterrence effect. General deterrence is the concept that increases the severity, certainty, and celerity of the punishment, which will decrease criminal activity through fear of it (Kleck and Barnes 2014:719). Initially, one may hold preconceived notions about the dynamics between police strength and deterrence, surmising that more police officers would amplify mass surveillance efforts, thereby dissuading potential offenders. However, this assumption is unfounded, as it inaccurately presumes that the individual is affected by macro-level actions (Kleck and Barnes 2014:720). Deterrence can only be effective to the extent that an individual offender perceives a high risk of punishment, potentially resulting in a change of behaviour (Kleck, Sever, Li, and Gertz 2005:625). Studies have found that ideas of general deterrence fail to work as a primary defence mechanism against crime. In Kleck and Barnes' research, they found that police strength had no significant, positive relationship with perceived arrest risk for homicide, assault, robbery, and burglary (Kleck and Barnes 2014:727). Through police data and self-report questionnaires, they additionally found that an improved, actual arrest rate a higher police strength may produce did not make citizens more likely to perceive high risks of arrests, excluding homicides (Kleck and Barnes 2014:726). This suggests that while an increased police strength may benefit traffic control or public services, there are no large-scale changes to deterrence (Kleck and Barnes 2014:734-735).

These results are replicated and extended in Kleck, Sever, Li, and Gertz's work, where they concluded that the null relationship between actual and perceived punishment risks is caused by two underlying failures of deterrence in understanding individual perceptions.

Firstly, prospective offenders are often misguided and irrational during risk assessment due to inadequate knowledge. The study found that news media, personal and vicarious experiences, or other sources failed to provide an accurate foundation for understanding perceptions of deterrence (Kleck et al. 2005:655). Subsequently, they found that prospective offenders are typically under considerable emotional stress, making it difficult to conceptualize reasonable risks (Kleck et al. 2005:652). These factors incorporated into one's cost/benefit analysis limit the capability of deterrence to make a substantial impact in reducing crime.

Moreover, the study indicates that prospective offenders' awareness of risks is often limited to their immediate environment during commission of the crime (Kleck et al. 2005:654). This suggests that an increased presence of law enforcement will result in the execution of crime being displaced to different instances and locations to avoid legal ramifications (Kleck et al. 2005:654). While these reports do not argue that a baseline deterrence does not exist from the criminal justice system's activities, they suggest potential increases and decreases in punishment risks do not fluctuate simultaneously with perceived risks (Kleck et al. 2005:653).

Moving away from the theoretical standpoint, practical manifestations of an expanded police force continue the mistranslation between police strength and crime rates. The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment conducted a randomized field experiment in which motorized patrol levels were manipulated across 15 precincts. Patrol patterns were randomly assigned, ranging from no routine patrols in some precincts to four times the standard frequency in others (Kelling 1974). The study found that variations in police

strength had no significant impact on crime rates despite the considerably elevated patrol levels, which exceeded sustainable levels for any police department (Kelling 1974). The visible manifestation of police also incited no change in rates of self-reported victimization (Kelling 1974).

On a national scale, an analysis was conducted on the expansion of American police forces amidst the fluctuating socio-economic conditions of the 1990s to determine the effectiveness of police strength in reducing crime rates. Using data from 85 cities, researchers found that the violent crime rate had no significant relationship with police strength (McCarty, Ren, and Zhao 2012:414). Other existing studies corroborate this conclusion, wherein augmenting police presence overlooks the phenomenon of crime displacement and its inefficacy in preventing crime within the private realm (Greenberg, Kessler and Loftin 1983:387-388). Conversely, the study noted a significant negative relationship between property crime and police strength. However, its suggestion that reducing the number of officers by three would lead to an increase of one-thousand property crimes holds minimal statistical significance to warrant policy change (McCarty et al. 2012:419). The inability of heightened police strength to successfully reduce crime significantly denotes the misguided practice of expanding the police force. While it cannot be proven that abolishing police would not affect the crime rate, moderate changes in police employment yield no impact (Greenberg et al. 1983:388).

