

AUSPEX

Interdisciplinary Journal of Undergraduate Research

Volume Three

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Hannah Schiller | Sociology and Anthropology

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**Warren Wilson College
Swannanoa, NC
Spring 2014**

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Published by The Daniels Group with financial support from Academic Affairs, Office of Admissions, and the Work Program Office.

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Editorial: Against Absolutism

Wes Tirey

On December 23rd, 2013, after nearly two years in prison, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina—two members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot—were released on an amnesty bill. Their original charges: “hooliganism motivated by religious hatred.” Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina, along with Yekaterina Samutsevich (also jailed on “hooliganism,” though released on appeal in October 2012) and two other members had performed a song titled “Punk Prayer” at Moscow’s Cathedral Christ the Saviour in February 2012. “Put Putin away” the lyrics declared—an anthem against church and state, patriarchy, and unjust and illegitimate authority.

In protest against prison conditions, Tolokonnikova had gone on hunger strike on September 23rd, 2013. “I will not remain silent,” she wrote in an open letter, “resigned to watch as my fellow prisoners collapse under the strain of slavery-like conditions.” At one point, Tolokonnikova was unreachable after a prison transfer—later to be located at a Siberian tuberculosis hospital where she was treated for health issues. It was here that she began corresponding with Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek. In a letter dated January 2nd, 2013, he wrote: “In the same way that Hegel, after seeing Napoleon riding through Jena, wrote that it was as if he saw the World Spirit riding on a horse, you are nothing less than the critical awareness of us all, sitting in prison.”

“We are the children of Dionysus,” Tolokonnikova responded on February 23rd, 2013, “sailing in a barrel and not recognising any authority...We are a part of this force that has no final answers or absolute truths, for our mission is to question,” she continued. “There are architects of apollonian statics and there are (punk) singers of dynamics and transformation....We are the rebels asking for the storm, and believing that truth is only to be found in an endless search. If the ‘World Spirit’ touches you, do not expect that it will be

painless.”

Punk rock not just against authoritarianism, but against absolutism—epistemologically, culturally, and politically.

The purpose of our liberal arts education, as far as I can tell, at least, is to be sympathetic towards Tolokonnikova’s claim that truth is a perpetual journey. Indeed, this may not always feel like it is the case—and I’m sure in some instances it is simply not the case. Nonetheless, we are part of a legacy of intense criticality, of a strong skepticism towards knowledge-claims as final.

The authors of Volume 3 of *Auspex gaze*, in one way or another, skeptically towards claims of a fixed and persistent truth, as well. Instead, truth is seen as fluid and dynamic. Truth may not be some kind of Hegelian battle towards recognizing itself, but it is nonetheless decentralized; that is, truth is localizable, performing a particular function within a particular place, not resting in a Platonic crystal palace or heavenly realm.

We begin with Samantha Capps’ piece, which offers a keen analysis of Gödel’s critique against Russell’s and Whitehead’s *Principia Mathematica* and their claims that particular mathematical facts correspond to reality. Ranging from Euclid to Aristotle, to of course Gödel, Capps synthesizes mathematics and philosophy, challenging long-made suggestions that certain axioms translate to unquestionable truths about the world. Next, we move to Nathan Gower’s essay, a precise investigation into the dynamism of discourse itself. Here, Gower is concerned with the exclusion of the queer community from the conversation surrounding Amendment One—an amendment banning gay marriage in North Carolina (which, as Gower notes, was already illegal before its passing). By analyzing this exclusionary dialogue (courtesy of both the Left and Right), Gower is able to deconstruct an unjust and unfounded singular image of a particular community.

Amelia Snyder's research into metal concentration levels in sediment from the French Broad River follows. She writes that "measured metal concentrations do not warrant concern for environmental or human health," though "this does not necessarily indicate that no sediment contamination is occurring." In short, Snyder heralds a scientific revisitation of her personal findings. Beyond recognizing that her conclusions should not be viewed as fixed, Snyder's research illustrates the practicality of liberal arts education in that her skills and training are directly applied within her own locale. From there, we move to Hannah Schiller's thorough and sophisticated ethnography of the primitive skills community and the decentralization of its own culture. More specifically, Schiller illustrates that the community as a counterculture is not as unified as one might imagine.

Next is Georgia Beasley's essay, which claims that if Western NGOs truly wish to assist post-conflict northern Uganda in its healing process, then indigenous epistemologies and ontologies must be taken into consideration. In short, Beasley challenges the claim that Western knowledge systems are universally applicable, suggesting instead that knowledge-of-the-world and being-in-the-world are locally oriented. Megan Gordon's investigation into the causes of mass rape in the genocides of Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina ends Volume 3. She writes, despite their radical similarities, that "No single phenomenon is solely responsible for mass rape in either genocide," and that "More research is necessary to determine if the pattern continues across genocides." Like Beasley, Gordon is yet to be convinced that truth or certainty is transcultural.

Indeed, the concept of truth as unhinged from the heavens seems to carry with it a postmodern brand of nihilism: Truth is empty; God is dead; Who cares? But an "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard) does not mean that seeking truth is a worthless endeavor--that the absence of certainty nullifies intellectual freedom itself. Quite the contrary: the absence of certainty exemplifies intellectual free-

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dom—allowing for the pursuit of knowledge to be an ever changing and open adventure.



Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems: Logic, Metamathematics, and the Limits of Axiomatic Proof

Abstract:

This thesis explains the proof and implications of Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems as well as the prior developments in mathematics that led to the theorems. David Hilbert proposed a search for consistent axioms through which all of mathematics could be established. Gottfried Leibniz expressed the theory that mathematics is ultimately a product of logic and created a language that could express statements of logic in a clear, unambiguous way. Bertrand Russell discovered a paradox in Leibniz's work, and to absolve the paradox and find the axioms requested by Hilbert, Russell and Alfred North Whitehead wrote the *Principia Mathematica*, but the *Principia* failed to fully solve the paradox in Leibniz's work. Kurt Gödel used the *Principia* as a starting point for his incompleteness theorems, which state that if an axiomatic mathematical system is consistent it must be incomplete and that it is not possible to construct a proof for the consistency of a system within the system itself, meaning that Hilbert's goal is impossible. I also walk through the core steps of the proof in detail, with emphasis on the use of Gödel numbers.

Samantha Capps | Mathematics



Samantha Capps lives near Charlotte, North Carolina, and works for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library in circulation services. She was inspired to complete her thesis in order to finish her math major after discovering that life after college is very difficult and that she would rather be solving math problems again. Her math-related essay "In the Midst of my Convergence" is scheduled to be published in the fall 2013 issue of *Confrontation*, and in May 2014, she plans to write at La Muse Writer and Artist Retreat in southern France for seven weeks. She is currently preparing to relocate to Montréal next fall to begin the Masters of Information Studies program at McGill University.

Introduction

In the early twentieth century, a major unsolved question in mathematics was whether all of mathematics could be formalized. Is it possible to build all mathematical knowledge from axioms and logical deduction? Can it be proven that the system derived from these axioms is both consistent and complete? Following the efforts of mathematicians such as David Hilbert and Bertrand Russell, who assumed that the answer to these questions was “Yes,” and strove to find the necessary proof of such, 25-year-old Kurt Gödel constructed one of the most important proofs of modern mathematics, a proof that showed definitively that mathematics could not be contained purely within logic and axiomatic reasoning.

Part 1: Axioms

The earliest and most well-known mathematical axioms—self-evident premises used to build further truths—are those of geometry as defined in *Euclid’s Elements*:

“Let the following be postulated:

1. To draw a straight line from any point to any point.
2. To produce a finite straight line continuously in a straight line.
3. To describe a circle with any centre and distance.
4. That all right angles are equal to one another.
5. That, if a straight line falling on two straight lines make the interior angles on the same side less than two right angles, the two straight lines, if produced indefinitely, meet on that side on which are the angles less than the two right angles” (Euclid 2).

With these five postulates, as well as five additional “Common Notions,” Euclid provided the first example of an axiomatic system, a way of building mathematical truths from a base of assumptions. Not much is known about

Euclid, except that he lived in Egypt around 300 BC, but through his axioms, Euclid established an axiomatic model of geometry and provided a structure that could be implemented in other areas of mathematics (Pickover 56). Over 2000 years later, Italian mathematician Guiseppe Peano posited five axioms for arithmetic, which include “0 is a number” and “the sucesor of any number is a number” (Pickover 284).

The building of formal mathematical systems by the axiomatic method works by assuming the truth of a base of axioms, which ideally are as few in number as possible, and establishing the truth of theorems with proofs composed of axioms, prior theorems, and a logical structure. It is essential to note, then, that the truth of any axiomatically derived system is established only by assuming that the axioms on which it was built are true, and axioms, by definition, can never be shown to be true by proof, as theorems can, but only assumed.

Because of the nature of axiomatic systems, multiple contradictory systems built on different axioms can be equally true. For example, in the nineteenth century, over 2000 years after Euclid, three mathematicians—Nikolai Lobachevsky, János Bolyai, and Bernhard Riemann—published independent works that describe non-Euclidean geometries in which the parallel postulate, the common name for Euclid’s fifth axiom, is assumed to be false (Pickover 224). Euclidean geometry and non-Euclidean geometry are mutually contradictory, but both are nevertheless true in respect to their axiomatic structure.

In 1921, German mathematician David Hilbert proposed a search for axioms through which all of mathematics could be established. In addition to the axioms, Hilbert’s Program, as this proposition would come to be called, demanded a proof of the consistency of the axioms using “finitary” methods (Zach). “Mathematics,” according to Hilbert, “is a game played according to certain simple rules with meaningless marks on paper.” This statement reflects

Hilbert's conviction that mathematical symbols, though they can be usefully interpreted to have significance, are inherently meaningless and can be manipulated according only to certain similarly meaningless rules (Goldstein 136). Hilbert's finitism rejects mathematics that cannot intuitively and immediately be understood. So, from the perspective of finitism, the concept of infinity is invalid due its lack of intuitive comprehensibility. What exactly can and cannot be used in finistic proof is not rigidly defined, but valid concepts and inferences can generally be restricted to those of arithmetic (Zach).

Part 2: Logic

The history of logic extends back to the days of Aristotle, in the fourth century BC, and the definition of logic has undergone many transformations since that time. Aristotle's *Organon* is composed of six books outlining his various logical musings and is considered the earliest major work of logic. Though Aristotle's conclusions are wide-ranging, his logical work is most commonly associated with syllogisms, statements along the lines of "if A then B" (Groarke).

The theory that mathematics is ultimately a product of logic is termed logicism, and was first proposed by Gottfried Leibniz in the late 1600s. In 1879, Gottlob Frege published his paper "*Begriffsschrift, a Formula Language, Modeled upon That of Arithmetic, for Pure Thought*" (German: "Begriffsschrift, eine der arithmetischen nachgebildete Formelsprache des reinen Denkens"), in which he presents a method of expressing logical relations that enabled further development in logicism (Irvine, "Principia Mathematica"). Frege later wrote, "My intention was not to represent an abstract logic in formulas, but to express a content through written signs in a more precise and clear way than it is possible to do through words (Heijenoort 2). This statement succinctly summarizes the goal of logicism: to express mathematics via clear and indisputable symbolistic logic.

In his paper *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell describes mathematical logic as a process that works in the opposite direction of standard mathematics by deconstructing rather than building up, or, as Russell puts it, “They differ as boy and man: logic is the youth of mathematics and mathematics is the manhood of logic” (194). In June 1902, Bertrand Russell wrote Frege concerning a logical paradox he found in the *Begriffsschrift*, which he describes as follows: “Let w be the predicate: to be a predicate that cannot be predicated of itself. Can w be predicated of itself? From each answer its opposite follows” (Heijenoort 125).

The paradox can be expressed in many forms, ranging from Bible verses (“One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway [sic] liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true” [King James Version, Titus 1:12-14]), to the well-known barber paradox: in a town there is a barber who shaves only those who do not shave themselves. Who shaves the barber? Russell dismisses the barber paradox in his paper *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* because the contradiction is easily solved by realizing that such a barber cannot exist in reality (101). To say such a thing cannot exist in reality, though, is not the same as disproving it logically. In an effort to absolve the paradox using only logic, Russell developed his theory of types, though his paper on type theory was not published until 1908, six years after he first discovered the paradox. The theory of types separates all objects in different type categories. Objects of the same class must all be of the same type, and the class as a totality must be of a higher type. The paradoxes are then dissolved, for they all stem from assertions that are invalid according to the theory of types, specifically statements asserting that the totality of a class can be a member of itself (Heijenoort 150-151).

The theory of types did not escape significant criticism. A common objection was that it exists solely for the purpose of eliminating Russell’s paradox, with no relevance

in other concerns of mathematics (Irvine, “Russell’s Paradox”). From the point of view of logicism, the theory of types is faulty because the rules it establishes are derived from the meaning of the signs involved, whereas logic must operate without regard to the meaning of the signs. As philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, a protégé of Russell, states in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: “It must be possible to establish logical syntax without mentioning the meaning of a sign ... It can be seen that Russell must be wrong, because he had to mention the meaning of signs when establishing the rules for them” (31).

Part 3: Principia Mathematica

To solve the problem of paradoxes and to further establish logicism, Russell, along with Alfred North Whitehead, wrote, over the course of ten years, the *Principia Mathematica*. The *Principia* was published in three volumes, appearing in 1910, 1912, and 1913, and contains in-depth descriptions and proofs of Russell’s and Whitehead’s work in mathematical logic and the foundations of mathematics (Irvine, “Principia Mathematica”). As the authors stated in their request to the Royal Society of London for funding to print the book, “It is ... proved by exact reasoning that the fundamental propositions from which the various branches of pure mathematics start are deducible from the logical principles stated in the book, without the aid of any other undemonstrated axioms” (Grattan-Guinness 582). The *Principia* is notable for its immense size and for the fact that the assertion “ $1 + 1 = 2$ ” is not proven until page 362 of the text. Even after receiving funding from the Royal Society, Russell and Whitehead lost £50 each for their decade-long investigations, the equivalent of over US \$7000 today (Grattan-Guinness 385).

Though few would deny that the *Principia* was a very significant project in the history of mathematics, the end result ultimately possessed some flaws. Despite working on it for about a decade, Russell failed to completely

eliminate the problems of type theory, and many theorems in the *Principia* are proved using an axiom of infinity—that there exist an infinite number of objects. This axiom runs contrary to the finitary goals of Hilbert’s program, meaning the *Principia* failed to establish an axiomatic basis for mathematics in the way Hilbert demanded (Irvine, “*Principia Mathematica*”). Most importantly, though, the *Principia*, contrary to the intentions of its authors, provided the genesis for a proof that would establish the impossibility of Hilbert’s goal.

Part 4: Gödel

In 1931, at the age of 25, Kurt Gödel published what would later be known as his incompleteness theorems in a paper titled “On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems” (German: *Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme*) (Nagel and Newman 1). As indicated in the title, the proof involves the axioms and theorems of the *Principia*. “Undecidable” refers to the results of the incompleteness theorems, which state that there exist formulas within the *Principia* that are neither provable nor disprovable, and hence contradict Russell’s and Whitehead’s goal of establishing a base for all of mathematics, as shall be shown below.

Before getting into the structure of the proof, it is essential to understand Gödel numbers, a phrase that Gödel himself did not use in his paper, but which was later used to refer to his unique concept. First, Gödel described a formal mathematical system based on the *Principia* but simplified (this system will from here on be referred to as PM). The use of Peano’s axioms serves only to simplify the proof and does not change the relevancy of the result to the unmodified PM (Heijenoort 599). This system can be deconstructed into precisely three elements: elementary signs, axioms, and theorems. Gödel then showed that each elementary sign, axiom, and theorem can be assigned a unique number—a

Gödel number (Nagel and Newman 68-69).

The elementary signs and axioms are assigned numbers—there are various, equally valid methods of assigning Gödel numbers (Nagel and Newman 69)—and the numbers for the theorems are derived from the Gödel numbers of every element of the theorem. To simply multiply the Gödel numbers of each element to create a single number is insufficient, for the resulting number would not be unique. A formula with a Gödel number of say, arbitrarily, 32, cannot be uniquely factored to derive the elements of the formula and, hence, its meanings. Instead, the Gödel numbers of each element are written as exponents of the prime numbers which are then multiplied together, where the Gödel number of the first element is assigned to the first prime number in order of increasing magnitude, the Gödel number of the second element to the second prime number, and so forth (Heijenoort 601). A simple example would be the formula $x=y$. Given that the Gödel numbers of x , $=$, and y , are 13, 5, and 17, respectively, the Gödel number for the formula as a whole is:

$2^{13} \cdot 3^5 \cdot 5^{17}$ Because 2, 3, and 5 are prime, we are assured that $2^{13} \cdot 3^5 \cdot 5^{17}$ is uniquely determined by the formula $x=y$.

By providing a method to assign to every formula of PM a numerical value, Gödel also provided a way of discussing the metamathematics of PM within PM itself. As PM is a formal system of number theory, it is not possible to discuss such concepts as “ a is the proof of b ” directly within PM. Such a statement belongs to metamathematics because it exists outside of PM. But once every formula within PM can be uniquely written as an integer—albeit sometimes an extremely large integer—it becomes possible to talk about metamathematical properties within the framework of number theory, since each formula of the system is arithmetically linked to the others via their Gödel numbers (Nagel and Newman 80-84).

Through a series of 46 definitions, Gödel then shows that the statement “ X is a provable formula” can be

expressed within PM itself. The formula within PM that means, metamathematically, that X is a provable formula is written as $\text{Bew}(x)$ —derived from the German word for “provable,” *beweisbar*—where x is the Gödel number of the formula X (Heijenoort 603-606). From there he demonstrates that it is possible to construct a formula $G = \neg\text{Bew}(g)$, where g is precisely the Gödel number of G itself, meaning that G , in metamathematical terms, states that G is not a provable formula within PM (Nagel and Newman 96-98). But this is a contradiction, for if G is true, then it is false, and if $\neg G$ is true, G must be true, both of which are impossible if PM is consistent. So, if PM is consistent, it must be incomplete. Further, Gödel shows that even if additional axioms are added to the system, such as “ G is true,” it is possible to construct another unprovable theorem, meaning that the incompleteness theorem is not unique to the system PM but holds for all formal mathematical systems. (Nagel and Newman 103). Note that Gödel’s proofs are reminiscent of the self-referencing dilemma of Russell’s paradox, and indeed they would present a paradox themselves if not for the conclusion that PM must be incomplete (Nagel and Newman 92-93).

This conclusion is generally referred to as Gödel’s first incompleteness theorem. His second incompleteness theorem, stated within the same paper as the first, states that the consistency of a formalized system cannot be proved within the system itself. The first incompleteness theorem rests on the assumption that PM is consistent: if PM is consistent, G is not a provable formula. So if it can be proven within PM that the system is consistent, this constitutes a proof within PM that G is unprovable. But G is the statement “ G is not a provable formula,” which means that G can be proved within PM. This is a contradiction, for the first incompleteness theorem states that G cannot be proved within the system. Hence, the consistency of PM cannot be proven with PM itself (Goldstein 183-184).

The incompleteness theorems do not show that a

proof of G or of the consistency of PM is absolutely impossible, but that it is impossible within the PM system. Gödel's proofs in no way discredit the possibility of constructing such proofs using metamathematics.

Part 5: Implications

The implications of Gödel's theorems spread throughout various areas of mathematics and science. Firstly, because they show that the consistency proof of arithmetic cannot exist using solely finitistic methods, Gödel's incompleteness theorems prove that Hilbert's program cannot be completed.

In his paper *Minds, Machines, and Gödel*, British philosopher John Lucas argues that the incompleteness theorems prove the impossibility of creating a computer capable of determining truths to the same extent as the human mind. Computers are like the formal system PM, restricted to a finite list of rules and processes, while the human mind, like metamathematics, is capable of processing information outside of the restrictions of the system (Goldstein 200).

Some interpret Gödel's theorems to prove that the mathematics, once thought to be the purest way of objectively understanding the universe, is necessarily inadequate, a conclusion that led author David Foster Wallace to christen Gödel the "Dark Prince" of mathematics (Wallace 284), and to state that "He is the devil, for math. After Gödel, the idea that mathematics was not just a language of God but a language we could decode to understand the universe and understand everything—that doesn't work any more. It's part of the great postmodern uncertainty that we live in" (Crain). Gödel himself, though, staunchly believed in the ability of humans to objectively understand the world through mathematics and fought the subjectivist interpretation of his theorems for the rest of his life (Goldstein 40).

The authors of *Gödel's Proof*, a detailed explanation of Gödel's method of proving his theorems often cited here,

argue that the incompleteness theorems do not mean that the desire to understand the world through mathematics is hopeless, but rather that it is merely limited in some ways and that the human mind has methods of contemplation and understanding that cannot be expressed purely through mathematics: “Gödel’s proof should not be construed as an invitation to despair or as an excuse for mystery-mongering ... It is an occasion, not for dejection, but for a renewed appreciation of the powers of creative reason” (Nagel and Newman 112-113).

Gödel died in 1978 from self-induced starvation due to intense paranoia about being poisoned, an ironically illogical death for one of the world’s most important logicians (Goldstein 250). If Gödel’s death is a reminder of how prone to error the human mind can be, then it is important to remember what Gödel’s theorems show: logic may be devoid of error, but the scope of the solutions logic provides will always be incomplete.

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to Charles William Lawless for providing me with books from the UNC Charlotte library and to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Inter-Library Loan department for providing books that were harder to locate. Thank you to my father, John Capps, for subsidizing the tuition fees for the mathematics thesis course. Thank you to Stephanie Haynes for drinking tea with me during stressful times and for being genuinely interested in my research. And especially thank you to Dr. Evan Wantland for taking me on as an advisee at the last minute, for responding to the long e-mails I send at two in the morning when I have been thinking too much and confusing myself, and for your unwavering support even as I feel like what I want to accomplish is impossible.



The Rhetoric and Realities of Amendment One: Analyzing The Campaign Surrounding North Carolina's Marriage Amendment

Abstract:

For decades, beginning in the 1970s, attempts at achieving marriage equality through litigation were viewed as disastrous failures. In recent years this trend has reversed, with the fight for marriage equality tallying victories in states across the country. Yet one state defies this emerging trend: in May of 2012, an overwhelming majority of North Carolinians passed Amendment One, adding a ban on same-sex marriage to the state's constitution, despite a statutory ban having existed since the mid-1990s. This essay explores a difference in the rhetoric of campaigners and the reality of the amendment's passing. I note a reluctance by campaigns for and against the amendment to mention gays and lesbians, despite the amendment's obvious nature as a ban on same-sex marriage. I demonstrate how a refusal by anti-amendment forces (pro-marriage equality) to acknowledge gays and lesbians in their campaigning was influenced by the social and political climate of North Carolina; they believed explicit mention of gays and lesbians would result in the amendment's passing, and possibly even swing voters to elect conservative candidates in upcoming elections. Ultimately, I argue this strategy was framed by animus towards gays and lesbians in North Carolina and betrayed the social, ethical, and economic realities of the amendment's passing.