To further consolidate the null relationship between police employment levels and crime rates, a study by Chamlin and Langworthy criticized previous findings of their failure to disaggregate the total police force into their respective

sections. The inclusion of administrative and executives in the employment-crime rate equation created an aggregation bias (Chamlin and Langworthy 1996:166). To rectify this, Chamlin and Langworthy's study in Milwaukee spanning from 1930 to 1987, comparing the levels of total, patrol, and detective employment in relation to total, property, and personal crimes (Chamlin and Langworthy 1996:166). Following their disaggregated, cross-sectional analysis, their findings were consistent with those of other studies. Notably, their investigation revealed an absence of any distinct relationship between patrol size or overall police force size and various categories of crime rates (Chamlin and Langworthy 1996:177). The experiment's novel findings also yielded no substantial improvements to the crime rate: patrol officer size had a small, negative effect on robberies, and a reduction of one detective saw an increase of 10,000 property crimes per 100,000 people (Chamlin and Langworthy 1996:178-180). However, since detective efficiency was not a variable considered, it is difficult to say whether a dramatic increase in detectives would reduce property crime rates significantly.

These studies have emphasized the shortcomings of intentionally bolstering police strength as a mechanism to decrease crime rates. Scholars have theorized that this phenomenon stems from the absence of a substantial relationship between police force size and public confidence in law enforcement. Instead, there appears to be a borderline significant adverse effect on confidence when police strength is magnified (Hauser and Kleck 2017:106). This can be primarily attributed to the traditional police culture (TPC) inherent in their role. Law enforcement agencies typically foster a unique culture grounded

by the nature of their jobs, viewing themselves as militaristic and distinct from conventional society (Leblond 2023a). TPC most notably shapes an attitude of constant suspicion and heightened disposition to employ force (Silver, Roche, Bilach, and Stephanie 2017:1293). Consequently, this culminates in diminished support for procedural justice, which aims to foster respectful and trustworthy exercises of authority to promote satisfaction with citizen encounters (Silver et al. 2017:1280). If TPC develops a mindset where officers perceive themselves as superior to citizens and consequently treat them unfairly, it undermines the tenets of procedural justice (Silver et al. 2017:1293). This erodes confidence in law enforcement, which is exacerbated when more police are hired.

To actively reduce the crime rate, we must transform the public perception of the police into a morally justifiable authority by changing their role (Leblond 2023a). Encouraging police legitimacy in the populace can play an essential factor in both deterrence and the dark figure of crime. The enhanced confidence in the police can factor into a prospective offender's cost/risk analysis, potentially inciting a greater fear of perceived arrest. Furthermore, the dark figure of crime, the number of offences never reported or detected by police, could be minimized if citizens have faith their case will be resolved (Leblond 2023b; Greenberg et al. 1983:383). The persistent recruitment of additional police officers has proven ineffective in reducing crime.

In contrast, when implemented within a restorative justice framework, the proposal outlined above holds the potential for significant crime reduction. Restorative justice is predicated upon notions of social accountability and deliberation between the offender, victim, and the community

(Braithwaite 1998). Redefining the role of policing to encompass more mediation and community liaison functions would bolster public confidence, as a system focused on restoration holds more legitimacy than a

punitive one. This would not only emerge as a viable strategy for crime prevention but also allow the re-investment of money meant for police hiring towards community development.

REFERENCES

Braithwaite, John. 1998. "Restorative Justice". Pp. 323-344 in *The Handbook of Crime and Punishment*, edited by M.H. Tonry. Oxford University Press.

Chamlin, Mitchell B., and Robert H. Langworthy. 1996. "The Police, Crime, and Economic Theory: A Replication and Extension." *American Journal of Criminal Justice : the Journal of the Southern Criminal Justice Association*. 20(2):165–82.

Greenberg, David F., Ronald C. Kessler, And Colin Loftin. 1983. "The Effect of Police Employment on Crime." *Criminology*. 21(3):375–94.

Hauser, Will, and Gary Kleck. 2017. "The Impact of Police Strength and Arrest Productivity on Fear of Crime and Subjective Assessments of the Police." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 42(1):86–111.

Huff, C. R., and John M. Stahura. 1980. "Police Employment and Suburban Crime." *Criminology* 17(4):461-470.