Nathan A. Gower | History and Political Science



Nathan A. Gower graduated in 2013 with a B.A. in History & Political Science and Philosophy. He currently serves as the Annual Giving & Communications Intern with the Office of Advancement at Warren Wilson College. As an undergraduate, Nathan was primarily focused on the concept of homonormativity and the trend towards assimilation in contemporary queer politics. He intends to further his research at the graduate level beginning in the fall of 2014.

Introduction

On May 8, 2012, North Carolinians voted to amend their state's constitution to read: "Marriage between one man and one woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this state."¹ While same-sex marriage had never been recognized in the state of North Carolina—and was banned by general statute in 1995—Amendment One calcified traditional marriage in North Carolina by a substantial twenty-point margin of victory. On the night of its passing, MSNBC personality Rachel Maddow commented, "The focus [in North Carolina] is on a constitutional amendment to doubly, triply, quadruply ban gay marriage...even though it's already banned there."² Why, then, was a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage necessary?

Supporters of the amendment primarily argued the need to protect traditional marriage from activist judges who could easily strike down the general statute. Those opposing the amendment repeatedly pointed out that same-sex marriage had already been banned by general statute, and a constitutional amendment would have little immediate impact on gays and lesbians in the state. Rather, they argued, the ambiguous terminology of "domestic legal union" would strip protections from those outside the general statute's jurisdiction, such as cohabiting heterosexual couples or victims of domestic violence. Neither side seemed keen to include gays and lesbians in the conversation, despite Amendment One's obvious nature as a gay marriage bill.

Investigating this exclusion is a goal of this essay. I will argue the anti-amendment campaign strategy to frame Amendment One as anything but a gay marriage bill was deeply influenced by hostilities towards gays and lesbians. To be clear, I am not arguing the anti-amendment cam-

1 *North Carolina Constitution* (Art. 14, Sec. 6).

2 "The Rachel Maddow Show for May 8, 2012." *The Rachel Maddow Show on NBC News*.

paigned was comprised of bigots. Rather, I argue the campaign strategy of anti-amendment forces was shaped by the hostile social climate in which they operated. While both sides framed the amendment as legislation which would harm a wide array of non-married, non-LGBT people, I will argue Amendment One was little more than an entrenchment of pre-existing animus towards gays and lesbians in the state of North Carolina. To make this argument, a general history of the politics of same-sex marriage must first be provided. Thereafter, the politics—and politicking—of Amendment One’s legislative history and ballot placement will be analyzed. From there, an in-depth look at the campaigns both for and against the amendment will be presented, focusing primarily on the weeks leading up to election day and its immediate aftermath.

A Brief History of Same-Sex Marriage

In 1970, gay men Richard Baker and James McConnell filed for a marriage license in Minnesota’s Hennepin County District Court. They were denied licensure, but contested this decision through the entirety of the Minnesota judiciary. In 1971, the State of Minnesota’s Supreme Court delivered the final verdict in *Baker v. Nelson* that marriage shall be defined between a man and a woman, and that this ruling “does not offend the First, Eighth, Ninth, or Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.”³ This ruling sparked an ongoing, decades-long fight regarding the definition of marriage.

In 1993, roughly twenty years after *Baker v. Nelson*, proponents of same-sex marriage received their first victory—albeit a minor sample—when the Supreme Court of Hawaii (SCoH) ruled in *Baehr v. Miike* that denying the right to marry to same-sex couples may constitute discrimination on the basis of sex and may violate the state constitution’s equal protection clause.⁴ Holding sex as a “suspect

3 *Baker v. Nelson*, 291 Minn. 310 (1971).

4 *Baehr v. Lewin*, 74 Haw. 530, 852 P.2d 44 (1993) *Baehr v. Miike* was originally known as *Baehr v. Lewin*.

classification,” and citing what is known as “strict scrutiny,” the SCoH determined the denial of marriage licenses to same-sex couples to be unconstitutional unless the state can provide compelling state interests in upholding this policy.⁵ The case was remanded to the state’s trial courts for further action.

The SCoH’s initial 1993 ruling was significant for a number of reasons. *Baehr v Miike* began in 1990, when three same-sex couples in Hawaii were denied marriage licenses, and after a long and complicated history, ended in 1998 when voters in the state of Hawaii passed a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman. During this time period, gays and lesbians across the country became an increasingly prominent target of social policy. One study noted that between 1992 and 2002, a total of 3,439 gay rights bills and amendments were introduced, with 58.5 percent classified as progay and 41.5 percent classified as antigay.⁶ Of those bills classified as antigay, 79% were put to direct democracy contests, and of those measures, 70% passed.⁷ This study concluded that progay efforts are more successful when pushed through legislation and policymakers and that antigay policies are more successful through direct democratic voting. The study also noted a sharp increase in proposed antigay bills,

5 Ibid; In cases over the years, the Supreme Court has determined suspect classification as a categorizing criteria in judicial review, wherein it can be demonstrated that a group has historically been, or is likely to be, the subject of discrimination and prejudice based on an immutable trait. Strict scrutiny, the most exacting level of judicial scrutiny, is applied in such instances as to protect those who are politically powerless. The SCoH ruled the denial of marriage licenses to same-sex couples “to be unconstitutional [unless] the State of Hawaii, can show that (a) the statute’s sex-based classification is justified by compelling state interests and (b) the statute is narrowly drawn to avoid unnecessary abridgments of the applicant couples’ constitutional rights” (*Baehr v. Lewin*).

6 Donald P. Haider Markel, “Lose, Win, or Draw?: A Reexamination of Direct Democracy and Minority Rights,” *Political Research Quarterly* 60, No. 2 (2007): 5.

7 Ibid.

especially those defining marriage, between 1995 and 2000.⁸ The study attributes this rise in antigay social policy—and marriage policy specifically—to the 1993 ruling in *Baehr v. Miike*.

The mid-1990s also saw a national resurgence in social conservatism. In 1995, Republicans gained control of Congress for the first time since the 1950s. Most significant to this essay was the urgency with which social conservatives in this period sought to strike down same-sex marriage laws. During this 104th session of Congress, freshman representative Bob Barr (R-GA) penned and introduced H.R. 3396 to the House floor, which would come to be known as the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). This bill proposed to define marriage as “a legal union between one man and one woman,” barring federal recognition of same-sex marriage.⁹ Furthermore, DOMA expressed, “no State... shall be required to [recognize] a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other [States], or a right or claim arising from such relationship,” and that no state is required to recognize same-sex marriages performed outside their boundaries as valid.¹⁰ The bill passed overwhelmingly, with a 342-67 majority in the House and an 85-14 majority in the Senate.¹¹ On September 21, 1996, DOMA was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. Less than two months later, Hawaii Circuit Court Judge Kevin S.C. Chang ruled in *Baehr v. Miike* that the state of Hawaii had no compelling interest for banning same-sex marriage.

8 It is important to note that gays and lesbians had not yet been granted the rights of *Romer v. Evans* (1996) and *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003)—two of the most significant LGBT-protective Supreme Court decisions in American history. Socially, gays and lesbians did not enjoy the same level of visibility they do today: Ellen DeGeneres came out in 1997, Will and Grace premiered in 1998, Rosie O'Donnell came out in 2002, etc. 9 Pub.L. 104-199, 110 Stat. 2419, 1 U.S.C. § 7 and 28 U.S.C. § 1738C 10 Ibid.

11 H.R. 3396 (Defense of Marriage Act), U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 104th Congress - 2nd Session, Vote Number: 280, Sep. 10, 1996; Final Vote Results For Roll Call 316, Question: On Passage, Jul. 12, 1996.

The impulsion to protect traditional marriage after Baehr specifically, and the rise in conservative political power generally, set the stage for staggering victories for supporters of traditional marriage. Prior to DOMA's adoption in 1996, only seven states legally defined marriage as between a man and a woman. By 1998, that number more than quadrupled, with 33 states adopting laws banning same-sex marriages.¹² Most statutory "defense of marriage" acts in the United States, and all state-level constitutional amendments defining marriage, were adopted after Baehr v. Miike. One of those states was North Carolina.

Senate Bill 106, Senate Bill 514 and House Bill 777

In 1996, legislators amended the North Carolina General Statutes to read, in part: "a valid and sufficient marriage is created by the consent of a male and female person who may lawfully marry," and "marriages, whether created by common law, contracted, or performed outside of North Carolina, between individuals of the same gender are not valid in North Carolina."¹³ These laws went unchallenged for years, yet Republican lawmakers in North Carolina spent over a decade trying to push a constitutional marriage amendment through the legislature, citing the need to protect traditional marriage from activist judges.¹⁴ Throughout its history, only one group challenged North Carolina's marriage laws. On December 2011—well after Amendment One made the ballot—Guilford County Register of Deeds Jeff Thigpen, along with several Greensboro ministers and same-sex couples, filed a lawsuit against North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper.¹⁵ The litigation's essential

12 National Conference of State Legislatures, "State Laws Limiting Marriage to Opposite-Sex Couples." Accessed May 15, 2012.

13 N.C. Gen. Statutes ch. 51, § 1 and 1.2.

14 "Sen. Jim Forrester on his Gay Marriage Amendment Bill." *North Carolina Now*, Sep. 13, 2011.

15 Morgan Josey Glover, "Local Elected Official Joins Lawsuit Over State Marriage License Requirements," *Greensboro News and Record*, December 13, 2011.

purpose was to challenge the constitutionality of North Carolina's marriage statutes in an effort to decouple the religious institution of marriage from state control and establish legally recognized same-sex unions in North Carolina.¹⁶

Superior Court Judge Judson DeRamus dismissed the case on March 30, 2012, saying it violated religious liberties.¹⁷ It seems evident that this need to protect traditional marriage from activist judges was little more than political rhetoric, given there had been only one challenge in over fifteen years. Nevertheless, Republican lawmakers persisted in trying to amend the state's constitution to protect traditional marriage.

In 2011, Republicans' chances of passing a marriage amendment in North Carolina increased when they took control of the General Assembly for the first time in over a century.¹⁸ As one law professor pointed out, "this bill's been twelve years in the making...but it's now made possible because Republicans control the legislature."¹⁹ A total of three defense of marriage bills would be pushed through this newly conservative legislature, with six of the eight combined sponsors being Republicans. Senate Bill (S.B.) 106 was filed on February 22, 2011, with its House equiva-

16 Thigpen et al v. Cooper, 12-582 (2011); Thigpen, et al primarily argued, "Adult and competent people will make their own living arrangements, treating them as marriages or civil unions, whether or not the state recognizes them, tries to prohibit them, or tries to compel them.... It is morally and constitutionally repugnant to administer a system which required all persons entering into marriage to have licenses that will be recorded; to obligate pastors, priests, and rabbis who are performing marriage ceremonies to perform them pursuant to licenses issued by the state; and to require either the religious or civil solemnization of marriages."

17 Staff Report, "Suit Challenging N.C. Marriage Laws Tossed Out." *Greensboro News & Record*, April 2, 2011.

18 Republicans last had control of both branches of the General Assembly in 1896; Andy Birkey, "North Carolina Legislators to Propose Constitutional Amendment Banning Same-Sex Marriage," *The American Independent*, August 26, 2011.

19 CNN Wire Staff, "North Carolina passes same-sex marriage ban, CNN projects," CNN Tue May 8, 2012.

lent, House Bill (H.B.) 777 filed on April 6, 2011. S.B. 514, originally a “Nutrient Management Plan,” was filed in the Senate on April 5, 2011.²⁰ Through a series of revisions, S.B. 514 would eventually read as a defense of marriage act. While none of the three bills passed during the spring session, S.B. 514 and H.B. 777 resurfaced in the fall.

On September 12, 2011, S.B. 514 was debated for three hours on the Senate floor. The language of pro-amendment legislators was unabashedly religious. One state legislator argued that same-sex marriage would draw the ire of God and bring about the downfall of civil society:²¹

By the biblical definition, usurping the authority of God in marriage is a blasphemy. It should come as no surprise that incorporating blasphemy into the institution of marriage has led to a massive increase in divorce, broken homes and single parent families today. Government recognition of marriage has led to a family receiving more child welfare benefits upon divorce or if never married, thus fracturing families and leading to an epidemic of single mothers amongst the poor and thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

Senator James Forrester (R-NC41), a primary sponsor of one of the other defense of marriage acts, argued the need to defend democracy when offering the Senate the following ultimatum: “Trust our state’s six million voters to make the decision, or leave this to activist judges to define [marriage].”²² Forrester made his stance on marriage clear, adding, “[The] definition of marriage is under attack nationwide,” and, “[this] amendment is about preservation,

20 Defense of Marriage, Senate Bill 514, S.L. 2011-409 (2011).

21 “Rep. Glen Bradley Speaks on NC Gay Marriage Bill on NC House Floor,” *North Carolina Now*, Sep. 12, 2011.

22 “Sen. Jim Forrester on his Gay Marriage Amendment Bill,” *North Carolina Now*, Sept 13, 2011.

not discrimination. It will help preserve the right of parents to transmit core values about sex, gender and family to their children.”²³ Senator Buck Newton (R-NC11) joined Forrester and other defenders of traditional marriage, citing the need to protect marriage from activist judges and a Democratically controlled legislature:²⁴

If [Democrats] were in control, they would repeal the law we currently have on books. They would favor homosexual marriage....I believe that the reason why we have a Constitution....is also to protect us from the tyranny of this legislature. It is to protect us from judicial fiat from judges somewhere else, politically appointed that decide they're going to impose their will on society about what a marriage shall be....It is to let the people decide they are not gonna have some unelected judge decide that today, after two-thousand years, we're going to redefine what a marriage is....It is a crying shame, I wish that this did not have to be in the Constitution to protect what we all know is a marriage.... Our society has turned itself on its head that we have so many crazy judges and so many crazy lawyers....that would challenge this fundamental bedrock of our society and that's what this amendment is about.

The strategy of legislators on the pro-amendment side was clear: “to get people emotionally involved in the issue,” as a way to draw them to the polls.²⁵ One commentator went a step further, saying the amendment “is about [instilling]

23 Ibid.

24 “Sen Buck Newton Debates NC Gay Marriage Amendment Bill & Effort,” *North Carolina Now*,” Sep. 13, 2011.

25 “David McLennan (William Peace Univ) Analyzes NC Gay Marriage Amendment,” *North Carolina Now*, Sep. 15, 2011.

fear.”²⁶ Democrats took jabs at the Republicans for failing to tackle economic issues, such as the state’s “10.1% unemployment [rate, and cuts of] almost four-hundred million dollars to the Health and Human Services budget.”²⁷ House Majority Leader Rep. Paul Stam (R-NC37) argued the state is not financially equipped to handle same-sex marriages, citing increased divorce rates and expensive custody battles as evidence.²⁸ For the entirety of the three-hour floor debate, any mention of gays and lesbians was rare.

In the end, S.B. 514 passed comfortably, with the House voting 75-42 in favor on September 12, 2011, and the Senate following suit the next day with a 30-16 vote.²⁹ While the Senate result was never in question, with Republicans controlling a filibuster-proof majority, the House vote is a fascinating display of politics. In the House, Republicans controlled only sixty-eight seats, with seventy-two needed to result in a two-thirds majority. House Democrats knew the amendment would draw social conservatives to the polls in large numbers and, “people who normally would not be primary voters [would] get revved up.”³⁰ In what some speculate was an effort to keep the amendment off the November ballot, where a high turnout of social conservatives would harm President Obama’s chances of reelection, ten House Democrats voted in favor of S.B. 514. In return, the ballot initiative was pushed up to the May primary. These fears were not entirely ungrounded, as President Obama was scheduled to visit the left-leaning city of Asheville the week before the primary election, but cancelled days prior in what some viewed as an effort to distance himself from making a public stance on gay marriage.³¹

26 Ibid.

27 “NC Now Coverage of Gay Marriage Referendum Bill,” *North Carolina Now*, Sep. 15, 2011.

28 Lynn Boner, “N.C. House OKs Amendment Banning Gay Marriage,” *The News and Observer*, Sep. 13, 2011.

29 Defense of Marriage, Senate Bill 514, S.L. 2011-409 (2011).

30 “NC Now Coverage of Gay Marriage Referendum Bill.”

31 John Frank, “President Barack Obama Planned to Visit North Caro-

What should be clear thus far is that legislators—either for or against—almost entirely excluded gays and lesbians from their arguments surrounding the proposed amendment. The debates were extremely impersonal—in the literal sense—and, more often than not, both sides of the aisle danced around actually saying the words “gay,” “lesbian,” “homosexuality,” etc.; Democrats focused on the economy, Republicans focused on protecting the religious institution of marriage. This bipartisan reluctance to speak about sexual identities reemerged as an explicit strategy of the campaigns both for and against the amendment.

Framing the Campaign

With Amendment One’s spot on the primary ballot secured, it became increasingly clear that the amendment would be the site of contestation come May, and both sides began a tireless campaign to win the election. Though a handful of state-level representatives’ seats were on the ballot, most were projected to be easy reelection bids. In addition, Mitt Romney had all but secured the Republican Party’s nomination in April, more than a month before the North Carolina primary.

Public Opinion

When DOMA passed in 1995, public support for same-sex marriage was less than thirty percent.³² By the turn of the century, support for marriage equality was still well below the fifty percent mark.³³ Not until recently did national polls reveal a shift in public opinion in favor of same-sex marriage.³⁴ Eerily, Gallup released only the second-ever poll showing a majority of American support for same-sex marriage on the same day as North Caro-

lina on Election Day,” *The News and Observer*, May 8, 2012.

32 Frank Newport, “For First Time, Majority of Americans Favor Legal Gay Marriage,” *Gallup*, May 20, 2011.

33 Ibid.

34 Frank Newport, “Half of Americans Support Same-Sex Marriage, Democrats and Independents in Favor; Republicans Opposed,” *Gallup*, May 8, 2012.

lina's primary election. While national support was on the rise, polls in North Carolina revealed a peculiar tension amongst voters. In their final press release before the election, Raleigh-based Public Policy Polling (PPP) argued, "North Carolinians are voting against their own beliefs [with] 53% of voters in the state [supporting] either gay marriage or civil unions," while support for the amendment led "by a 55.39% margin."³⁵ PPP added, "the reason for that disconnect is...only 46% of voters realize the proposal bans both gay marriage and civil unions. Those informed voters oppose the amendment by a 61.37% margin but there may not be enough time left to get the rest of the electorate up to speed."³⁶ Furthermore, PPP noted support for the amendment correlates directly with the percentage of voters who think gay marriage should be illegal. In short, PPP's data revealed a majority of North Carolinians support same-sex marriage or civil unions, but a storm of misinformation and confusion leading up to election day resulted in their voting against these beliefs.³⁷ It is worth investigating this tension further.

Understanding the Campaign: Who Voted and Why

On May 8, 2012, North Carolina voters turned out in record numbers to take a stance on Amendment One. The results were drawn along tangible demographic divides, with one campaign consultant arguing, "the urban-rural divide is going to be very apparent...You're going to see this generational divide, too."³⁸ Of North Carolina's one hundred counties, eight voted against the amendment. These counties are historically urban, Democratic areas, and house the majority of North Carolina's colleges and universities.³⁹ Additionally, voter turnout per capita was highest

35 "Final NC Primary Poll," Public Policy Polling, May 6, 2012.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Steve Lyttle, "Marriage Amendment Approved by N.C. Voters," *Charlotte Observer*, May 8, 2012.

39 The eight counties which voted against Amendment One were Buncombe, Watauga, Mecklenburg, Chatham, Wake, Durham, Orange and

in the extremely red and extremely blue counties. Orange County, home to UNC Chapel Hill and a disproportionate number of Democratic college students, had one of the highest voter turnouts, with 44% of registered voters casting a ballot—10% higher than the statewide average.⁴⁰ Even higher, with 50%, was rural Wilkes County, who voted for the amendment by an 83-17% margin. In comparison, that same county gave presidential hopeful Mitt Romney 69% of their vote. As one journalist observed, the amendment “has spurred grassroots action throughout the state [and] has also revealed generational and urban-rural divisions.”⁴¹

This generational divide was confirmed by a February 2012 poll conducted by Elon University which revealed “opposition to any legal recognition for same-sex couples rises with age.”⁴² State House Speaker Thom Tillis (R), an amendment supporter, told a group at North Carolina State University, “It’s a generational issue,” adding, “if it passes, I think it will be repealed within 20 years.”⁴³ The Elon poll also “found that 44.5 percent of people 18 to 34 years old supported full marriage rights for same-sex couples, while 23.7 percent of people 55 and older did.”⁴⁴ Bearing this in mind, the average age of voters at the end of early voting was 59. Additionally, “voters in counties at least 75 percent rural had a slight turnout edge, with 5.9 percent voting early, versus 5.7 percent in urban counties.”⁴⁵ This high turnout of older, rural voters during the early voting period was one indication that the amendment was likely to pass.

This rural-urban divide was also evident in the

Dare counties, “Election Results State of North Carolina | May 8, 2012,” North Carolina State Board of Elections.

40 Lytle, “Marriage Amendment Approved by N.C. Voters.”

41 Lynn Bonner, et al., “Amendment on Gay Marriage Divides Young and Old, Rural and Urban,” *Charlotte News and Observer*, May 06, 2012.

42 Ibid.

43 Emery Dalesio, “NC Votes on Constitutional Ban on Gay Marriage,” *Associated Press*, May 8, 2012.

44 Ibid.

45 Bonner, et al., “Amendment on Gay Marriage Divides Young and Old, Rural and Urban.”

actions of some county officials. On May 1, 2012, a week prior to the primary election, the Charlotte-based Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners voted 5-4 to adopt a resolution opposing the marriage amendment.⁴⁶ The vote was split along party lines, with Democrats supporting and Republicans opposing the resolution. Implicit in the remarks of Commission Chair Harold Cogdell (D) was the notion that residents of Mecklenburg County support same-sex marriage: “[I am] concerned that our silence on this issue sends a message to the rest of the state, nation and the international community about the values embraced by our community that I do not believe represents the philosophy of a majority of Mecklenburg County residents.”⁴⁷ Cogdell added that the amendment went against the efforts of business and city employees, who in 2009 voted to extend health benefits to same-sex domestic partnerships. Commissioner Bill James (R) replied that same-sex marriage is a sin and promotes “perversity, not diversity.”⁴⁸ Similar resolutions, either for or against the amendment, would be made in accordance with this rural-urban divide.

The Role of Religion

Religious institutions played a key role in the grassroots mobilization of Amendment One’s supporters. Reverend Mark Harris, president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, said “The involvement of the local churches across this state was absolutely the turning point [of the campaign].”⁴⁹ Undeniably, religious North Carolinians were the largest organized group on either side of the fight to define marriage. In December of 2011, “a group of religious and advocacy organizations...announced the for-

46 Carmen Cusido, “Mecklenburg Board Votes, 5-4, to Oppose Marriage Amendment,” *Charlotte News and Observer*, May 2, 2012.

47 April Bethea, “Mecklenburg Commissioners Debate Resolution Opposing Marriage Amendment, Commission Chair Wants Peers to Vote; GOP Leader Says No,” *Charlotte News and Observer*, April 13, 2012.

48 Ibid.

49 Lynn Bonner and Jay Price, “N.C. to Add Marriage Amendment to Its Constitution,” *Charlotte News and Observer*, May 9, 2012.

mation of Vote for Marriage N.C. to spearhead the campaign supporting the marriage amendment.”⁵⁰ Vote For Marriage N.C.’s first campaign contribution came from the faith-based N.C. Values Coalition, which was instrumental in the fight to get the amendment approved in the state legislature.⁵¹ Additionally, the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), one of the largest faith-based political organizations in the country, gave \$450,000 to the pro-amendment campaign.⁵² This turned out to be nearly half of the campaign’s final fundraising effort. Throughout the campaign, Vote For Marriage N.C. utilized the church to grow their base and spread their message.

Famed evangelical pastor and North Carolina resident Billy Graham—whose age and health limits public remarks—furthered this attempt to draw religious social conservatives to the polls by buying full-page pro-amendment ads in North Carolina’s fourteen largest newspapers. In a statement on his website, Graham argued, “The Bible is clear—God’s definition of marriage is between a man and a woman. I want to urge my fellow North Carolinians to vote for the marriage amendment.”⁵³ Around the same time, over five hundred people representing two-thousand churches met at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, with Amendment One a constant through-

50 John Frank and Craig Jarvis, “Dome: Anti-Gay Marriage Forces are Marshaling,” Dec. 02, 2011.

51 Ibid; 3500 self-identified Christians rallied at the state house in May of 2011, in an effort to push the marriage amendment through the legislature, where “a group of girls played patriotic music on their violins, rally-goers waved American flags of all sizes, tea party activists assembled their folding chairs, and young couples stood with Bibles in hand,” Eden Stiffman and Lyn Bonner, “N.C. Gay Marriage Foes Rally for Constitutional Ban,” *The Miami Herald*, originally printed in *The News and Observer*, May 18, 2011.

52 Bonner and Price, “N.C. to Add Marriage Amendment to its Constitution;” the anti-amendment campaign received a \$500,000 contribution from the Human Rights Campaign and would raise a final total of \$2.3 million.

53 Martha Waggoner, “Billy Graham Backs NC Anti-Gay Marriage Amendment,” *USA Today*, May 2, 2012.

out the conference's itinerary.⁵⁴ Here, ministers from across the south argued it was their duty as Christians to protect the definition of marriage under God. One speaker, former state senator Jim Jacumin, urged attendees to "confront the devils who are arranged on the other side," adding that "restricting marriage to straight couples cannot, by definition, be discriminatory as long as marriage is defined as a man and a woman and same-sex couples are barred from marrying or entering into civil unions."⁵⁵ Other speakers continued to urge attendees to protect traditional marriage and campaign for the amendment.⁵⁶

The rhetoric of Amendment One's supporters clearly demonstrates some degree of animus towards gays and lesbians. Whether on the House floor or from the pulpit, supporters of the amendment repeatedly framed same-sex marriage, and by consequence homosexuality, as something sinful and wicked. The religious nature of these remarks is not accidental—churches and faith-based organizations proved a powerful and effective tool for mobilizing support for the amendment. By framing same-sex marriage as something which would result in the moral decay of society, religious institutions transformed the campaign in support of Amendment One from a political campaign to a moral obligation under God. The mobilization of this socially conservative voting bloc would pay massive dividends on election day.

On May 8, social conservatives and family values voters flocked to the polls in record-high numbers. The

54 Bob Geary, "Does the Religious Right Really Believe Equality Will Allow Us to Marry Ice Cream?" *Independent Weekly*, Apr. 04, 2012.

55 Ibid.

56 Daniel Heimbach, senior professor of Christian ethics at the seminary, argued, "If marriage is radically redefined as a way of just affirming loving feelings of attraction, then equality will require allowing people who love dogs to marry dogs. And people who love ice cream to marry ice cream." Tim Wilkins, a self-proclaimed former homosexual and member of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, told attendees, "Being gay can be changed the same as switching from pistachio to vanilla fudge."

Asheville Citizen-Times moderated a blog throughout the day, posting comments from voters on either side. Almost every supporter of the amendment cited some religious motivation for going to the polls. In Asheville, one voter defended her support of the amendment: “I have a strong Christian belief that marriage should be between a man and a woman.”⁵⁷ In nearby Black Mountain, voters explained, “The Bible says marriage should be between a man and a woman and that’s what our church believes in,” and that “marriage [should be] between a man and a woman. I feel sorry for the parents whose kids have been coerced into this (gay) lifestyle. Apparently, they’ve never read the Bible.”⁵⁸

One voter in the adjacent town of Swannanoa declared, “I’m a Christian and I believe in one man and one woman. It’s the only legal union there is in the sight of God and in the sight of the law.”⁵⁹ Attempts by the religious right to draw social conservatives to the polls were proving extremely successful. Paired with the high early-voter turnout in rural counties and amongst older voters, it was clear the amendment’s chance of passing were extremely high.

Shifting Conversation: Amendment One, Unmarried Couples and the Law

Anti-amendment forces understood how difficult it would be to defeat Amendment One at the ballot box. While the language of Amendment One clearly categorized the bill as pro-traditional, anti-gay marriage, opponents of the amendment knew it would be political suicide to frame the marriage amendment as such. In its mission statement, the anti-amendment coalition Protect All N.C. Families omitted gays and lesbians entirely, arguing instead that Amendment One “would ban legal recognition for all unmarried couples, strip protections and benefits from families across our state, hurt our business climate and

57 “Asheville election blog,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, May 9, 2012.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

economic development and put our children in danger.”⁶⁰ The exclusion of same-sex marriage here seemed to be intentional, and was a key strategy throughout the entirety of the anti-amendment campaign. Strategists understood the amendment could not be defeated with gays and lesbians as the central subject. Instead, Protect All N.C. Families used children, families, unmarried women, and seniors as preferred subjects on campaign-funded merchandise.

The anti-amendment campaign utilized the amendment’s broad language of “domestic legal union” as a way to avoid framing Amendment One as a same-sex marriage bill. Rather than discussing Amendment One as a ban on same-sex marriage, the anti-amendment campaign framed the amendment as a broad legislative sweep that would unnecessarily harm all unmarried couples. They argued the reach of Amendment One was not limited to just gays and lesbians, and reminded voters that a ban on same-sex marriage was already in effect. Put simply, the anti-amendment campaign argued there was no need to further enshrine traditional marriage, and if the legislation were to pass, Amendment One’s widely cast net of “domestic legal unions” would reach a number of unintended targets.

A study on the potential legal impact of Amendment One’s untested terminology of “domestic legal union” was drafted by several law professors in the state of North Carolina. They found:⁶¹

60 Protect All Families N.C.’s steering committee was comprised by the ACLU-NC, Equality NC, Faith in America, the Human Rights Campaign, Replacements Ltd., Self-Help and Southerners on New Ground (SONG).

61 Maxine Eichner et al., “Potential Legal Impact of the Proposed Same-Sex Marriage Amendment to the North Carolina Constitution,” UNC School of Law, June 6, 2011: 1.

In prohibiting state recognition or validation of “domestic legal unions,” the proposed Senate bill would introduce into the Constitution a phrase that has never been used in any prior statutory law in North Carolina, never been interpreted by its courts, and never been interpreted by courts in any other state. Taken as a whole, the bill’s language is sufficiently vague, and its scope significantly unclear, that it would enmesh our courts in years of litigation to untangle its appropriate meaning. Moreover the eventual result of judicial interpretation of the Amendment would be uncertain. It could, however, be interpreted to upend completely the very minimal legal rights, obligations, and protections now available to unmarried couples, whether same-sex or opposite-sex.

The study presented a number of possible consequences of the amendment’s passing, including courts being prevented from enforcing private agreements between unmarried couples; interfering with child custody and visitation rights; invalidating protections against domestic violence to members of unmarried couples; interfering with end-of-life arrangements executed by unmarried couples; invalidating domestic partnership benefits currently offered to same-sex and opposite-sex couples by local municipalities; and preventing courts from enforcing private employers’ agreements, such as health insurance to employees’ domestic partners.⁶² The anti-amendment campaign, then, was primarily concerned with communicating the potentially negative impact of Amendment One on all unmarried cohabiting couples.

A number of social workers and advocacy organizations also chimed in on the possible deleterious effects of Amendment One’s passing.⁶³ During an April 25 press

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ These organizations include the North Carolina Pediatric Society;

conference, Rep. Rick Glazier (D-NC45) argued, “It is irresponsible for amendment sponsors to try and deceive voters into passing an amendment with a false premise that would effectively live on in our founding legal document, the history of this state, possibly in perpetuity and cause so much harm to so many.”⁶⁴ Dr. Erica Wise, M.D., President-Elect of the North Carolina Psychological Association added, “children could be denied access to a parent’s health insurance, quality child care and early childhood education programs, custody agreements, domestic violence protections, and more,” supporting the argument of Protect All N.C. Families that Amendment One harms children and families. One attendee added, “This amendment will undermine existing family structures and the societal protections that many of our patients depend upon, such as adoption rights, access to healthcare and insurance, and domestic violence protections. This Amendment changes no North Carolina law affecting the LGBT community—but it affects many heterosexual couples in ways that are largely unpublicized.”⁶⁵ Tanya Roberts spoke for the National Association of Social Workers, North Carolina Chapter when arguing, “This amendment not only affects our profession but the clients we serve. Domestic violence protections against unmarried women will be affected as the Amendment redefines marriage. Children in unmarried homes will be affected from not having insurance coverage to visitation rights. Seniors lose privileges such as visiting loved ones in the hospital or making critical medical decisions on behalf of their loved ones.”⁶⁶ But efforts to inform voters of the alleged consequences of Amendment One were too late. As

North Carolina Psychological Association; North Carolina Psychiatric Association; National Association of Social Workers, North Carolina Chapter; and the Carolinas Chapter of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists; David Forbes, “NC Pediatric Society announces opposition to Amendment One,” *Mountain XPress*, April 26, 2012.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

one columnist wrote, “The final stretch was something of a race against time for the opponents of the bill to explain to North Carolinians just what they were voting for. And then time ran out.”⁶⁷

Recalling the final pre-election PPP poll, this attempt to inform voters on the possibility of Amendment One reaching a number of unintended targets was generally ineffective. One Asheville voter worried, “People [don’t] understand it. There’s a lot of confusion about it. It affects way more than gay marriage, like single parent families, like myself.”⁶⁸ One supporter of the amendment conceded, “If our legislators are so damn stupid that they wrote all these harms in there, then we need to get new legislators.”⁶⁹ One law professor argued, “If they vote against the amendment, nothing in the law changes...If it passes, it puts citizens at risk of domestic violence when the current law protects them.”⁷⁰ By the time the anti-amendment campaign’s message began to sink in, it was too late; it was impossible to achieve the drastic shift in public opinion necessary to win at the ballot box.

Election Day

Both campaigns intensified their efforts in the weeks leading up to election day, with Amendment One dominating airwaves, billboards, church marquees, national headlines, public polling, etc. As polls closed and results trickled in, it was clear the vote was going to be incredibly one-sided. A ten-point margin divided the vote for nearly the entirety of the initial counts, and a final tally would see the amendment pass with 61% voting in support of Amendment One.⁷¹ With this result, North Carolina became the

67 Amy Davidson, “Choosing Sides in North Carolina,” *The New Yorker*, May 9, 2012.

68 Asheville election blog,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*.

69 Bob Geary, “Equality NC’s Jen Jones and the campaign against Amendment,” *Independent Weekly*, April 04, 2012.

70 Martha Waggoner, “Marriage Amendment Backers, Foes Differ on Impact,” *The News and Record*, May 1, 2012.

71 Election Results State of North Carolina | May 8, 2012,” North Caro-

thirty-first state in the country—and the last in the south—to ban same sex marriage via constitutional amendment.

In celebration of the amendment's passing, Vote For Marriage N.C. held a "victory rally in Raleigh, where supporters ate pieces of a wedding cake topped by figures of a man and a woman."⁷² In a victory speech, Tami Fitzgerald, the organization's chairwoman, declared, "We are not anti-gay—we are pro-marriage...The point, the whole point is simply that you don't re-write the nature of God's design for marriage based on the demands of a group of adults."⁷³ Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, added, "Despite the relentless lawsuits and attempts to marginalize supporters of traditional marriage, a clear majority of the American people have not given up on standing in support of marriage...but instead, the evidence suggests they want to see it strengthened and preserved for future generations."⁷⁴ Those opposing the amendment had little to cheer for. One anti-amendment voter commented, "It writes discrimination into our state constitution and gives the majority the chance to vote against the minority."⁷⁵ Put simply, as is the case in every election, one side lost and one side won. But the side which lost hardly had a say in the matter.

Conclusion

The rhetoric of legislators during Amendment One's infancy made it clear the legislation was intended to prevent same-sex couples from marrying. Opponents of the measure knew that framing the amendment as a gay marriage bill would draw greater numbers of social conservatives to the polls. In an attempt to mitigate the impact of the socially conservative bloc, the anti-amendment campaign avoided explicit mentions of homosexuality in their communica-

lina State Board of Elections

72 Campbell Robertson, "North Carolina Voters Pass Same-Sex Marriage Ban," *New York Times*, May 8, 2012.

73 Ibid.

74 Faith Karimi, "North Carolina's Ban on Same-Sex Marriage Sparks Cheers, Jeers," CNN, May 9, 2012.

75 Ibid.

tions and campaigning. For a piece of legislation which undeniably sought to prohibit gays and lesbians from marrying, it was surprising to see the degree with which same-sex partners were excluded from the conversation. Speaking to a room of predominately gay men and women during a community law workshop, lawyer Meghan Burke argued, “Everyone in this room probably knows on a gut level what this amendment really was about. I think we all feel it in our daily lives and we know that our legislature proposed this referendum out of animus, out of bigotry, out of discrimination, hostile feelings towards out community.”⁷⁶ Burke, a lesbian herself, evoked the painful feelings of most gay men and women after the amendment’s passing. She added, “We cannot understate what [this loss] means...[but] as a legal issue...Amendment One changes nothing.”⁷⁷ Burke noted Amendment One changes nothing with regards to advance directives; healthcare power of attorney; living wills; titles to jointly held property; rights of survivorship; child custody and visitation arrangements; hospital visitation; domestic partner benefits; and domestic violence protective orders.⁷⁸ It became increasingly clear that attempts to frame Amendment One as anything but a gay marriage bill amounted to little more than political rhetoric and campaign strategy. Indeed, the second sentence of the amendment ought to have alleviated any fears that unmarried heterosexual couples would be barred legal protections as a result of its passing:⁷⁹

This section does not prohibit a private party from entering into contracts with another private party; nor does this section prohibit courts from adjudicating the rights of private parties pursuant to such contracts.

76 “What Amendment One Means for You and Your Family.mov,” Campaign for Southern Equality, Aug 14, 2011.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 NC Constitution Article 14 Sec. 6.

In short, it has become clear that the anti-amendment campaign's language of unintended consequences had little ground in reality: Amendment One would not, and has not, changed anything for unmarried heterosexual couples, victims of domestic violence, single parents, etc. Instead, Amendment One codified a level of anti-gay animus into the North Carolina constitution. Without the right to marry, gays and lesbians are largely restricted in access to medical benefits, federal tax breaks, co-signing of large loans, etc. Additionally, employers may terminate LGBT employees without penalty due to their sexual orientation. Essentially, Amendment One furthered the social, economic, and political disadvantages of gays and lesbians in the state of North Carolina.

The stated goal of this essay was to understand why legislators felt the need to ban same-sex marriage via constitutional amendment, despite a statutory ban having been in existence for two decades. The statutory ban went largely unchallenged for the entirety of its existence, and threats of "activist judges" overturning the law were greatly exaggerated. Fierce dialogue from the religious and conservative right concerning Amendment One suggests an explicit level of animus and bigotry towards gays and lesbians influenced the amendment's passing. The rhetoric of religious leaders, state officials, and socially conservative voters showed little compassion towards the marginalized status of gays and lesbians in the state of North Carolina.

Instead, they argued that same-sex marriage in the state would result in a reduction in the quality of life for all North Carolinians – gays and lesbians included. Furthermore, the grassroots mobilization of large numbers of religious voters and the utilization of extensive financial resources ensured the amendment's eventual passing. Yet the same decision to exclude homosexuality by progressives, leftists, civil libertarians, and all facets of the anti-amendment campaign reveal the pervasiveness of this animus was not simply drawn along party lines, but was more deeply

ingrained into the cultural and moral fabric of North Carolina. The record-high turnout, the hesitancy to include gays and lesbians in either campaign, and the large margin of victory for Amendment One reinforce this suggestion that social hostilities towards gays and lesbians were the dominant driving force behind the constitutional ban of same-sex marriage in North Carolina.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Melissa Estes Blair, whose patience and guidance throughout my time at Warren Wilson College was instrumental in my growth as both a scholar and a person. Secondly, to my editor and peer, Wes Tirey, whose keen eye polished my research into the product before you. Thirdly, to the professors at Warren Wilson College who forced me to interrogate my own presuppositions and gave me a more nuanced view of my place in the world. In no particular order: Sally Fischer, Jessica Mayock, John Casey, Matt Whitt, Chris Kypriotis, Michael Matin, and Phil Otterness. Fourthly, to my friends, colleagues, and the countless other victims of my late-night rants: our conversations over the years were an education in their own right. Finally, to my mother, for keeping me sane through the frustrations of intensive scholastic research.



Introduction

Migration of Metals from a Coal Ash Pond into the Sediment of the French Broad River

Abstract:

The coal-fired power plant located in Skyland, NC, stores coal combustion residues (CCRs) in unlined, uncapped settling ponds next to the French Broad River. Previous research has shown that CCRs contain high levels of heavy metals. Further, elevated metal concentrations have been found in the French Broad River near the pond discharge sites. This study examined the possible further migration of these metals along a 3 km stretch of the river. Metals in river sediments were extracted with aqua regia and analyzed by ICP-OES. Trends in concentration of As, Pb, Cr, Cu, and Zn were studied as a function of distance downstream of the power plant and reported both as overall concentrations in the sediment, as well as corrected for the amount of organic matter present. The results of this study indicate that heavy metal concentration in sediment did not significantly increase downstream of the power plant (for $p < 0.05$). No concentrations exceeded EPA Ecological Risk Assessment Freshwater Sediment Screening Benchmarks.

Amelia Snyder | Environmental Studies and Chemistry



Amelia Snyder was raised in the hills of West Virginia, where her interest in the environment began at an early age. She grew up kayaking and swimming in the Cheat River, as well as volunteering with a local nonprofit that worked to preserve and protect this river. At Warren Wilson, Amelia studied Chemistry and Environmental Chemistry, graduating with honors in both, and minored in Mathematics and Spanish. Her interests perfectly complemented her research, in which she measured the concentration of met-

als in the sediment of the French Broad River near a coal-fired power plant. After graduation, Amelia joined the Peace Corps and is presently teaching high school chemistry in Foya, Liberia. When she returns, she plans to attend graduate school to pursue her studies in Environmental Chemistry.

The process of coal combustion, which supplies around half of North Carolina's electricity, produces several waste products, collectively known as coal combustion residuals (CCRs) (EIA, 2012). CCRs, which are frequently referred to as coal ash, include fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, and flue gas desulfurization gypsum (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2012). Around 130 million tons of CCRs are produced in the United States annually (Chatterjee, 2009).

Approximately one third of these CCRs are disposed of in settling ponds, in which CCRs are mixed with water and allowed to settle (Chatterjee, 2009). These CCR settling ponds introduce pollutants to the environment in two different ways. First, effluent water is drained from the top of these ponds and deposited in nearby rivers and streams. Additionally, because many of these ponds are unlined, contaminants are able to leach into the groundwater, which eventually also flows into nearby streams and rivers. The EPA has identified unlined CCR storage ponds as the most hazardous way to store CCRs.

Coal naturally contains a wide variety of metals, and, when burned, these elements become much more concentrated in CCRs. A small selection of the metals that have been shown to be present in CCRs includes arsenic, chromium, lead, iron, copper, selenium, and cadmium (Ruhl et al., 2012; Ribeiro et al., 2011). These metals can become anywhere from 2-30 times more concentrated during coal combustion, depending on the metal of interest (Patra et al. 2012).

High levels of various metals give CCRs the potential to have serious health implications for the environment, as well as for humans or other organisms that come into contact with these pollutants. Various animals that were observed breeding near these coal ash ponds have shown significant heavy metal accumulation in their tissues. Heavy metal accumulations will likely lead to behavioral, physiological, and developmental abnormalities in these animals

(Chatterjee, 2009). Deformities in fish, including an extended lower jaw and spinal curvature, have also been noted in bodies of water near settling ponds due to elevated metal concentrations (Ruhl et al., 2012). Additionally, ground and surface water contamination with these metals could potentially lead to human health consequences.

A previous study assessed the environmental impact of these CCR settling ponds in North Carolina. CCR settling pond outfalls were enriched with many constituents compared to upstream waters. The Skyland power plant, a 376 megawatt coal-fired power plant along the French Broad River that stores CCRs in unlined, uncapped wet coal ash ponds on-site, was the focus of this study. During the summer of 2011, this study documented that As, Se, Sb, Cd, and Tl concentrations in the CCR settling pond effluent exceed various human and aquatic life toxicity benchmarks. Additionally, several elements showed increased concentration in downstream water relative to upstream water, as well as relative to concentrations in a reference lake that had no connection to coal plant discharge (Ruhl et al., 2012). While efforts have been made to reduce metal concentrations in power plant discharges, these data indicate that wastewater treatment is currently insufficient.