Kelling, G. 1974. *The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment: Technical Report*.

Kleck, Gary, Brion Sever, Spencer Li, And Marc Gertz. 2005. "The Missing Link In General Deterrence Research*." *Criminology*. 43(3):623–60.
7

Kleck, Gary, and J. C. Barnes. 2014. "Do More Police Lead to More Crime Deterrence?" *Crime and Delinquency* 60(5):716–38.

Leblond, Alyssa. 2023a. "Police Culture." Queen's University

Leblond, Alyssa. 2023b. "Criminal Justice System Operation." Queen's University

McCarty, William P., Ling Ren, and Jihong "Solomon" Zhao. 2012. "Determinants of Police Strength in Large U.S. Cities During the 1990s: A Fixed-Effects Panel Analysis." *Crime and Delinquency* 58(3):397–424.

Silver, Jason R., Sean P. Roche, Thomas J. Bilach and Bontrager R. Stephanie. 2017. "Traditional Police Culture, use of Force, and

Procedural Justice: Investigating Individual, Organizational, and Contextual Factors." *Justice Quarterly* : JQ 34(7):1272-1309.

Which Famous Sociologist are You?

★ START ★

Do you believe that wealth shapes society?

No

Yes

Do you think that social change derives from class struggle and conflict?

Yes

No

Do you see importance in understanding motivations of social behaviour and how they interpret such actions?

No

Do you prioritize the student of social solidarity and consciousness?

No

Yes

Do you find that social cohesion and integration are necessary for maintaining social order?

Yes

Yes

Do you find the rise of bureaucracy and social rationalization impact modern society?

No

Yes

No

**Max
Weber**

**Karl
Marx**

**Emile
Durkheim**



Message from the Editor

DEAR READERS,

There aren't many ways I can express my level of gratitude towards the Sociology DSC and to you all, the Queen's sociology faculty and students for making this journal possible. The Phenomena has been a part of my life for the past three years, and I am so grateful for another successful year. Every question, submission, and conversation exchanged with all these amazing contributors this year has been unforgettable.

This student-run journal provides a platform for students to share their passionate ideas with a wider audience than just inside the classroom, overall fostering a new sense of community. As you read, The Phenomena invites you to engage with this field of creative and academic conversation.

Behind this Year's Theme


The submissions in the 2024 Issue primarily focus on analyzing the complex and current challenges of contemporary society, revolving around these main themes:

- Breaking down gender constructs in specific and unique contexts
- Various forms of modern media and their implications on social roles and surveillance
- Calls for institutional reforms regarding unjust treatment of intersectional groups

Therefore, I associated this year's authors' innovative and progressive ideas with the evolving challenges they foresee today. A butterfly's transformative life course resonates with these articles' ability to break down various social issues and concepts in many 'environments' and then navigate ideas to address and break free from these configurative 'shells.' In other words, these authors harnessed the ability to find ways to identify and escape these socially normative issues within society through multiple contexts. Reflecting a sociologist's purpose in a beautiful yet empowering way.

SINCERELY, 

Bryn Sultana, Journal Editor



THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Julia Bennett

Rachel Boyd

Jacob Davis

Jocelyn Ehlers

Chloe Fraser

Nicholas Lykopoulous

Shannon Mahoney

Lauren McDermott

Noor Nasr

Avery O'Farrell

Hannah Oommen

Jade Paganelli

Julia Saltzman

Margaret Shen (Jitong)

Beth Smith

Evie Tansley

Vienna Wiens

Erin Yuil



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE PHENOMENA?

Phew!

Good thing, you came to the right place.

Please contact socy.dsc@asus.queensu.ca or phenomena.queensu@gmail.ca to speak to this year's editor directly.

You can also send questions about future hiring for the Sociology DSC by directly messaging our Instagram page [@sociologydsc](https://www.instagram.com/sociologydsc)

Do you have questions or comments about this year's Spring 2024 publication?

Please contact phenomena.queensu@gmail.ca

**Published by the Sociology Students of Queen's
University, Kingston. Copyright © 2019 Phenomena,
Queen's Sociology Journal. All Rights Reserved.
Phenomena Volume 05 March 2024**