This study aimed to assess the degree to which these metals were migrating away from the coal ash ponds by measuring their concentration in the sediment of the French Broad River, which flows past the Skyland Power Plant. Sediments were chosen as the focus due to the long-term effects that sediment pollution can have. Sediments are able to act as both a sink for, and source of, contaminants. When metals dissolved in CCR settling pond water pass through sediment, some of them become adsorbed onto the sediment surface, temporarily decreasing the effects of this pollution. However, these metals are not permanently stored, and as environmental conditions fluctuate, these metals may be released and become dissolved in the water again, making the sediment a new source of pollutants. Be-

cause of this behavior, sediment pollution can lead to long-term environmental consequences. Sediment remediation is a difficult and expensive process, and natural recovery time can potentially take up to hundreds of years (Stiglianai, 1991). For these reasons, sediment pollution is important to monitor, and preventative measures must be taken to avoid or decrease the potential long-term consequences.

This study focused on five metals that are frequently found in CCRs: arsenic, chromium, lead, iron, and copper. Arsenic, lead, and chromium were measured due to their detrimental effects on human health and their common presence in coal ash. Arsenic, a known carcinogen capable of bioaccumulation, can result in various skin problems, increased mortality, lowered brain function, and even death when consumed in high enough concentration. Lead has been noted as a possible carcinogen that can also lead to decreased nervous system performance, weakness, increased blood pressure, as well as a number of other health problems. Chromium exists in two different forms: chromium (III), as well as the much more toxic form, chromium (VI). While chromium (III) does not pose any significant health concerns at expected levels, chromium (VI) is a known carcinogen that can also lead to ulcers of the stomach, small intestine, or skin, as well as cause anemia (ATSDR, 2013). Copper and iron, which are both essential nutrients and must be incorporated into the human diet, also have the potential to cause adverse health effects if present at high enough concentrations. However, the primary reason that copper and iron were measured was because they were expected to be present in fairly high concentration, allowing for analysis even if the more toxic metals were below detection limits.

In addition to measuring metal concentration in the river sediment, a correction for organic matter was also applied. A previous study showed a positive correlation between metal concentrations in sediment and organic matter concentration, suggesting that heavy metals adsorb onto or-

ganic matter more strongly than the inorganic components of sediment. Different metals showed different correlation coefficients with organic matter concentrations; however, all trends appeared to be linear (Marcovecchio and Ferrer, 2005). In order to decrease variation in metal concentration due to variation in organic matter concentration, all metal concentrations were expressed not only as a proportion of total sediment mass, but also as a proportion of organic matter mass.

All heavy metal concentrations were compared to the EPA Ecological Risk Assessment Freshwater Sediment Screening Benchmarks (2013) to determine if current levels posed significant ecological risk. Concentrations of these five metals were compared between sediment samples collected upstream of any coal ash pond effluents or major groundwater inputs and sediment samples collected at or below these sources of pollutants.

Methods

Concentrated trace grade nitric acid and trace grade hydrochloric acid were purchased from Spectrum Chemical Corps. Hydrogen peroxide (30% v/v) was purchased from Sigma-Aldrich. Fe, Pb, and As standard solutions were purchased from Acros Organics, Inorganic Ventures, and J. T. Baker, respectively. Cu and Cr standard solutions were both purchased from Fisher Scientific.

All glassware was rinsed with concentrated HCl, followed by deionized water before use. Sediment samples were collected in 50 mL polypropylene centrifuge tubes purchased from VWR. These tubes were acid rinsed with ~10% HCl, followed by deionized water, before use.

Sediment samples were collected approximately 350 m apart, along a 3000 m stretch of the French Broad River. Progress Energy is located approximately halfway down this stretch of river on the right-hand shore. An aerial view of this river stretch can be seen in Figure 1; GPS locations and distances downstream can also be seen in Table 1. The

Auspex

French Broad is a north-flowing river, so the power plant and coal ash ponds can be seen on the right side of the figure. Grab samples of surface sediment were collected within a meter from the shore, at a depth of about a half-meter below the surface of the water on both riverbanks. These samples were stored four days in a refrigerator before analysis.

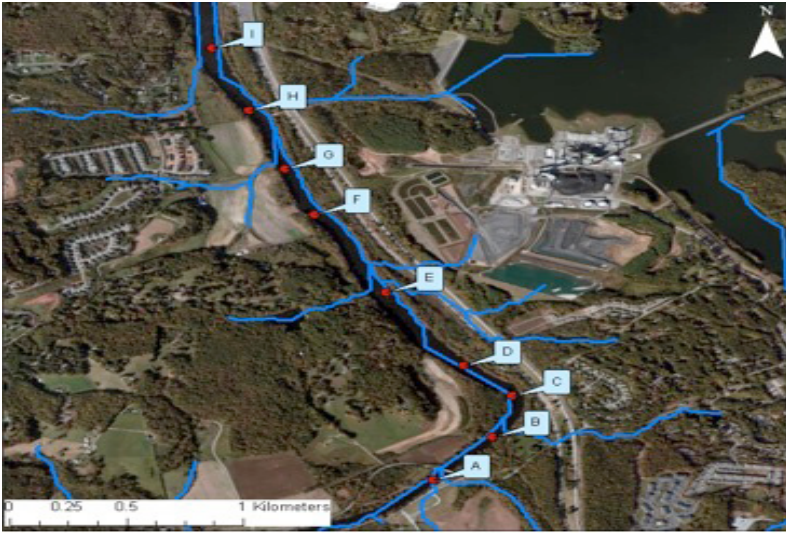


Figure 1. Study site on the French Broad River, with sampling locations and major groundwater inputs marked.

Table 1. Sample site locations with their respective distances downstream. Negative distances downstream indicate a distance upstream of the power plant.

Site	Latitude	Longitude	Cumulative Distance Downstream (km)	Distance Downstream from Power Plant (km)
A	35.45466	-82.54774	0.00	-1.32
B	35.45694	-82.54544	0.33	-0.99
C	35.45906	-82.54466	0.57	-0.75
D	35.46062	-82.54655	0.82	-0.50
E	35.46445	-82.54955	1.32	0.00
F	35.46850	-82.55231	1.84	0.51
G	35.47084	-82.55344	2.12	0.79
H	35.47390	-82.55482	2.48	1.16
I	35.47714	-82.55626	2.86	1.54

Sediment samples were dried at a temperature of 105°C to a constant mass. Small samples (~1g) were placed in 50 mL beakers and the mass was recorded. Organic matter content was determined by loss on ignition (LOI). Samples were heated to 550°C for 210 minutes, and the difference in mass was used to determine the % composition of organic matter in each sample.

Soil samples were then prepared for ICP-OES by acid digestion. Soil digestion methods were adapted from EPA Method 3050B (1996). A 10 mL aliquot of 1:1 HNO₃ was added to each soil sample, and each beaker was covered with a watch glass. These samples were heated to 95 ± 5 °C and refluxed for 10 minutes. Samples were cooled, 5 mL of concentrated nitric acid was added, and the samples were refluxed again for 30 minutes. Samples continued to be heated at this temperature until the volume was approximately 5 mL.

These 5 mL samples were then cooled, and 2 mL of water and 3 mL of 30% v/v H₂O₂ were added to each sample to remove any remaining organic matter. These samples were heated until effervescence subsided and vol-

ume was reduced to 5 mL once again. A 10 mL aliquot of concentrated HCl was added to each sample. These samples were refluxed for 15 minutes and then allowed to heat until the volume was reduced to 5 mL.

Samples were cooled, diluted to 100 mL, and filtered with 0.2 μm sterile syringe filters purchased from VWR for ICP-OES analysis. Blanks were prepared by following all steps of the acid digestion; however, no sediment was added. A series of standards containing each of the measured metals for calibrations was prepared.

A Perkin Elmer Optima 3100 XL ICP-OES was used to measure the concentrations of As, Cr, Cu, Pb, and Fe in each sample. The flow rate was set to 0.8 mL/min and background pressure was negligible. Detection wavelengths for each metal are summarized in Table 2, below.

Table 2. ICP-OES detection wavelengths.

Element	Wavelength (nm)
As	188.979
Cr	267.716
Cu	327.393
Pb	220.353
Fe	238.204

ICP measurements were performed as follows: blanks, all standards, West bank samples (27 samples), blanks, all standards, East bank samples (27 samples), blanks, all standards. Metal recoveries are assumed to be similar to previous values found, listed below in Table 3.

Table 3. Percent metal recovery from previous research.

*EPA 1996

**Hagedorn 2008

Metal	% Recovery
As*	100
Cr*	97
Cu*	94
Pb*	91
Fe**	123

Detection limits were defined as the upper 95% confidence interval limit for three blanks, each of which was measured in triplicate as seen in Table 4. Detection limits are listed for both the measured solutions as well as estimated concentrations in sediment, assuming exactly one g of sediment was used. Iron and lead concentrations were much more elevated in one of the blanks, compared to the other two. This high concentration led to a higher average reading and standard deviation, both of which led to the high calculated detection limits.

Table 4. Detection limits for all of the metals in solution, as well as an estimated concentration for 1 g of sediment.

Medium	As (ppm)	Cr (ppm)	Cu (ppm)	Pb (ppm)	Fe (ppm)
In solution	0.04	0.03	0.06	2	2
Estimated for 1 g Soil	4	3	6	200	200

Emission intensity of each metal was recorded in triplicate for every sample. Emission intensity of standards was recorded at the beginning and end of each ICP run, and the mean intensity was used to create calibration curves. No significant drift in emission intensity was noted. These calibration curves are included, along with calibration methods, in Appendix I.

Results

Arsenic and lead concentrations were below detection limits in all samples. For samples in which iron, copper, or chromium had a measurement below the detection limit, concentration was assumed to be halfway between zero and the detection limit so that they could be averaged with other samples from the same location.

Concentrations of Cr, Cu, and Fe in the soil (ng metal/g soil) on each side of the river can be seen in Figures 2-4. The power plant and coal ash ponds are located on the east bank of the river. The concentrations of these metals are plotted as a function of distance downstream from site A. Major groundwater inputs for the coal ash ponds come in very close to site E, as can be seen above in Figure 1.

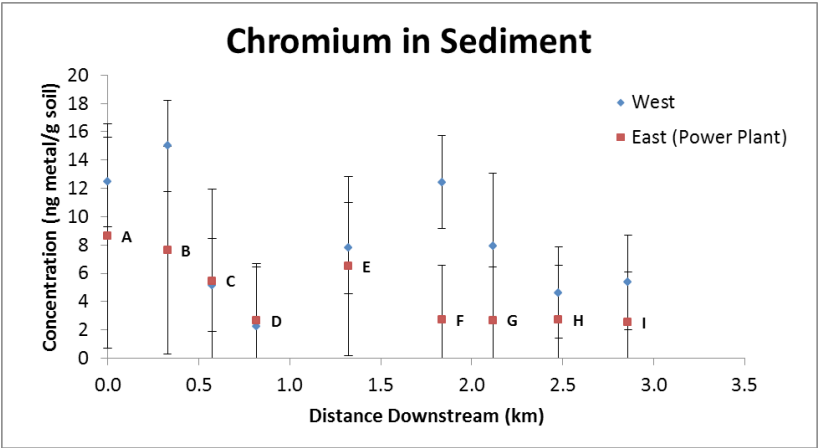


Figure 2. Chromium concentration is river sediment as a function of distance downstream. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

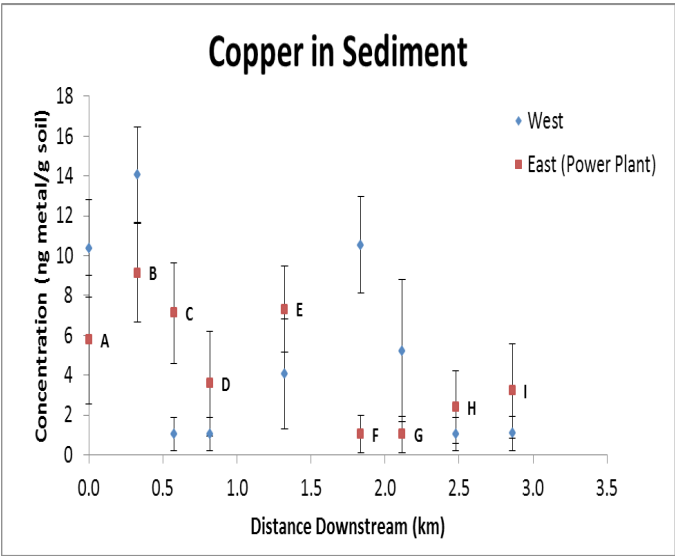


Figure 3. Copper concentration is river sediment as a function of distance downstream. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

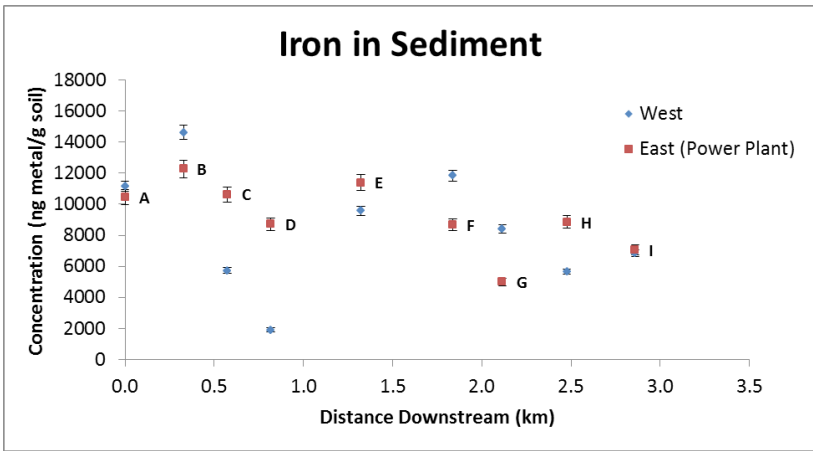


Figure 4. Iron concentration in river sediment as a function of distance downstream. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Metal concentrations have been shown to have a positive correlation with organic matter content of soils because organic matter is able to absorb metal ions more strongly than soils with low organic matter content (Marcovecchio and Ferrer 2005). Therefore, concentrations of Cr, Cu, and Fe have also been normalized for organic matter content (ng metal/g organic matter) in Figures 5-7.

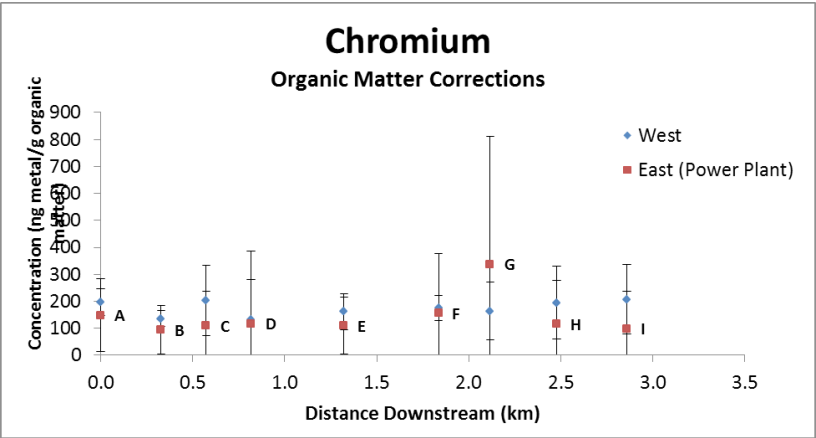


Figure 5. Chromium concentration in river sediment, normalized for organic matter content, as a function of distance downstream. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

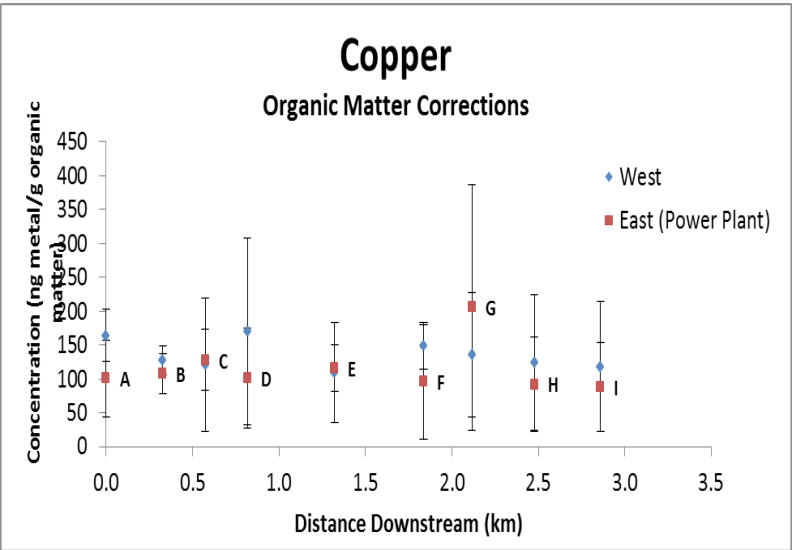


Figure 6. Copper concentration in river sediment, normalized for organic matter content, as a function of distance downstream. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

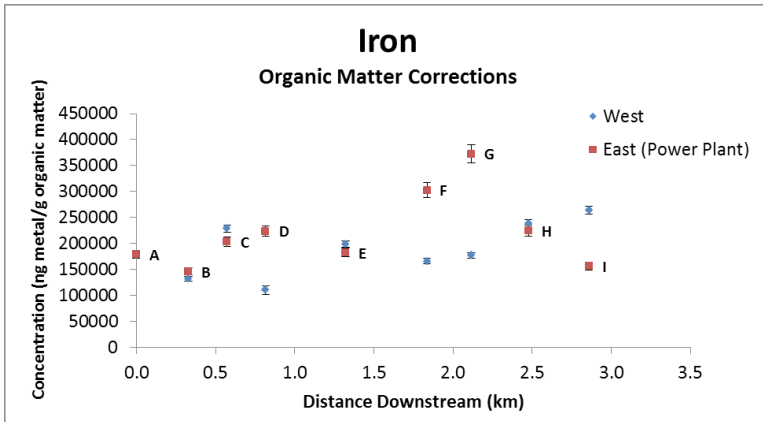


Figure 7. Iron concentration in river sediment, normalized for organic matter content, as a function of distance downstream. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

In Figures 8-10, below, a positive correlation between metal concentration and organic matter can be seen. Upstream and downstream samples have been differentiated for residual analysis. Residuals for this linear relationship were calculated, and a two-tailed t-test was performed comparing upstream and downstream residuals. This analysis was performed first for all upstream and all downstream samples, and then for upstream and downstream samples on the east bank (power plant side) only. The results of these t-tests can be seen in Table 5, below.

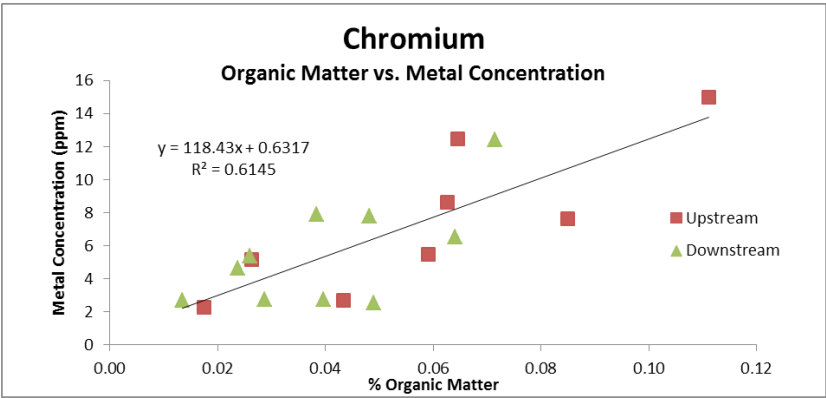


Figure 8. Relationship between organic matter and content and chromium concentration. Upstream samples corresponds to sites A-D, and downstream samples correspond to sites E-I.

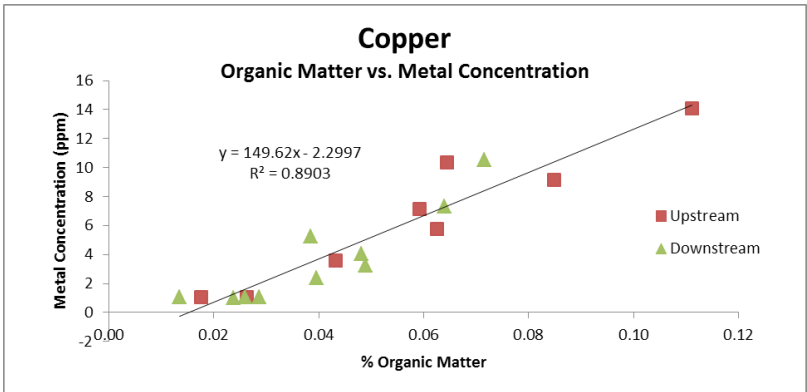


Figure 9. Relationship between organic matter and content and copper concentration. Upstream samples corresponds to sites A-D, and downstream samples correspond to sites E-I.

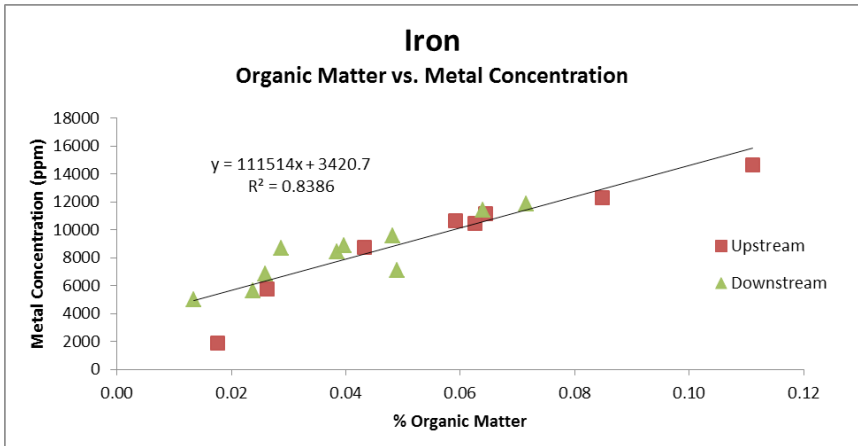


Figure 10. Relationship between organic matter and content and iron concentration. Upstream samples corresponds to sites A-D, and downstream samples correspond to sites E-I.

Table 5. Results of the two-tailed t-test between upstream and downstream residuals. Values represent the p-values for the 95% confidence interval (for All Samples df=15, and for east bank df=7).

	Copper	Iron	Chromium
All Samples (upstream vs. downstream)	0.82	0.62	0.98
East Bank Only (upstream vs. downstream)	0.21	0.12	0.95

Discussion

As can be seen in Figures 2-4 above, chromium, copper, and iron all showed similar trends in concentration as a function of distance downstream in the French Broad River. Trends on the east bank, the side on which the power plant and coal ash ponds are located, will be primarily dis-

cussed because this bank is where pollution is more likely to be seen. On the east bank, each of these metals first show a gradual decrease in metal concentration and then have a small spike in concentration at site E, which is located very close to the major groundwater discharges coming from the coal ash ponds. The metal concentrations then decrease to lower levels again. However, after organic matter corrections were applied (Figures 5-7), this spike and most of the rest of variation disappeared.

Unlike chromium and copper, iron concentrations still showed a notable amount of variation after the organic matter correction was applied (Figure 7). This variation is attributed to the fact that iron is naturally a major component of sediments. Therefore, the inorganic portions of the sediments are also able to contribute significantly to the variation in iron concentration, causing a greater degree of natural variation.

A positive, linear relationship between organic matter and metal concentration can be seen in Figures 8-10. The strength of these relationships indicates that most of the variation in metal concentration throughout the river is due to the varying presence of organic matter. The results of the residual analysis (Table 5) indicate that the deviation from the predicted relationship (the calculated regression) do not significantly differ ($p > 0.05$) between upstream and downstream sites. Therefore, these data do not indicate that an additional source of metals is introduced between upstream and downstream samples, which would cause metal concentrations to deviate from the predicted relationship differently between upstream and downstream sites.

A comparison of the results of the current study and similar previous studies is included below in Table 6. All previous study comparisons are from rivers or creeks that have coal ash pond effluents that are added directly to them, similar to the French Broad River. Iron was not recorded in previous studies, probably due to the fact that it is a significant component of soils, making it a poor indicator of

pollution from coal ash ponds.

Table 6. Comparison of current study results with similar previous studies.

Site	As	Pb	Cr	Cu	References
French Broad River, NC	< 4 ppm	< 200 ppm	6	4	Current Study
Stingy Run, OH	43	25	89	49	Lohner and Reash 1999
Little Scary Creek, WV	88	28	88	108	Lohner and Reash 1999
Savannah River, SC	34	not reported	38	67	Cherry et al. 1976, 1979 a and b Guthrie and Cherry 1976, 1979 Cherry and Guthrie 1977

Little can be concluded about lead concentrations in comparison to previous studies due to its high detection limit in this study; however, the concentration of all other metals is significantly lower in the French Broad River's sediments than in the other studies included in Table 5. While little information on basic stream parameters of the comparison sites could be found, a few potential hypotheses for the low metal concentrations in the French Broad can be made. To begin, the French Broad is a fairly large river with high discharge—around 2000 cfs near the study site. This means that pollutants entering the French Broad are quickly diluted and washed downstream, allowing for limited interaction with river sediments. This factor would decrease potential sediment pollution at this study site.

Additionally, the pH and dissolved oxygen levels in the French Broad could lead to metals concentrating near their source. The French Broad has a pH around 7,

and a dissolved oxygen concentration of around 10 mg/L (NCDENR 2009). Metals tend to be more mobile in acidic and anoxic environments. As soon as contaminated water enters the relatively high oxygen and pH environment of the French Broad, any metals would likely drop out of solution. This would result in fairly high concentrations of metals near the source and may not have been sampled in this study.

While none of the metal concentrations exceeded the EPA's Ecological Risk Assessment Freshwater Sediment Screening Benchmarks and no significant difference was seen between upstream and downstream samples, these data do not necessarily give enough evidence to conclude that metals are not affecting the sediment of the French Broad River. As was noted, elevated concentrations of various metals were observed in effluent waters coming into the French Broad River (Ruhl et al. 2012).

In order to better understand if and how sediment is being affected by these effluent waters, sediment sampling should be performed at the inflow of this contaminated water into the river. This information would give stronger evidence as to whether or not the sediments are being impacted and to what degree. Additionally, long-term studies should be conducted to monitor if changes in metal concentration are occurring over time as well as if the distance from the source these metals are migrating is increasing with time.

One final area in which further study is warranted would be surrounding the effects of seasonal variations on sediment metal concentration. During the summer, dissolved oxygen levels are lower due to warmer weather, and the river's discharge is also decreased. Both of these effects could lead to contaminated effluents and groundwater having a greater impact on river sediments. During times of very low river flow, such as during periods of drought, these effluent waters could potentially have serious implications on the aquatic systems.

In summary, the results of this study do not indicate metal migration through the French Broad River's sediment at this scale. While the measured metal concentrations do not warrant concern for environmental or human health, this does not necessarily indicate that no sediment contamination is occurring. As was discussed, metals have the potential to be concentrated near the effluent site and may also have a more significant impact in other seasons. Due to the widespread use of coal combustion as a source of electricity as well as the currently poor understanding of the migration of these metals away from CCR settling ponds, further study of sediment contamination is warranted.

Appendix I- Calibration Methods

ICP measurements were performed as follows: blanks, all standards, west bank samples (27 samples), blanks, all standards, east bank samples (27 samples), blanks, all standards. Emission intensity of each metal was recorded in triplicate for every sample. Emission intensity of standards was recorded at the beginning and end of each ICP run, and the mean intensity was used to create calibration curves. Standard concentrations that were analyzed were as follows: 0.02, 0.04, 0.05, 0.06, 0.08, 0.1, 0.2, 0.4, 0.6, 0.7, 0.8, 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15 ppm for each of the metals.

Detection limits were calculated as the upper limit of the 95% confidence interval about the average blank reading. The intensity readings for all three blanks at the beginning of the run and at the end of the run were all averaged to determine the average blank detector response. The upper 95% confidence interval (detection limit) was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Detection limit} = (\text{average blank reading}) + \frac{t * s}{\sqrt{n}}$$

Where s is the standard deviation for all readings, n is the number of blanks ($n=3$ in this case because 3 blanks were run), and t is the t-statistic.

Calibration curves were created by plotting standard concentration vs. detector response for all samples above detection limits. A linear regression was calculated to determine the relationship between the two variables. Calibration curves can be seen below in Figures 9-14.

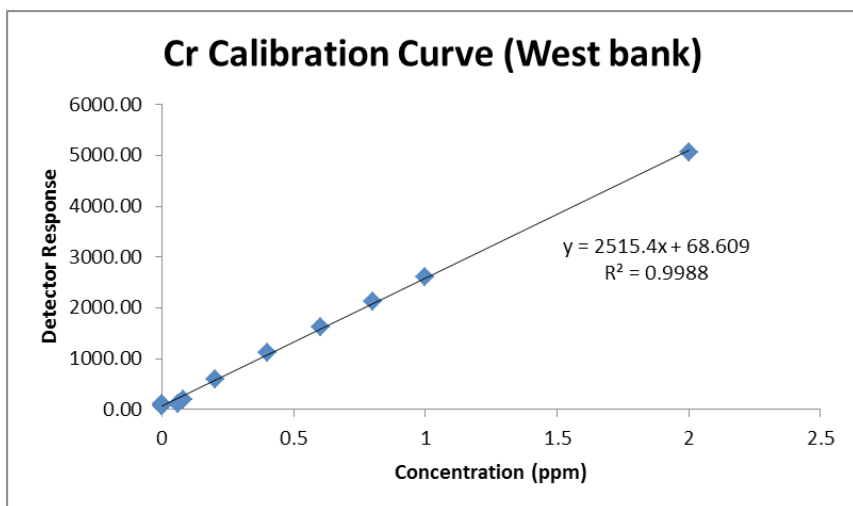


Figure 11. Chromium calibration curve for west bank samples.

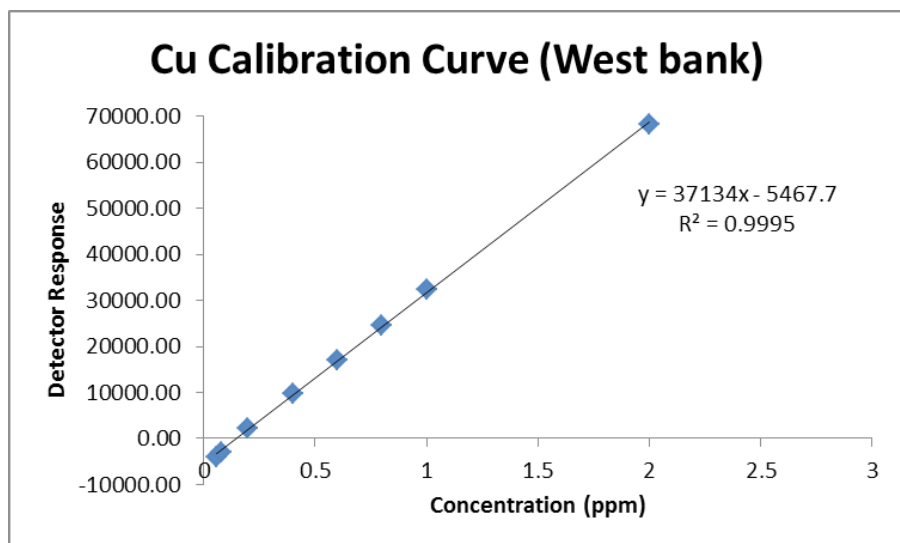


Figure 12. Copper calibration curve for west bank samples.

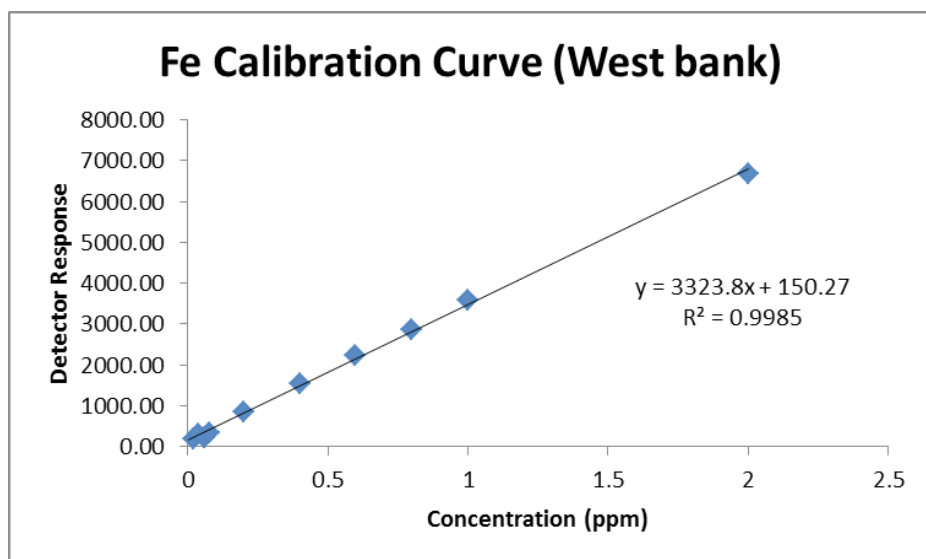


Figure 13. Iron calibration curve for west bank samples.

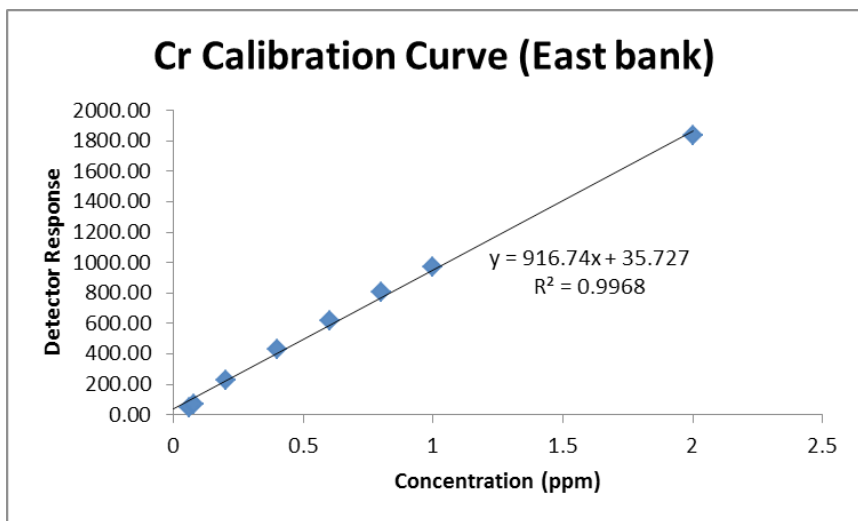


Figure 14. Chromium calibration curve for east bank samples.

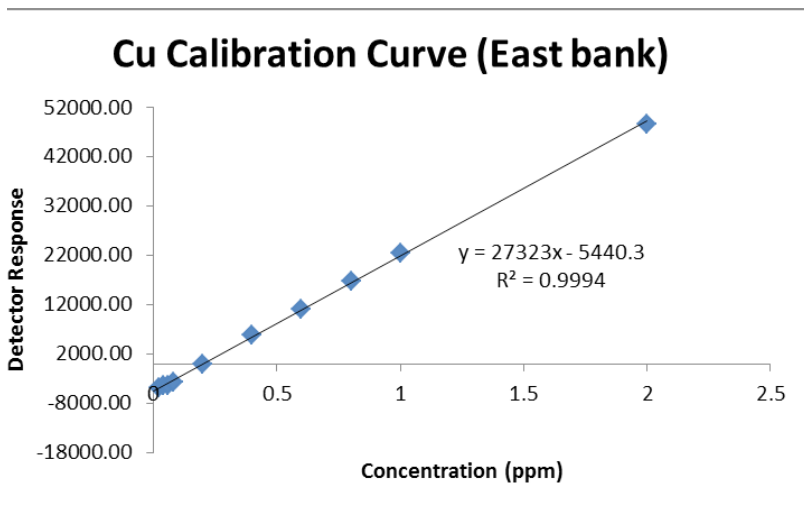


Figure 15. Copper calibration curve for east bank samples.

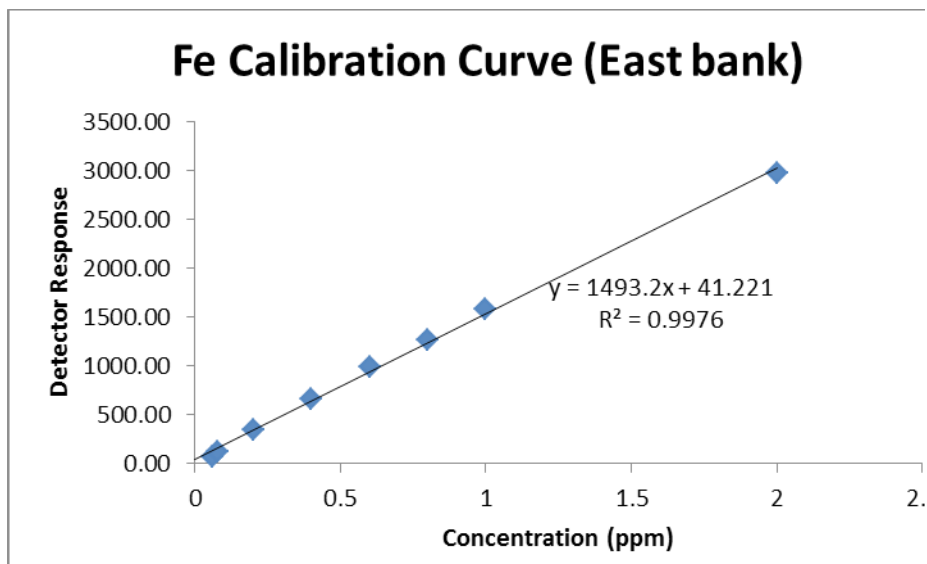


Figure 16. Iron calibration curve for east bank samples.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for making my research possible: John Brock for all of his help and support throughout the lengthy process of my research, WNCA and Riverlink for their partnership on the project, Steve Cartier for his immeasurable support in everything I do, J.J. Apodaca for his statistics expertise, Owen Kroening for her help collecting samples, Stephanie Williams for all of her help preparing samples and entertaining me while I spent countless hours in the lab, Joe Young and Natasha Shipman for keeping me well-stocked with lab supplies, and Nick Ford and the GIS crew for their assistance in my GIS data analysis. Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the North Carolina Academy of Sciences as well as Warren Wilson College for funding my research.



“You Just Make A Buckskin Laptop Case”: Identity and Authenticity in the Primitive Skills Community

Abstract:

The primitive skills subculture is what Dick Hebdige would call a “subculture of taste,” in which members congregate around shared interests and active participation—both literally, through participation in the visceral experience of gatherings and cooperative living situations, and symbolically, through the assertion of a specific style, one that exemplifies subcultural values and preferences and the individual’s participation within those. This research examines the subculture’s alternate “system of aesthetic principles”—a sort of classification or code of the values and preferences deemed authentic or credible by the group—in order to explore what it means to be a member of this community and how identity and authenticity are constructed within it (Bourdieu 1984: 267). It addresses the means through which group affiliation and commitment are created and communicated through an analysis of the symbolic exchanges and performances that have occurred within subcultural settings. It explores the meanings and values attributed by members to particular objects, skills, and aesthetic choices – such as in clothing and tattoo – which are determined to be and communicated as authentic. It also addresses how subcultural capital is measured within the group and how a subculturally specific valuation system is constructed and maintained as this community negotiates its place within and against mainstream society.

Hannah Schiller | Sociology and Anthropology



Hannah Schiller graduated in 2013 and majored in Sociology/Anthropology. Since graduating she has been putting her degree to use waiting tables at an Indian restaurant in Asheville and doing weekly crossword puzzles in the Mountain Xpress.

Introduction: An Alternate Paradigm

“On one hand it’s something very new,” Fox explained as he showed me around the urban homestead where he lives in Asheville, a big old colorful house its inhabitants have dubbed “Possum Splendor.” “We can hang out together and craft, work together and build something in a way that folks haven’t really experienced much, putting technology away from it, not dealing with the phone or the computer. And then there’s something very old about it, too. Even if you weren’t born doing this it’s in our genes; we’ve evolved doing these things - our ancestors were building fires, cooking from what was around them, living by moons and seasons, and that doesn’t really go away even after a few generations. So, I think it touches us in both places.”

I had asked him, just as I had asked each of my interviewees, what primitive skills and this community is all about and why people are drawn to it. As he led me about their small property and through the house where jars of herbal medicines lined the shelves and animal furs (many of them foxes) hung over doorways, I was surprised by how he had seamlessly worked these practices into a city lifestyle, how he could be part of both worlds—the old and the new.

When I visited Kaleb Wallace and Natalie Bogwalker soon after, I was once again met with the realization that there is a dualistic nature to this subculture, which encompasses both our contemporary society and the “primitive” practices of the past. The two live on a homestead of sorts in the woods with a small group of other folks where they use earth-based living practices—hunting, tanning hides, making baskets and clothes, gardening—but they are not purists. Natalie’s phone buzzed off and on during the hour we talked together, and in the other room Kaleb busied himself baking bread in their electric convection oven.

“We all came from the society that we’re attempting to create a sort of alternative to,” Kaleb asserted when I asked him about the primitive skills community and its

relationship with society. “We’re all products of that society, so being strictly opposed to it is impossible in a way because we’re all products of it. We could be reactionarily [sic] opposed to it—and a lot of people are, and in a lot of ways we’re opposed; we have opposing ideas about things.” I nodded, trying to grasp how he and other members of this group could both reject society and partake in it. “I feel like my goal in life,” he mused further as we walked around their front porch where a variety of animal hides were stretched out like sails across the beams, “and the goal of our subset of society, our ‘subculture,’ is finding a different paradigm that’s not based on domination or resource extraction or oppression but that maximizes personal autonomy—freedom and responsibility.”

I was drawn to studying the primitive skills community first and foremost because it represents a unique subculture in the Asheville area, visibly distinct from mainstream society, with identifiable subcultural spaces where membership and identity are enacted. But I was also drawn to the community because it seems to balance cautiously on a very thin line between living in society and rejecting it entirely. I would walk around the Firefly campground and see people dressed all in buckskin, carrying all their camping gear in a hand-made pack basket, no shoes on their feet, with an iphone case dangling from their barktanned belt, or I would talk to someone who seemed to devote his life to traveling around to every gathering in the country, teaching ancient Cherokee pottery techniques, only to discover that he actually does web programming for a living and lives just outside DC. I wanted to understand how this community works, how it functions for its members, how it exists separately from contemporary culture and yet fits into it at the same time, and specifically how members construct identity and a system of values within a community rooted in such liminality.

For this study I conducted qualitative ethnographic research comprised of both fieldwork at the Florida Earth-

skills Gathering in February 2013 and 10 semi-formal interviews with prominent members of the community.

Subcultures within Subculture: The Internal Dynamics of Community

The primitive skills community, though it appears to be founded on a specific sensibility, is not as cohesive as the word “community” often implies. The skills and the communal gatherings that members attend attract a wide array of people who often come from disparate lifestyles, backgrounds, ideologies, even religious beliefs. Todd Elliot, a young man whose back-to-the-lander parents raised him totally immersed in this lifestyle, has seen it all, he explains. Interacting with the odd assortment of folks at the gatherings as a kid was one of the most intriguing aspects of his involvement with these skills and this community.

There’s just incredible demographics. You have people who were ex-military, who were raised without social security numbers and birth certificates and come out of middle Tennessee in arranged marriages; to people who have AK-47s lying on their couches, who bury guns and ammunition and tampons and socks because they think the world’s going to come to an end; some people who want to find the worst piece of land so no one will try to take it from them if the world comes to an end; but then you’ve also got the business mom and dad who show up with their kids. You can find people that have everything under the sun that they’ve dealt with in their lives and you can just sit down with them and hear their stories. And sometimes you’ve got people who are über religious, Amish and such, and they’re sitting on one side of the pond

in their religious garb while on the other side
you've got a bunch of people skinny-dipping.
[Elliot 2013]

Elliot illustrates just how diverse the group of people that make up the primitive skills community really is, noting specifically that those who come to the gatherings and come to learn and share these skills do for a wide variety of reasons. No matter the reason though, this motley crew of folks is strung together by the strength in their desire to learn simply how to survive. And that becomes enough to bring them all back to each other and the gatherings every year, to create this “cohesive family-like feeling” that so many of my informants referred to as they reflected on their years of experience.

Kaleb Wallace, co-founder of the Firefly gathering, expressed how, despite this sense of unity, the community can, at times, feel somewhat divided by the differing approaches to its purpose and philosophy and the varied backgrounds from which the members have come. Kaleb discovered primitive skills and the community that surrounds it about ten or eleven years ago through his dissatisfaction with society and his involvement in the punk/anarchist subculture. After deciding to address his qualms with civilization by living through more self-involved means—what he refers to as “lifestyle activism”—Kaleb ended up in the woods, without electricity or most modern amenities, relying not on society for his needs, but on himself and other simple-living people. He acknowledges, however, that not all the people in this community come at it from this radical perspective, and that this has had an impact on how members interact as the community evolves and on the atmospheres of the different gatherings.

There are subcultures within our subculture, you know. If you go to a gathering where you have a whole lot of people who are punk rock and share a lot of those punk rock values, when people show up and have those same values and are part of that subculture they're going to be, generally speaking, looked upon in more favor. I think this is normal in general human society—you look for the people who are like you and have like ideas and like values and you associate with those people. But then you could go to a gathering where the people there who are organizing are older and came to it through experiential archaeology or back to the land movements and those people might look down on people who come to it through the punk scene. Again, because they have different values, because they're dirty or because they eat out of the trash or because they're not trying to influence society through the mainstream channels and are just dropping out of it instead. It just depends on where you go. [Wallace 2013]

Kaleb acknowledges an important attribute of the internal dynamics of this community: the nature of cross-comparisons—between philosophical backgrounds, between members' distinct “habitus,” between age groups and across time periods, noting the changes from how the community used to be and how it is now. In similar research done on the punk rock subculture, Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1990) explore uses of comparative measurements of authenticity, noting three types of comparison used to achieve status within a subculture. These comparisons occurred between the subculture and external standards, the past and present character of the subculture, and between the older and newer members. They emphasize the role of the descriptions of members' reasons for joining the subculture in

measuring authenticity, noting the difference between being a member and simply doing or performing what appears to be membership.

There isn't necessarily one sub-group's philosophy or origin story that is viewed, across the board, as better or more authentic to the primitive skills community, but there is a kind of tension that has evolved around the separate groups and ideas of what are primitive skills and what forms of commitment and expressions of it are ideal. Kaleb refers to this tension between the subcultures within the primitive skills community, noting the differences between generations and why folks became involved, expressing that these kinds of self-defining comparisons do exist and function to delineate commitment and a person's "purity" of membership. "It can just feel really competitive sometimes," explains Emily Jernigan, a young woman who has been attending gatherings since high school and has struggled to assert herself as a long-standing, important member of the community deserving of the same respect given to most after just a few years of teaching. Emily attributes this inequality to these shifting standards in what an authentic story or expression of involvement in this community is.

Prestige and Authenticity: Subcultural Capital

As Kaleb illustrates, divisions exist within the primitive skills community, deeply influenced by this idea of prestige and what connotes status within the subculture. In this section I address how status and authentic membership are achieved through three distinct ways—style, skills, and gender.

Style

Style is often perceived in subcultural studies as a performative construction of the self, used by members as signs of affiliation with the group's values and beliefs and disaffiliation from those of the group in opposition to them, in this case mainstream society (Hebdige 1979). For the

punk subcultures William Ryan Force studied, sartorial adornment is the main mode through which subcultural alignment and expression of unique values is conducted, along with the possession of other objects and knowledge that have been imbued with subcultural meaning (Force 2009).

While I was at the Florida Earthskills gathering, there was a sort of unofficial aspect to the gathering's structure and schedule led by a group of young, transient, "anarcho-primitivist" folks dressed all in buckskin, who had set up their private camp on the other side of the main area, set back a ways into the woods behind the teepee and next to the cotton field. During the day they opened up their space, which they called "Hide'n and Tannin," for learning how to butcher, flesh, and scrape an animal and then process its hide. They gave out free hides to whoever showed up to learn and spent the entire gathering overseeing people as they attempted to process skunk pelts and deer hides. What was specifically interesting to me about this area and the group of people who manned this hide-tanning station was that it ran parallel to the gathering, but was not truly, in fact, part of it. The "teachers" themselves hardly left the area and didn't participate in the official schedule of workshops, ate their meals together, and sat back under a live oak smashing coconuts open and chatting amongst themselves. The folks who came to learn from them also ended up devoting their entire gathering experience to their hides, as it is a full three days of work to go from meaty, hairy animal skin to soft, browned cloth suitable for turning into a nice button-up vest.

What's more is that this area seemed to serve as a kind of "demonstration area" for the participants and attendees of the gathering, particularly the hobbyists and the one-time attendees who came from the local Gainesville community for a day to check out the hype. These gathering participants would wander through the hide tanning area periodically throughout the day in large groups, during

lunch or in between classes, asking questions about what people were doing or making, sometimes taking photographs. It became, to a certain extent, a spectacle, serving as a kind of paradigm for the ultimate primitive skills lifestyle and the belief-system that governs it. As I sat there, sipping on a coconut behind a curtain of Spanish moss, watching a young woman pull deer brains out of Tupperware containers, I felt in some way like I was in a diorama of sorts, or one of those revivalist re-enactor communities that people visit, like a kind of living museum to see and experience what the life is really like. For some people this might not be the intention, but they must realize how and what is expressed in the way they dress and conduct themselves in front of others. Kaleb Wallace comments on this aspect of primitive skills and the intentions of those who promote “living the lifestyle” when they venture out into the “real world”:

I mean, we go out in society and we're a spectacle. You go somewhere and you've got a four-inch knife strapped to your hip, you've got dreadlocks or you've got a buckskin vest on or a raccoon pouch or handmade shoes. You know, it's out of the ordinary and everywhere you go you're sort of parading yourself. That's one of the reasons I don't wear buckskin clothes. It's just the same as when people choose to be punk rock and have giant mohawks because it catches people's attention, you know they're making a spectacle of themselves and some people are better at doing that and they're comfortable with that. In one way it's your lifestyle and in another way it becomes an advertising campaign because how you dress or how you behave is reflective of your values, and when your clothes don't come from the store and they're made from animals skins and you have a need for your knife so you carry it around on your hip all the time, it's going to be a spectacle for

people who don't do that. [Wallace 2013]

In both the example of the hide tanners at the Florida Earthskills gathering and in Kaleb's discussion of the primitive skills appearance in society, we see examples of ways in which members of the primitive skills community express their membership and values through their transgression of mainstream sartorial and behavioral codes. Through their deliberate "spectacular" stylistic choices, these members issue a symbolic challenge to conventional society, parading their values and beliefs, as Kaleb refers to it, in front of all those for whom this lifestyle is unfamiliar. This "intentional communication" of values, as Dick Hebdige refers to it, distinguishes the spectacular subculture—in this case the hard core members of the primitive skills community—from the surrounding culture, about which so many of my informants expressed a deep dissatisfaction that ultimately led them to pursue this lifestyle and find this community. In a way, primitive skills authenticity is demonstrated through a sort of "carnavalesque" presentation of the self, as Bakhtin (1984) would call it. Members walk around in their hide-clothing or dirty traveler's garb, their hair dreadlocked and dirty, their faces unshaven or tatted up in tribalesque formations, deliberately debasing themselves and distinguishing themselves from mainstream society, using their body to express their opposition to the fixed and regulated standards of official discourse as a site of resistance. They intentionally become a spectacle for the mainstream, turning themselves into "the other" in order to express their dissatisfaction with the ideals and lifestyle standards of contemporary civilization.

Often this transgressive, intense appearance and interpretation of the primitive skills identity is, as Kaleb stated, idolized and seen by the hobbyists and newcomers to the community as the fullest embodiment of the subculture's values. People often perceive the people who don this

“look”—the buckskin, the dreads, the sheathed knife—as symbolically embodying the lifestyle for others and that one’s adherence to these sartorial standards contributes to one’s subcultural capital or authenticity. This returns to the idea of what is understood as an authentic embodiment of primitive skills, and what aspects of that embodiment are more valued than others and contribute to a person’s status within the community. Natalie Bogwalker often notices that this idea is pervasive, and that how you appear to others influences your status within the community.

I think at these gatherings when someone who is a hobbyist, say, is hanging out with somebody who is more practicing this stuff in everyday life, there might be some admiration that’s going on. I mean, I definitely notice some funny things where I’m like hanging out with someone and I say “Hey, I’m Natalie, blah, blah, blah” and they’re like “Oh! You’re Natalie Bogwalker,” and I’m like, “Yeah,” and that status is kind of weird. But I don’t think that necessarily comes from things that I’ve done, that it’s because I just happen to be the talking person, figurehead type with all this stuff. And it’s really ironic because in order to organize that huge event I spend one or two days if not three or four or five days on the computer to be able to do that. So, whether my status is based on how I’m actually spending my time or how people perceive me, you know, it’s a really different thing [Bogwalker 2013].

Though Natalie spends a lot of time working on the computer in order to plan the Firefly gathering, she is allotted the status of someone who embodies the primitive skills lifestyle because she is the figurehead for the event; a photo of her in a buckskin dress hunting with a bow in front of her

tulip poplar wigwam in the woods emblazons the event's posters. It is not necessarily always what you do that connotes an authentic involvement in the subculture but the impression you give through these certain aesthetic attributes. The posters for the gatherings surely serve as an example of that impression, with people wearing buckskin clothing in each picture, making fire, shooting a bow and arrow, gathering wild plants. This image is not a lie—these are things that you do and learn at these events—but the newcomers in their Old Navy shorts and flip flops are not depicted, and this contributes greatly to what and who are deemed as having prestige within this community. Marc Williams, an attendee of and teacher at many of the gatherings, speaks to this gathering “persona” many people put on at the event, which may not in fact speak to how they truly live their life and incorporate the values of the community into their everyday.

There's a dichotomy about being in the gathering space and having a certain persona and then going back to the “real world.” Whether it's instructors, and I just think by nature anybody that is holding space as an educator, is taking on this certain persona that they might not necessarily have at the tea house on a random Thursday afternoon. Certainly you see, in particular with the clothing attire, what clothes people wear at the gathering versus on the street. I think just in various ways it's a different space to inhabit, whether it's how you prepare your food or go to the bathroom. You are a different person, in a certain manner. [Williams 2013]

And so the primitive skills identity appears, in some cases, to be put on for the gathering, or at least to be difficult to negotiate outside of the event as people struggle to incorporate primitive skills into their daily lives beyond the gather-

ing. Marc mentions the “real world,” emphasizing that for many the gathering is not real life and the way they dress, act, and behave in the comfort of that space is not representative of who they are in other situations and spaces. This speaks a lot to what the gathering space serves as for this community—a place in which people feel the freedom to be perhaps their truest selves, to embody the lifestyle and “persona” they cannot lead on a regular basis because of the difficulties of extracting themselves fully from society.

Skills

In his work, “Embodying Hardcore: Rethinking Subcultural Identities,” Christopher Driver critiques the representation in anthropology of youth subcultural practices as fundamentally symbolic. He argues that focus on the symbolic neglects the role of the body and its essence of subjectivity in creating social identity, thus overlooking the significance of affective connections and experiences central to subculture members’ own perceptions and construction of self and authenticity. Driver focuses instead on the idea that sustained subcultural participation and commitment are enacted less through stylistic and symbolic means and more through physical and emotional expression—the embodied practice of producing said symbols and signs. For the primitive skills community, what one does or has done, the skills one knows, and how one physically embodies the values of the primitive skills subculture—the behavioural aspects of “doing” subculture—represents a significant part of understanding identity and authenticity. This is often revealed on the exterior through symbolic means, by a well-made buckskin jacket with a nice fringe and pockets, objects that indicate behavioural characteristics and social roles, but it is the act itself, revealed by the material goods, that connotes prestige in this community.

For Fox, a relatively new member of the Asheville community, a clear hierarchy is harder to pinpoint, and he believes how you dress or look or act isn’t necessarily at the

root of it. Fox theorizes, though, that status is often allotted to those who know the most and have the most skills and experience to share from, whether this allocation is stated or not.

People come to a gathering and see these people wearing nothing but buckskins, smelling like they haven't showered in three months, and they're cutting up a deer they picked up from the side of the road on the way there, there's definitely an intimidation factor that sometimes comes to them. But when I think of any kind of hierarchy, though, it's more of like, I'm thinking I'm going to go to this person because they lived in the woods and they're going to know about tarping. I'm thinking about who I could learn from. I'm not thinking that they're my dear holier than I because they went to Talking Drum or did a one year program out in the wilderness or have been living like that for years. Not one person has all the answers. [Fox 2013]

More authority is given to those who live the lifestyle, who live in the woods and know about tarping or any other skill because they've truly had to use it in a way that a hobbyist never really would have. As Fox illustrates, attendees of the gatherings will often choose to learn from those people, perhaps because they are placed above others due to their skill level and venerated for their true embodiment of the community's core values, but more because people are really there to learn to survive, and the more you can say you've had to do that, the more respect you'll get. "They have more skills than others, so they're very much honored. A lot of the primitive skills community your merit is based on how skilled you are, what kind of skills you have, and what you have to bring to the community in that way," explains Todd Elliot. Senda S. Cook emphasizes that the practices of a subculture themselves reveal ideologies, identities, and

habitus, serving as performances of one's social and situational knowledge. Because these practices are embodied, ephemeral, sensual, and fluid, Cook claims that by studying them one can pick up on the subtle and nonverbal messages that reveal a community's ways of social organizing and how members articulate and construct identities, ideologies, consciousness, and culture. In her work with those partaking in outdoor recreation she witnesses how the mundane practices of the subculture become meaningful symbols, connecting practice with identity. These practices—such as how gear is used and the deliberate choice to “bushwhack” instead of follow the trail—portray a person's relationship with the outdoors and connote what is and isn't an authentic or “real” outdoor recreation experience (Cook 2012).

As in Cook's research, specific skills in the primitive skills community reflect a certain habitus, such as with the comments of both Fox and Todd, whereby a member's commitment to the lifestyle is revealed by the skills she has. Certain ways of accomplishing the same task are seen as less authentic or as “cheating,” for example using a PVC pipe to hold a hide up while you scrape off the flesh. In such a way the symbolic and the performative merge as a member attempts to embody this subculture's values.

Gender

Though I didn't originally plan to have my research address gender in any concrete way, many of my interviewees, in particular my female informants, drew me more to the topic as I spoke with them. At first, I claimed it as beyond the scope of my project and too complex to address in depth, but I realized how perfectly it relates to this topic of prestige and subcultural capital within the community, in particular with how one's status is impacted within the community by the gender inequalities that permeate the subculture. For most of its existence, the subculture has had radically fewer female participants, especially female teachers at the gatherings, which has made it difficult for

the women I spoke with to assert their membership and authentic status in the group. Still today, despite efforts from many of the women, men are more often chosen as teachers at the gatherings, and women have often been paid less for their work, or simply not paid at all as instructors. Natalie Bogwalker describes her experience as a woman trying to make it into the scene:

It was kind of a struggle to move into the teaching realm at that time because I was a woman and really young. Things have really changed, I think. And that's one thing with Firefly that I've tried to develop, especially with female teachers, because there's many more male teachers in this whole scene; at some point, at a different skills gathering, just looking at the people who got paid to teach there, it was like 80% males. As I try to bring in skilled instructors there are definitely more men who have been doing this stuff longer. But I think it's so important trying to change that. I definitely give some preference to female teachers, because I want to encourage that, and I think the position I'm in is really helpful for empowering women. There's some things about being a female leader that maybe makes it easier, but it has been challenging at times to get the respect I want. [Bogwalker 2013]

Natalie expresses the difficulties she inherently faced as a woman coming into a scene dominated by male participants, in particular when she began trying to teach. She has been successful, but only after years of working at it, and only now, ten years into her involvement, does she feel her voice is strong enough to be heard, a voice she feels she uses often to stand up for other women. The aspect of this that is most intriguing, though, is her brief mention that most instructors at a lot of the gatherings are male, and eighty

percent of those paid for work at gatherings are male. Marc Williams, a renowned plant expert in the community, also spoke to this inequality, particularly in the plant education realm of the community. He said:

I do find that it's pretty male-centric as far as who is offering things and educating. It can vary by the particular skill, but I do find it really interesting in particular with the plant aspect, that a lot of the teachers tend to be male, but then if I go to teach at herb schools where people are learning about plants it's mostly women. [Williams 2013]

There are two really significant aspects of this observation on gender—the first is how it reflects Sherry Ortner's theory of women being associated with nature and men with culture. As Marc Williams points out, women are often herbalists, and so one would think that this nature-based subculture would be dominated by women. But women being associated with nature is often seen as fixed in their position, and the men as able to kind of transcend nature and imbue it with culture, or raise it to a higher standard, not just doing it, but teaching it to others. The second is simply how much this reflects gender relations and essentialist gender norms of contemporary mainstream culture, in that men's work is often seen as more valuable and is more rewarded with a higher pay and more status. That being said, many of my informants, like Natalie, who are on the younger side of the subculture, spoke to how this is shifting and how they are making changes in the gathering structure to have more gender equality, especially with newer gatherings such as Firefly and the Florida Earthskills Gathering, both of which are organized and run, in part, by women.

Liminality

As I stated earlier, what intrigued me most as I con-

ducted this research about the primitive skills community was its relationship to mainstream society. At the core of this subculture's philosophy, like so many rebellion-based youth subcultures, is this strong aversion to structure and system and this focus on freedom from constraint. Each of my informants' interviews had a slight undercurrent of the anarchist diatribe in which they discussed this sense of liberation in the community and its importance. The flaw in this is that the community itself is structureless in many ways, and this structurelessness can have its repercussions. Though there is some continuity and some organization within the group, particularly with the gatherings, the impact of this kind of constant liminality is palpable.

I wanted to attend the gathering in Florida to really get a feel for what this community is like in its essence, and it was there that I really noticed how liminal and rootless the community can feel. At the gathering, emphasis was heavily placed upon attendees' past involvement and experiences in the community. As an attendee of the event myself I experienced a barrage of prying questions over the course of the weekend as I met and spoke with more people who wanted to gain insight into why I was there. Everyone wanted to know where I was from, who I knew, which gatherings I had been to, and when. Each of these questions was asked pointedly, one after the other, as if I were the one being interviewed. Sometimes I was asked which I preferred or whether I liked this particular gathering and why, but just the fact I had been to at least one often felt like enough to merit a spoonful of armadillo stew from someone's personal cookstove or a nod of approval to continue asking questions. I overheard many conversations in which people spoke of their past gathering experiences, reminiscing on what classes they took last year at Winter Count or the funny Swedish guy at Teaching Drum who liked to put the feet in his raccoon stew. "You're friends with Kelly, aren't you?" "Didn't I meet you through Tyler?" I was asked multiple times in a variety of ways throughout the first two days who

I knew and how I was connected, and I found myself sparking conversations in a similar fashion. "I think we met at Geoffrey's house," or "weren't we in the same basketry class at Firefly?" For me, it was a way into a conversation, a way into a private campsite to sip on coconuts with a particularly enticing and equally standoffish group of men all wearing coon caps. For others, whose involvement need, at least to my eyes, not be questioned or challenged, it appeared to be a way of quickly establishing and solidifying community. Perhaps it's because of the brevity of such a gathering, or the lack of social relations in so many of the members' lives, those who do live out in the woods in Montana somewhere on homesteads butchering and skinning elk all winter and talking to no one except the occasional park ranger, or maybe it's because of the transience of the group's members and spaces of congregation.

In talking to many of the Florida gathering attendees, I began to understand the full extent to which this transience exists for this community and how that contributes to the way the subculture is structured, which, as mentioned above, is not very much. While I was there I heard so many stories about journeys and wanderings, especially from the younger population, aged 20 to 30. At one point, after a goat harvest on the third morning of the gathering, I sat with a young transient man named Brian on a broken tree limb in the hide-tanning area as he carefully attempted to scrape the goat's face from its skull, to make a mask. "I'd been in Brooklyn for a while and then started hitching rides and hopping trains down the east coast wanting to come to Florida [be]cause I'd heard about this gathering and the community down here," Brian explained. "It was a crazy trip. A couple of times I didn't get picked up for days on the highway, and was chased off by the police in this one town, most likely because I'm dirty and look like no good." Brian shrugged as he reached his finger into the skull and popped out the two milky eyeballs that were far bigger than I was expecting them to be, the size of golf balls.

When I asked what he was doing next he shrugged again. “Sticking round here for a bit, gonna see the ocean and eat kumquats, then maybe I’ll hitch a ride out with one of these folks to Winter Count in Arizona. Not sure.” For Brian, the nomadic lifestyle appeared pretty normal and worry-free; he counted on the community at the gathering to lead him where he needed to go next and didn’t seem phased at all by his lack of pre-planning. And he wasn’t alone. So many of the younger members I spoke with at the gathering had no serious place-based situation or job to which they had to return and were meeting each other, making plans to head down to the Keys or over to someone’s land-project a few states away for a while with little forethought on how they’d get there or back or pay for their food.

Kaleb Wallace attributes this kind of attitude and lifestyle to many members’ affiliation with the punk/DIY/anarchist subculture, a subculture rooted in a philosophy that derides organization of any sort and emphasizes a kind of liberation from the mainstream. In reflecting on how many of the community’s members live such a traveling, drop-out lifestyle as Brian does, Kaleb sees both positives and negatives.

In some ways the community can really support the traveling lifestyle, but in some ways maybe the traveling lifestyle makes it not cohesive because people aren’t settled in one place and building really long lasting connections with a certain bioregion or certain people or piece of land; but again, I think freedom is really important, people being able to do what they feel like they need to do and creating a society or subculture that facilitates that in any way necessary I think is beautiful. If people want to be land-based and raise all their own food and that works for them, then that’s wonderful. If people

need to travel and be part of transient communities, then I think it's really important to have a lot of different models. [Wallace 2013]

Liberation was a theme throughout my interviews, underscored as one of the community's unifying values, fitting well with the postmodern sensibility David Muggleton (2000) discusses in his book *Inside Subculture*. Their care-free yet distinct appearance, the travelling lifestyle, and the ephemerality of communal gatherings all serve as examples of hyperindividualism and heterogeneity which the subculture has constructed against the backdrop of the homogenized conventional "other." Through their expression of liminality and emphasis on the concept of freedom from restraint, structure, stasis, and the mainstream—all that appears to inhibit one's license to self-expression—the members of this community assert personal difference and, in so doing, authenticate commitment to the ideals of the subculture.

On the other hand, this appears to have its negative repercussions for the community, as well. There are few communal spaces besides the gatherings, which last two weeks at most and occur only three or four times a year depending on how many the various members choose to attend. Because of the rarity of such forms of community congregation, the gatherings are intense, immediately seeking the atmosphere of a small village or tribe, hence the onslaught of questions I received in Florida. Every moment is packed with events for sharing, learning, and bonding. For many, the gatherings are the only times and places when they see their friends and fellow "primitivists," and, for some more extreme members, the only time they really see anybody. But, because of this, "there can be a kind of 'carny' type essence to the moving about and reconstituting camps and communities for a week at a time," explained Russell Cutts, one of the leading organizers of the Earthskills Rendezvous events in Georgia, the longest-running primitive

skills gathering in the country.

When asked about the effects of such transience on the community and its members, Todd Elliot expressed that it's both rewarding and difficult to be part of a community with such "fuzzy lines." "There's less sharing than could be going on. That's the downside. The upside is that when you do get together there's so many different ways of doing things that you can glean the best ways from everyone," Todd explains. "But that also comes with the territory because people want to do their own thing, build their own homesteads, their own spaces."

Growing up, Todd was able to learn from skilled adults who were not just his parents, as well as cultivate certain abilities from others' help and advice, providing him with a space to really connect with people who live the lifestyle, who he otherwise might never know because of their more isolationist tendencies. But the fact that at the end of the gathering everyone splits up and heads back out to their separate swaths of land across the country, that learning and sharing comes only piecemeal and infrequently, can really affect the community and its members in a negative way.

For Marc Williams, the extreme lifestyles of so many members—either homeless and wandering or so intensely place-based they are in some ways hermetic—and these infrequent community congregations have some serious consequences on personal connection, deeply affecting his and others' relationships.

I think that it leads to this dualistic nature of connection. I feel within this movement this kind of surface connection that people tend to have and it gets kind of into that persona thing again, because you see these people for years and "know" them, but you don't even know their last name, let alone how many siblings or where they grew up, or like what you're asking about—what brought them here in first place. The depth of connection is not there. The level of emotional and psychologi-

cal investment is pretty low as far as if you have a problem you're dealing with and you need to address it with someone; or maybe even long-term planning about who is this person in your life and what does it mean moving forward. Its a very in the moment type of thing. You make the most of those moments when in each other's presence, but there's not a lot of long-term perspective or planning around the nature of your connection with people. I've gotten worn out on that. I've lived that life of traveling, just being with a bunch of different groups and there's a kind of emotional oxygen I've been missing; I feel like I've been asphyxiating myself in not getting deeper with people. [Williams 2013]

Despite the postmodern sense of liberation that comes with challenging the oppressive nature of mainstream society and not succumbing to its expectations of staying put, finding a job, making and spending money on its products, the absence of this "depth of connection," whether it be with the land or with other people, grows harder the longer a person is part of this liminal community. Natalie Bogwalker also acknowledges this aspect of "what it really is to be human" that is often missing in these communities and at these gatherings, which is why she has set up Firefly to not simply be based around primitive skills, offering classes on subjects like relationship communication. She explains:

It doesn't have to do necessarily at all with tanning deer hides or learning how to make tinctures or whatever, but it more so has to do with opening oneself up to ways of relating with other people, with the earth, and with society at large. The communication aspect is so important for learning how to be a functional human being. And that's really what I think this is all about - learning how to be a

functional human being, which is pretty important, pretty basic. It's not all peaches and candy and late night mead circles. [Bogwalker 2013]

What Natalie touches on are the feelings of disconnection that simply come with being a human that this group attempts to assuage. She asserts that this community, though founded on these skills, is also just a community, aimed at connecting everyone with each other and the earth and creating a kind of solidarity that is otherwise so difficult to establish. She and many others in the community with whom I spoke agreed that, yes, the fleeting nature of the gatherings and the transience of the community's member base create some complications, but the group still accomplishes what it intends to—learning to be a functional human.

Something Old, Something New: A Conclusion

After about a year of intensively thinking about and interacting with the primitive skills community, I am humbled. I set out into this research, I admit, rather jaded. My first experiences at the Firefly gathering left me with a kind of sourness as I, myself, felt excluded from the community and intimidated by the buckskin-wearing folks “living the lifestyle” who I felt were competitively asserting what they know and do to make me, a newcomer, and my skills and passions feel inconsequential. So I set out to understand how one could be considered an authentic member and achieve status within the community, and why members pursued this kind of prestige or proven commitment so vehemently. In my time with the community I saw how this status was achieved and displayed—through choice of clothing and assertion of knowledge and skills—in ways that appeared to reflect norms of mainstream, middle-class white culture. Why would this be such an important attribute of asserting membership in a community that seems to be based on egalitarian and liberationist philosophies?

Though the ways in which members of this group assert

an authentic identity within and commitment to the group is significant, what really makes this research important is the ways they do this against the backdrop of the subculture's relationship to mainstream society, an attribute of my research that evolved the more time I spent with this community. The question then became not how do they assert authentic membership, but why they do, and why they do so vehemently and almost exaggeratedly, with their overtly "carnavalesque" appearance with which they assert otherness from society, and their use and assertion of certain skills that equally connote disaffiliation with the norms of the mainstream.

Quite late in the game did I come to Victor Turner's research and theory on liminality and *communitas*, and only with that piece did my discoveries fall into place and make more sense to me. This subculture is a pure example of Turner's notion of "ideological *communitas*"—a kind of utopian model of society based on these existential, spontaneous, and unstructured happenings. This is a characteristic of so many subcultures, which are founded on those concepts of liberation, heterogeneity, flux, and hyperindividualism, fighting against contemporary societal structures and cultural laws while inherently conforming to them at the same time. Russell Cutts expresses this duality that members feel at all times which comes from living the divided life:

We are all struggling to walk with one foot in ancient knowledge and the other in the modern world. This leads to a certain bipolarism or split-personality. Few of us feel genuinely grounded in a life that is totally fulfilling, insofar as we attend these events and communities because we KNOW and FEEL that there is something missing in the modern human condition. Broad society cannot fill all our needs, so we seek.

[Cutts 201

skills community faces various struggles as its members attempt to negotiate a dual existence. In one sense they belong to the “real world” and participate in the norms of society. They have cell phones, computers, live in cities, use electricity, watch Netflix—perhaps not out of the desire to do so, but out of necessity or ease. And yet they also spend periods of their lives in the woods or at these gatherings, living solely off the land, often asserting that these times are when they are following their true beliefs, when they are being their best selves. Despite this, though, many members do not live this way full time, and so the subculture remains just that: a subculture, unable to expand beyond. So, in concluding my research and attempting to understand its significance, I am left with these questions for how this and other similar subcultures throughout this country can persist and negotiate this relationship with society at large.

How can a community or subculture grow, reproduce, and fulfill people’s needs while maintaining this sense of freedom and *communitas*? Neither society nor the subculture seem to be able to fulfill all members’ needs. Can a group find an appropriate balance between structure and *communitas* and accept each modality when it is necessary and not cling to it when the impetus is spent? And can a community like this grow into something that fulfills the members’ needs without losing the regenerative experiences or liberation from the imposing superstructures and without being appropriated into mainstream with a reality TV show or Urban Outfitters selling buckskin clothing?

Somehow, though, it seems people find, at least for now, some way to manage being pulled in both directions, to live in both worlds to live in both worlds and cultivate a strong sense of who they are and where they belong. As Kaleb states:

A lot of people just recognize people are going to live how they're going to live and some of us need computers for organizing purposes and to participate in mainstream society and some of us try not to use computers, but you're expected to use a computer and function in that way. So you just make a buckskin laptop case. [Wallace 2013]

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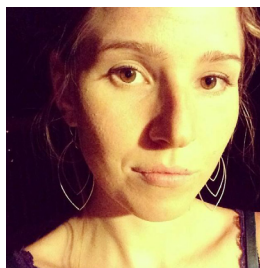
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Healing and Knowing among the Acholi: Culture-Bound Symptoms of War-Related Trauma and a Call for Re-Centering Indigenous Knowledge within Western NGO Interventions

Abstract:

Acholi culture-bound symptoms and manifestations of conflict-related trauma and the perceptions of the roots of those symptoms can be viewed as indicators of the way in which the Acholi perceive, interpret, articulate, and know the world in which they exist. As such, these understandings help to inform Acholi epistemic and ontological orientations. Being that these understandings are culturally constructed and culturally unique, they vary from Western understandings, and thus hold implications for the Western-based and -funded NGO operations involved in psychosocial interventions aimed at conflict-affected individuals in northern Uganda. Drawing from postcolonial theory and critical development theory, this paper challenges the assumption of the universal applicability, and the subsequent importation of, Western modes of trauma healing—and the epistemic and ontological orientations they are based in—within non-Western regions of the world. Utilizing an indigenous knowledge discursive framework and the notion of cultural relativism, this paper asserts that for Western-based and -funded psychosocial interventions to be effective, relative and meaningful, they need to be de-centered from Western epistemic orientations and instead be grounded within Acholi understandings of trauma and its subsequent healing.

Georgia Beasley | Global Studies



Georgia feels, innately, that we humans are all one. Yet what inspires her most is the beauty found in the myriad of cultures we humans continue to embody in our multi-faceted world. She feels that these diverging paths of embodied expression, and the multiplicity of manners in which we perceive our world, are meant to be explored and celebrated—both to discover difference, while at the same time returning back to that inherent sameness we share. Currently, with the help of Ground-

swell International, she is working on securing funding to work for the Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development in Ghana this upcoming year. In the meantime, she is evading winter by frolicking across Colombia and Ecuador, seeking out more of those fleeting moments whereby the cultural filters that inform our relating to others seemingly—if only for a moment—dissolve into ether.

Introduction

0.1 Objective

Utilizing northern Uganda as a case study, this paper aims to illuminate the need for not just the inclusion of indigenous knowledge within psychosocial aid initiatives aimed at war-affected individuals, but a re-centering of such initiatives around indigenous knowledge and understandings. If international humanitarian aid initiatives are to be effective and meaningful for the beneficiaries that the initiatives are aimed to assist, foundational and structural changes must be enacted. Such initiatives must be de-centered from Western understandings and worldviews and re-centered around the worldviews and understandings of the beneficiaries.

By exploring psychosocial illness and its healing among the Acholi of northern Uganda, this paper seeks to ascertain the efficacy of the cross-cultural transfer of Western modalities of trauma healing into psychosocial aid initiatives within northern Uganda. By viewing cultural worldviews, understandings, and practices as embodied philosophy, this paper seeks to challenge the universal applicability of Western modes of knowing into non-Western regions of the world.

As an exploratory study based on qualitative data aimed at understanding Acholi perceptions of conflict-related distress and indigenous modalities of trauma healing, I conducted a series of interviews, focus group discussions, and engaged in participant observation in northern Uganda during the months of November and December of 2012. The population “researched”¹ consisted of returnees from

1 I put the word “researched” in quotes because the whole notion of researching individuals brings up potent ethical considerations. I prefer the language of “engaged and explored” opposed to “researched,” as I feel it gives more humanity to the issues at hand, and moreover, recognizes these individuals as living and breathing humans with real lives as opposed to abstract, removed humans that can be reduced to subjects in a research paper.

LRA rebel captivity and their respective communities within the northern Ugandan region. Twelve interviews were conducted with LRA returnees, nine of whom had participated in Western-based and –funded psychosocial aid initiatives; seven were female and five were male. Interviews with three high-standing elders associated with Ker Kwaro Acholi, the main cultural institution of the Acholi, were also conducted. Multiple interviews and in-depth discussions with two female ajwakas² as well as several focus group discussions with members of their respective villages were also crucial in the greater understanding of the underlying spiritual nature of the root causes of the culture-bound symptoms of conflict-related distress identified by respondents during the research period. Finally, in-depth, informal conversations with my research advisor, Dr. Daniel Komakech, were imperative in my personal conceptualization of the implications of the information gathered through the research period, and as such, many of my thoughts regarding the epistemic and ontological orientations of the Acholi were catalyzed by his knowledge and wisdom.

0.2 Contextualizing the paper

The Acholi of northern Uganda, a Nilotic people of the larger Luo ethnic group comprised of two other groups spread across South Sudan and western Kenya, are one of an estimated sixty-five ethnic groups within Uganda³. They, along with the Teso and Lango,⁴ are the populations most

2 Ajwakas are indigenous Acholi healers, spirit mediums and diviners. Among other services, ajwakas are utilized in addressing physical, mental, and emotional disease and illness, using their abilities to negotiate between the spirit world and the physical world to construct and interpret meaning and resolve issues among individuals and communities.

3 Ochola Bosco Achege, “Nature of Wars and Armed Conflict in Northern Uganda” (lecture, School for International Training, Gulu, Uganda, September 11, 2012).

4 The Teso and Lango are two other ethnic groups that reside in northern Uganda, primarily east of the Acholi.

affected by the LRA-UPDF⁵ conflict that has relentlessly transpired since the LRA's inception in 1986.

The LRA-UPDF conflict is not only one of Africa's longest running conflicts—it is arguably the most enigmatic of conflicts on the continent today. It is a conflict that, when decontextualized,⁶ as it so often is, seemingly has no motivation, no justification, and no solution in sight. This perception is of course ill-informed, yet remains the prevailing assumption both within the larger Ugandan context and amongst the international community. Following the unsigned (and thus failed) Juba Peace Talks that occurred from 2006 – 2008, the LRA is no longer active in northern Uganda, as it has transferred its activities into neighboring Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Yet, while this relative calmness in northern Uganda has sparked an unwavering air of hopefulness throughout the region, this does not mask the fragility and uncertainty of peace. The past two decades of fear, trauma and liminality caused by the conflict will not soon be forgotten.

It will not soon be forgotten because in those twenty-two years of protracted conflict, an estimated 66,000 children have been abducted and conscripted into the rebel ranks; over 30,000 civilians have been killed, with thousands more mutilated and raped and entire villages burned and looted; and nearly 95% of the entire Acholi population have been forced into IDP⁷ camps of contemptuous condi-

5 The LRA refers to the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group originating in Acholiland which was initially formed in attempts to overthrow the Museveni regime that was at the time just consolidating power within the Ugandan state; the UPDF, or the Uganda People's Defense Forces, is Uganda's national army.

6 While the scope of this paper does not aim to contextualize the conflict within its socio-political and historical context, the original thesis did include an analysis on the way in which the conflict is often decontextualized, with an attempt to briefly contextualize the conflict in its socio-political and historical context. However, due to space, it has been cut.

7 Acronym for internally displaced persons, which is distinguishable

tions.⁸ It will not soon be forgotten because it has left the collective psychological state of the Acholi both vulnerable and traumatized. The extent of trauma that has accumulated over the past two decades of violence, fear, and displacement within Acholiland can be at times hard to grasp; yet it is clear that the shared experience of witnessing, enduring, and even perpetrating traumatic events became intertwined within the day-to-day experiences of the population.

A study conducted in 2008 researching the factors associated with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (a study clearly embedded within Western epistemic and ontological orientations and cultural constructions of trauma, but that is something we shall address later) amongst Uganda's internally displaced sheds light on the imbedded trauma of the Acholi population. The 1,210 IDPs participating in the study revealed that⁹:

Three quarters (75%) of respondents had witnessed or experienced the murder of a family member or friend. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents had witnessed the murder of a stranger⁹ or strangers. More than half (56%) reported having been beaten or tortured. More than 40% reported having been kidnapped and 14% reported having been raped or sexually abused. Over half (58%) of respondents had experienced 8 or more of the 16 trauma events covered in the questionnaire.

Though this study was not carried out in all districts within

from the term refugee in that a refugee has sought refuge outside of his/her country of origin, while an internally displaced person remains in his/her country of origin.

8 Ochan Layoo, "War Trauma and Recovery" (lecture, School for International Training, Gulu, Uganda, September 14, 2012).

9 Bayard Roberts, Kaducu F. Ocaka, John Browne, Thomas Oyok, and Egbert Sondorp, "Factors associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression amongst internally displaced persons in northern Uganda," *BMC Psychiatry* 8 (May 2008), <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-244X/8/38> (accessed November 8, 2012).

the Acholi sub-region, the findings nonetheless display the presence of widespread trauma within the region. The implications of the psychosocial well-being of the individuals affected by such events cannot be understated, and it is clear that healing from such experiences will be an ongoing challenge for the rest of their lives, which holds further implications for their families and the larger communities in which they reside. Thus, social and psychological recovery of war victims poses an enormous, long-term challenge for the Acholi population.

However, it is important not to take statistics at face value. The portrait that these statistics paint are of a people devastated by war, debilitated by its effects and victimized to a point of paralysis. The effects are classic: the continuation of a narrative based on alterity; a narrative of otherization; the same narrative we have read time and time again for generations over. A narrative that perpetuates the postcolonial, contemporary image of Africa as the (neo) Dark Continent:¹⁰ rife with suffering, inhumanity, and the echoes of mortars. A narrative that the international media sensationalizes and fanaticizes, and that the international aid industry heralds as validation for their proliferation of new initiatives. But worst of all, it is a narrative that strips the agency from the people who are experiencing such a socio-cultural milieu, the people who are living in that “Dark Continent,” who, on a daily basis, navigate their way through the maze of mortars and the UN World Food Program bags of rice to arrive at a place of meaning, with a sense of individual ownership over their lives and a sense of belonging with the individuals in their lives.

So while it is necessary to highlight the extent of trauma that accumulated over the course of the conflict so that we may contextualize the topics discussed in this paper, it is important for us, as Westerners, to be conscious of the ways in which we have been socialized to otherize the

10 A 19th century expression used to describe sub-Saharan Africa, see Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, among many others.

peoples of Africa, not only as one big homogenous entity, but as characterized by many of the things that, coincidentally, the Acholi have undergone in the past two decades. It is important for us to be aware of this so that we do not find ourselves, to our dismay, projecting a certain identity, or victimization, or any other ill-conceived assumptions, onto these individuals or the broader Acholi population. Despite the images shown on Invisible Children's documentaries, or news articles written about a delusional and spirit-crazed Joseph Kony, after just one day in Acholiland, you might find it hard to believe that such a state of affairs has occurred. As you watch the sun set beneath that all-expansive sky, as women bend over smoldering fires, laughing and gossiping with one another as they prepare the evening meal, as children run about pushing old bicycle-wheel frames with a stick, and as men play checkers beneath the mango tree or discuss who won the most recent football match on TV, you might find it hard to believe that just a few years earlier, the soil you are standing upon was a war zone, and all the people surrounding you were not here, in their homes, but packed like rats in squalid IDP camps. The vibrant sounds of daily life bustling on might make you forget that nearly every person greeting you with a smile on the street has witnessed the murder of a family member. I say this because such statistics do not say this. I say this because amid the trauma, amid the existential and visceral suffering, amid the war, life does carry on.

As the conflict raged on, it slowly caught the attention of the international community. Without hesitation, NGOs began flooding into the region to offer their help, starting initiatives ranging from income-generating activities to food distribution to psychosocial support programs for war victims and everything in between. By the mid-2000s, the international NGO presence in northern Uganda became among the highest in the world per capita.¹¹ This is important to note, in that northern Uganda is a region

11 Daniel Komakech, "Political History of Conflict in Uganda" (lecture, School for International Training, Gulu, Uganda, September 10, 2012).

historically and contemporary known for its relative isolation from Westernization and modernization in comparison to the larger Ugandan context. The proliferation of Western-based and Western-funded NGOs in the region not only brought in much-needed, amicable support to local people, but with it came a whole new array of exogenous cultural forces never before experienced in Acholiland in such a high density. The tensions created by the interaction between these Western exogenous cultural forces and Acholi endogenous cultural forces are particularly present within the psychosocial interventions run by Western-based and Western-funded NGO initiatives. As hundreds of returnees from LRA captivity came flooding into Gulu town,¹² their need for psychosocial rehabilitation was apparent, both to Acholi communities and to the NGOs working in the region. Accordingly, several rehabilitation centers for returnees of LRA captivity were established to meet the pressing needs of these individuals.

However, both during the conflict and in its current aftermath, many of these programs have been ideologically based in Western cultural constructions of trauma. These NGO programs have put an emphasis on Christianity and “talk-therapy,” and as such, Western modalities of healing have been given precedence over indigenous, Acholi modalities of healing.¹³ These Western-based programs, and the Western epistemic and ontological orientations they are rooted in, seem to imply that both internal perceptions of war-related distress and the manifestations of war-related symptoms of distress are universal, rather than culturally specific and culturally constructed.¹⁴ Yet most of our

12 Gulu town is the largest urban center in northern Uganda, and serves as the main economic, administrative, political, and social hub of northern Uganda.

13 Collection of interviews, interview by author, Acholi-region of Northern Uganda, Nov 3-Dec 13, 2012; Neil Bilotta, “Encompassing Acholi Values: Culturally Ethical Reintegration Ideology for Formerly Abducted Youth of the Lord’s Resistance Army in Northern Uganda” (master’s thesis, Smith School for Social Work, 2011), i.

14 Ibid., 2.

existence, and the way we think about our existence, is a product of cultural construction, and the way we perceive and articulate misfortune —here, the distress caused by war—is no exception.

I argue that the Acholi have their own culturally constructed and localized ways of perceiving, articulating, interpreting and addressing symptoms of conflict-related distress. These understandings contribute to the epistemic and ontological orientations of the Acholi, and being that they are cultural constructs, vary from that of their Western counterparts. To not recognize this, and for humanitarian aid to not harmonize with the cultural context in which it is interacting, could result in such interventions from external agents undermining not only existing local ways of coping, but existing local ways of perceiving how to cope.¹⁵

Thus, the attempt here is to decolonize the “development project.” Through engaging postcolonial theory and critical development theory, I argue that for any relevant and meaningful change to occur in post-conflict northern Uganda, a shift in the way that indigenous knowledge praxis is executed within the development project must be enacted.

1 Literature Review

To contextualize the implications of indigenous, Acholi perceptions of trauma for the NGOs involved in psychotherapy within Acholiland, I draw considerably from critical development theory, post-colonial theory and the discourse on indigenous knowledge frameworks. Utilizing relevant works of scholars such as Dei (2000), Ajei (2007), Briggs and Sharp (2004), Munck (2010), Escobar (1995), Spivak (1988), and others, I attempt to weave elements of these three discourses to emphasize the possibility of engaging post-colonial thought within critical development praxis

15 Thomas Harlacher, “Traditional Ways of Coping with Consequences of Traumatic Stress in Acholiland: Northern Uganda Ethnography from a Western Psychological Perspective” (PhD diss., University of Freiburg, 2009), 3.

so as to de-center Western NGO initiatives. By doing so, I hope to illustrate that Acholi culturally-constructed and – bound knowledges should be the composers, the directors, and the actors of such initiatives.

1.1 Post-colonial theory

While the political domination and economic exploitation that constituted the overt characteristics of colonialism have (technically) come to an end, the more elusive and insidious effects of the “colonization of the mind” still remain embedded within formerly colonized peoples’ consciousness, thus affecting the nature of their lived experiences. The Western values, modes of knowledge, science, and culture that were given precedence during colonialism were also imposed onto and filtered into colonized peoples and their respective cultures, and, more often than not, internalized by them.¹⁶ This “colonization of the mind” alludes to the post-colonial critique of the interplay of knowledge and power, in that modes of knowledge inform the way we articulate and know ourselves, each other, the “other,” and the world in which we exist. Once these Western ways of knowing were imposed upon and internalized by subjugated populations, they became not only mere modes of knowledge, but “modes of power that radically change people’s awareness of themselves and others, that have profound psychological implications, and forever alter the meaning of one’s culture.”¹⁷ Post-colonial theory sets out to analyze what those changes in awareness, psychological implications, and alterations in the meaning of cultures are and critique why and how they occur.

Furthermore, Postcolonialism is largely interested in the ways in which Western knowledge systems have been granted universal validity and applicability and have be-

16 Joanne P. Sharp, *Geographies of Postcolonialism: Spaces of Power and Representation* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2009), 5.

17 Roy R. Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, and Christopher B. Steiner, eds., *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 427.

come the standard to which all other knowledge is gauged.¹⁸ It dares to ask critically questions of epistemology: What is knowledge? What constitutes knowledge? How is knowledge acquired? And who creates, controls, distributes, and consumes this knowledge? Thus, central to its critique is its concern with the ontological and epistemological status of the voices of subaltern peoples within Western knowledge systems.¹⁹

1.2 Critical development theory

The overall goal of critical development theory is to critique the mainstream development paradigm while also providing insights in the construction of a new, emancipatory paradigm.²⁰ One way in which critical development theory does this is by looking at development's historical context and implications. Development studies arose in the late 1940s and 1950s, and were very much concerned with "the modernization of colonial territories and newly-emerging independent countries."²¹ Through this we see that the "development project" is historically rooted in colonialist and Eurocentric tendencies. By forcing development theory to be self-conscious and –critical of itself, critical development theory hopes to reinvent the "development project" to be more inclusive, culturally relevant, and to embody its altruistic intentions.

As described by Escobar, the concept of critical development thought and post-development thought²²

18 Ibid., 5; George J. Sefa Dei, Budd L. Hall, and Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, eds., *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2000), vii.

19 John Briggs, and Joanne Sharp, "Indigenous Knowledges and Development: A Postcolonial Caution," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2004): 664, <http://0-www.jstor.org.library.acaweb.org/stable/3993739>.

20 Ronaldo Munck, "Critical Development Theory: Results and Prospects," *Migración y Desarrollo*, no. 14 (2010): 35, <http://estudiosdeldesarrollo.net/revista/rev14ing/3.pdf>.

21 Alberto Arce, and Norman Long, eds., *Anthropology, Development and Modernities: Exploring Discourses, Counter-tendencies and Violence* (London: Routledge, 2000), 5.

22 Arturo Escobar, "Culture sits in places: reflections on global-

has become a heuristic for re-learning to see and reassess the reality of communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America...a way to signal this possibility, an attempt to carve out a clearing for thinking other thoughts, seeing other things, writing in other languages.

The point of critical development as a theory is to go beyond theory: to not only discuss theoretically the Eurocentric tendencies within development praxis, but also to act on the theory generated from this dialogue by implementing such theory into praxis.

1.3 Indigenous knowledge discursive framework

As noted by Dei, with the onset of both colonialism and the “development project,” the world was gazed upon through a Western lens. The plurality of knowledge systems in our world thus transformed into a hierarchy of knowledge systems.²³ An indigenous knowledge framework is based on the aim of deconstructing the vertical hierarchy of “unequal” knowledge systems to a horizontal ordering of equally-valid knowledge systems. Thus, an indigenous knowledge discursive framework revolves around the notion that local peoples have indigenous ways of acting, feeling, knowing, and making sense of the social and natural worlds, and that they “experience and interpret the contemporary world in ways that are continuous and consistent with their indigenous worldviews.”²⁴ In Dei’s words, indigenous knowledge²⁵

ism and subaltern strategies of localization,” *Political Geography* 20, no. 2 (2001): 153, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629800000640>.

23 George J. Sefa Dei, Budd L. Hall, and Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, eds., *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2000), vii.

24 Ibid., 71.

25 Ibid., 6.

refers to traditional norms and social values, and to mental constructs that guide, organize, and regulate the people's way of living and making sense of their world. It is the sum of the experience and knowledge of a given social group, and forms the basis of decision making in the face of challenges both familiar and unfamiliar.

The inclusion of local voices and priorities requires the "development project" to de-center both its perceptions and initiatives from its own Western way of looking at the world so as to re-center their perceptions and initiatives into the worldview and understandings of the local peoples and beneficiaries such initiatives are geared towards.

2.0 Acholi perceptions of trauma and its necessary healing: A glimpse into an indigenous, epistemic & ontological understanding

The goal of this paper is to explore culturally-specific conceptualizations of health and illness in order to gain a greater understanding of how these cultural models "guide, orient, and direct action, constructing and constraining ordinary knowledge and experience in a particular cultural world."²⁶ The way people view health and illness is deduced largely from people's culturally-constructed conceptions of normality and abnormality. Illness is then a cultural construction that is representative of psychosocial experience.²⁷ Illness, as defined in the *Dictionary of Anthropology*, "refers to a person's perceptions and lived experience of sickness or being 'diseased.'"²⁸ As discussed by Kleinman, while disease and illness are similar, the two are separate

26 Thomas Barfield, ed., *The Dictionary of Anthropology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 105.

27 Ibid., 256; Arthur Kleinman, *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture: An Exploration of the Borderland between Anthropology, Medicine, and Psychiatry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 71.

28 Barfield, ed., *Dictionary*, 256.

and independent of one another. Whereas disease is more universal in that it exclusively refers to the malfunction of biological and/or psychological processes, illness is the experience and meaning individuals and societies tack onto the state of being “diseased.”²⁹

Since such extremes of war and violence had never before been experienced in Acholiland prior to the LRA-UPDF conflict, no Acholi word exists for the illness that is indicative of the plurality of symptoms discussed below within the specific context of the war. Rather, alongside the proliferation of Western-based and -funded NGOs, the term “trauma” has been widely appropriated by the Acholi as the name of the specific illness experienced by conflict-affected individuals with the below symptoms.

2.1 Culture-bound symptoms of trauma

Through this qualitative research, several indigenous, culture-bound symptoms of war-related psychosocial illness were identified. These include, but are not limited to the following: *kome nure* (the sickness that demoralizes you), *kumu* (pain in the heart), *kome bedo dibidibi* (apathy), *ajiji* (trauma itself) and *apoya* (the madness). It is important to note, though, that while frequently identified in individuals affected by the war, these symptoms are not limited to distress and terror from war and can be present in individuals for a multitude of reasons.

However, with the conflict came a dramatic increase in the presence of these symptoms within Acholi society. As described by an ajwaka, who reported a massive influx in community members afflicted with such symptoms soliciting her healing services during the conflict: “The conflict which took so long got in so many bad things...that is why most of these things are happening...so surely before the conflict which took so long, the level of madness was so low.”³⁰ Here we will focus on their relation to war-affected individuals.

29 Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, 72.

30 Ibid.

Kome nure was explained as the sickness that demoralizes oneself, as it makes one feel terrible and drains one's energy to the point that one can hardly think. As described by an ajwaka, *kome nure* is present when "a sense of hopelessness sets down in their mind and in their heart, and then their bodies become limp; they cannot be active anymore."³¹ It is experienced by the afflicted as both hopelessness and bodily weakness. *Kumu* is pain in the heart. *Kumu* manifests itself when one has trouble sleeping; often-times one wants to be alone and quiet. One also feels cold and weak, and suffers from loss of appetite and frequent headaches. *Kome bedo dibidibi* refers to the general feeling of apathy and of not wanting to do anything, and is often accompanied with an impairment in social functioning as one has no desire to be social and "does not relate well to others."³² Respondents explained that *kumu* and *kome bedo dibidibi* are both similar and interrelated to *kome nure*, but are more specific, while *kome nure* is more all-encompassing.

According to the elders at Ker Kwaro Acholi, *ajiji* is "trauma itself," and various manifestations of it include, but may not be limited to the following: talking very little; appearing to be dizzy; suffering from persistent and constant nightmares; isolating oneself from others; crying easily and often, as well as being easily irritated; and frequently trembling and shouting.³³ According to one elder, someone might know a person is afflicted with *ajiji* when "the person is not decided, you see, he looks afraid all the time, undecided...so we know, this person is in danger."³⁴ If *ajiji* does not heal on its own as time passes—as it occasionally does according to several elders—or, if it is not addressed in the form of cleansing or another mode of healing, then *ajiji* can lead to the more severe *apoya*.

31 Collection of interviews, interview by author, Acholi-region of Northern Uganda, Nov 3-Dec 13, 2012.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

When asked about *apoya*, many respondents described it simply as “the madness”. However, an elder in Gulu town went further, explaining that while it can manifest itself in many different forms, it often is embodied in: visions in which people vividly see certain events of their past, overtly aggressive behavior or excessive shouting, talking nonsense about things that have no relation to current situations, and moving around in long and aimless walks.³⁵

All of the individuals who I spoke with who had spent time in LRA rebel captivity informed me that they had experienced at least two of these symptoms, and three of them had experienced all of these symptoms. According to them, these symptoms were most extreme upon first returning from rebel captivity, and while some have fully healed from these symptoms today, there are others who continue to feel these symptoms from time to time.³⁶

Many of these symptoms are psychosomatic, in that manifestations of symptoms include both physical and non-physical (whether it be mental or emotional) traits. Western thought would deduce that the physiological aspects of these symptoms would be the result of the non-physical aspects of the symptom. For example, the physiological loss of appetite and frequent headaches characteristic of experiencing *kumu* would be assumed to be the result of the non-physical experience of pain in the heart. However, that rationalization does not necessarily align with Acholi understandings. As explained by one *ajwaka*, just because certain characteristics of a symptom are physical while others are non-physical (psychological and/or emotional), that does not mean that the physical characteristic is the result of the non-physical characteristic;³⁷ they cannot be separated from one another so simply. According to the *ajwaka*, the physical and the non-physical exist together.³⁸ This brings us

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Collection of interviews, interview by author, Acholi-region of Northern Uganda, Nov 3-Dec 13, 2012.

38 Ibid.

to two understandings. Firstly, that the Acholi view health and illness in a holistic manner, in that the physical and the non-physical, the body and the mind-spirit, are inherently connected and must be viewed and addressed as such. Secondly, because one cannot view the physical symptoms as the result of the psychological and/or emotional symptoms, as a Western psychosomatic diagnosis would deduce, the root cause of these symptoms lies somewhere else.

3.1 The root causes of the above culture-bound symptoms: Cen and the spirit world

Acholi indigenous and localized interpretations of well-being are informed by social values and understandings that are intricately intertwined within their own cosmology. Acholi perceptions of the root causes of the culture-bound symptoms discussed above, as well as what it means to heal, is deeply embedded within indigenous spiritual beliefs and perceptions of the spirit world.

Central to Acholi understandings of the existence and manifestations of the above localized symptoms of trauma, particularly in relation to returnees from LRA captivity, is the notion and interpretation of *cen*. *Cen* is the spirit of a dead person who is upset or angry, particularly the dead who died an unnatural and unfair death.³⁹ This spirit can enter into the mind-body-spirit of a person for a variety of reasons, such as participating in the killing of someone; witnessing the killing of someone; or by treating the dead or dying in an ill-manner by not performing the indigenous, customary rituals for them.⁴⁰

The way that *cen* is contracted shifted as mass killings became a normal part of daily life. Today, it is also assumed that *cen* can be contracted by simply walking through a space where *cen* is present; in other words, by walking through a space where many people have been killed.⁴¹ As the Acholi have faced a drastic influx of kill-

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

ings in the face of the conflict, this is evidence of the ways in which “traditional” elements of society are not static or fixed in a timeless past; rather, they are constantly evolving and in flux with the natural ebb and flow of life’s changing circumstances and culture’s adaptation to those changes. As described by Finnstrom:⁴²

The lifeworld...is culture as practiced and negotiated in everyday social life. It is not simply a worldview statically reproduced. Cosmology, from this perspective, is an everyday process of social contest and human creativity (Kapferer 2002:20f).

Moreover, before the conflict, and before the massive proliferation of war victims afflicted with conflict-related psychosocial illness, the prevalence of being afflicted with *cen* and the nature of being afflicted with it, although similar, varied greatly. Prior to the conflict, being afflicted with *cen* was not as frequent of an occurrence—social mores were strongly in place.⁴³ Unfair killings or deaths were not commonplace, and deaths were nearly always addressed with the customary and indigenous funerary rites; psychosocial illness was not commonplace, either.

However, with the conflict came the disruption of normal life that confronted the Acholi with extreme circumstances; with chaos came the disruption of social mores. Both perpetrating and witnessing killings became commonplace, particularly in the case of LRA abductees, who were not only frequently put on the front lines in battle and in village attacks, but who were almost always either forced to kill or witness someone who was forced to kill as

42 Sverker Finnström, “Living with Bad Surroundings: War and Existential Uncertainty in Acholiland” (PhD diss., Uppsala University, 2003).

43 Collection of interviews, interview by author, Acholi-region of Northern Uganda, Nov 3-Dec 13, 2012.

part of their initiation into the rebel ranks.⁴⁴ Deaths, according to several LRA returnees, that were committed as part of the rebel initiations, as well as other killings that occurred within the life-world of the LRA, were normally not accompanied with indigenous funerary rites and rituals.⁴⁵ The spirits of *cen* thus became increasingly prevalent.

Among village life outside of the “bush”⁴⁶ families and communities were experiencing an abnormal influx of deaths. Proper funerary rites and rituals became increasingly hard to manage and perform for two main reasons.. Firstly, they are often relatively expensive and time-consuming. Secondly, killings of villagers by the LRA were often the result of village raiding and looting. Surviving villagers were not only faced with the deaths of many of their relatives and community-members, but were also faced with having their homes burnt, their livestock and harvests taken, and their lives in a state of chaos. The imperative need to merely survive the coming day made it hard to dedicate the time and resources to performing the proper rituals for the deceased.⁴⁷ Yet again, according to Acholi understandings, these circumstances allowed for a massive increase in the prevalence of *cen*.

Here we see that, “by framing the alien within existing cosmological practices, it can be brought under control. Eventually, its menace can be disarmed.”⁴⁸ This reveals the way in which “traditional” aspects of culture and cosmology are far from static. As part of the human condition, we strive to make sense out of the world around us and in the

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 The “bush” refers simply to uninhabited areas. In context to the conflict, the “bush” became synonymous with the “land of the rebels,” and was considered the areas in which the LRA roamed and inhabited. As such, phrases like “when I was taken to the bush” or “when I escaped/returned from the bush” are common ways returnees from rebel captivity explained being abducted by the LRA or escaping the LRA.

47 Collection of interviews, interview by author, Acholi-region of Northern Uganda, Nov 3-Dec 13, 2012.

48 Finnström, “Living with Bad Surroundings,” 42.

experiences that we endure. The disruption of social mores and normal life, and the drastic increase in psychosocial illness and rampant killings have led the Acholi to interpret and articulate these abnormal circumstances through the notion of the already established understanding of *cen*.

When *cen* enters into the mind-body-spirit, it can manifest itself in any of the indigenous symptoms described above.⁴⁹ *Cen* will continue to affect an individual until measures by the individual's community are performed in order both to cleanse the individual from such spirits, as well as to appease those spirits.

3.2 Cen and its implications on Acholi ontological and epistemic orientations

In an attempt to illuminate certain characteristics of Acholi society and the world in which they exist, I have chosen to view these culturally constructed symptoms of conflict-related distress and the perceptions of the root causes of those symptoms through an epistemic and on ontological lens. Particularly, I focus and expound upon the concept of *cen* discussed in the previous section. I align with Nordstrom and Finnstrom in their assertion that it is not solely academia or proclaimed philosophers who produce epistemology, while people in their day-to-day lives produce only "popular thought."⁵⁰ Rather, people in their experiential lives strive to make meaning of their world, and as such, "philosophy and epistemology are part and parcel of cultural life."⁵¹ Just as culture and cosmology are not statically produced and reproduced within a society, neither is philosophy statically produced and reproduced in a classroom or in academic journals. What I hope to reveal is that, as eloquently stated by the Acholi-born Okot p'Bitek,

49 Collection of interviews, interview by author, Acholi-region of Northern Uganda, Nov 3-Dec 13, 2012.

50 Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 27; Finnström, "Living with Bad Surroundings," 17.

51 Finnström, "Living with Bad Surroundings," 17.

“culture is philosophy as lived and celebrated in a society.”⁵²

There are several specific attributes of *cen* that reflect particular Acholi social values and are indicative of particular elements of an Acholi ontological orientation. First, *cen* is believed to not only affect the individual who has contracted the spirit, but implicates the family and community, as well. If the individual is not taken care of and healed from *cen*, *cen* can seep into the mind-body-spirit of the affected-individual’s family, causing individuals close to the afflicted-individual to suffer from the same psychosocial illness that s/he is suffering from. This reflects the collectivist and communitarian essence of Acholi culture, in that what affects an individual quite literally affects the community. It reveals that one basis in which the Acholi interpret, articulate, and know the world in which they exist lies in the ontological premise “I am because we are,” reflecting a worldview whereby the collective mind is fundamentally based on the notion that “I” is contingent upon “we.”⁵³

One rebel’s return from the bush reflects this ontological statement as he described his affliction of *cen* upon returning. When asked how he knew that he was afflicted with *cen*, the respondent replied: “It is difficult to say as an individual... it was identified by members of the community in my home.”⁵⁴ In this way, the communities of returnees from LRA captivity have implicated themselves as an integral facet of the returnee’s reintegration and healing by identifying the affliction the returnee is suffering from and becoming a part of the subsequent healing process. This validates the assertion that, within the Acholi cultural-context, trauma healing must not be individualized, as it is in the Western context of “talk therapy,” but rather placed within their specific socio-cultural context so to engage the

52 Okot p’Bitek, *Artist, the Ruler: Essays on Art, Culture, and Values, including Extracts from Song of Soldier and White Teeth Make People Laugh on Earth* (Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1986), 13.

53 Collection of interviews, interview by author, Acholi-region of Northern Uganda, Nov 3-Dec 13, 2012.

54 Ibid.

trauma-affected individual's familial and other interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, this ontological premise "I am because we are" was further reflected during an interview conducted with an elder in Gulu town. When asked whether he felt that communities are healing from the conflict, he explained that it is very hard to answer that question. He explained that while measures are being taken to incur healing among both individuals and communities, and that healing is indeed occurring, full healing remains impossible because of the multitude of children who remain in captivity, or who have not been accounted for. As explained in his words:

...as for now it is difficult to say because those children who are still in captivity, there is still a big big big pain in our hearts for them, because of the African extended family, even if he is not your child who is out there, we still feel for them.

Through this, we see that while a certain level of healing can occur among individuals, full healing lingers only as a thought for as long as the healing of the community, and of the greater society, remains inaccessible. Thus, individual well-being is contingent upon the well-being of the community, and as such, "I" becomes contingent upon "we."

Another important aspect of *cen* is that it is not solely concerned with the living individual who is afflicted with psychosocial illness that has been caused by it. It is also deeply concerned with healing and appeasing the spirit of the dead person who has inflicted itself onto the living individual. Thus, conceptions of psychosocial illness among the Acholi, and its subsequent healing process, indicates not only the living, but the dead, as well. For the Acholi, the well-being of society is all-inclusive, and is concerned with the well-being of both the living and the non-living. The living community cannot thrive if the non-living—both the dead and the ancestors—are unable to thrive. This reveals

that, for the Acholi, ontology “conceives of [the] human community as a continuum of the unborn, the living and those who have ‘remained somewhere.’”⁵⁵

Thus, the notion of *cen* reveals the intrinsic interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual worlds, and the way in which day-to-day events and actions are interpreted and understood in relation to the supernatural and the spiritual. Here we see that an Acholi ontological orientation affirms “both a visible and invisible aspect of the world.”⁵⁶ The embodied and localized way of knowing among the Acholi places an emphasis on the spiritual causes of ordinary and extraordinary events in the physical lives of individuals and communities; the ways of coping with such events are informed and synthesized with spiritual elements. The entire social fabric of the Acholi is understood, validated, and enforced by religious and spiritual worlds.⁵⁷ Thus, the⁵⁸

phenomenon of *cen* illustrates the centrality of relationships between the natural and supernatural worlds of Acholi, the living and the dead, and the normative continuity between individual and the community.

Alongside these elements of an ontological orientation lie elements of Acholi epistemic orientations, as well. As described by Odei in his reflections on Ramose’s *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*:⁵⁹

55 Odei Martin Ajei, “Africa’s Development: The Imperative of Indigenous Knowledge and Values” (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2007), 141.

56 Ibid., 143.

57 E. K. Baines, *Roco Wat I Acoli: Restoring Relationships in Acholi-land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration* (The Liu Institute for Global Issues, Gulu District NGO Forum & Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2005), 10-12.

58 Ibid., 12.

59 Odei Martin Ajei, “Africa’s Development,” 121.

Knowledge and being cannot be separated. On this view, epistemology is as much an ontological reflection as ontology is an epistemological concern. “Accordingly, African ontology and epistemology must be understood as two aspects of one and the same reality” [quoting Ramose].

In this way, the epistemic orientations of the Acholi are based in the recognition of the interplay and the interconnectedness of the natural world and the supernatural world. Epistemological elements of the Acholi are revealed in the way that, according to the Acholi-born Okot p’Bitek, “religious beliefs and practices are used to diagnose, explain and interpret the individual causes of misfortune and illness.”⁶⁰ For the Acholi, then, knowledge is not simply constituted as what can be seen in the physical world, or what can be rationalized by scientific inquiry, but by understandings of the spirit world and the knowledge that the spirit world bequeaths onto Acholi society. Through this, we see that while knowledge is acquired and validated through the five perceivable senses, the acquisition and validation of knowledge is not limited to those five perceivable senses. Knowledge is also constituted and validated through the invisible realm of the world, as well – the realm of spirit and the realm of the non-living.

4.1 Conclusion: Rethinking the Acholi-NGO relationship

What remains clear through the discussion above is that the Acholi have their own culturally constructed ways of interpreting, articulating, and understanding notions of trauma and of conflict-related distress, and that from these understandings it is possible to deduce certain ontological and epistemological features of an Acholi worldview, culture, and philosophy. With these understandings in mind,

60 Okot p’Bitek, *Religion of the Central Luo* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1971), 160.

the question must be raised: is the cross-cultural transfer of Western modalities of healing relevant and applicable to the northern Uganda context? Is utilizing “talk therapy” and Christian values relative and meaningful to Acholi individuals in their process of healing from the personal trauma that has been inflicted upon them by their experiences of the LRA-UPDF conflict? I think the simple answer is no. Our personal perceptions of the world are filtered through cultural particulars that are deeply rooted in socio-cultural values and understandings, and embodied ways of knowing the world in which we exist.

Whereas an Acholi understanding of the world asserts the interdependence of the individual and the community, the continuity between the living and the non-living, and the natural and supernatural worlds, a Western understanding of the world asserts the individualization of lived experience. Within Western notions of trauma healing, the main presupposition of understandings of conflict-related trauma is the notion that all symptoms are rooted within the mind and within psychological processes.⁶¹ As highlighted by Bilotta: “Western-based interventions pertaining to combat-related trauma focuses specifically on the suffering individual’s internal process of coping.”⁶² Through this individualization, the effects of trauma are perceived exclusively in the context of the afflicted individual’s intrapsychic existence, and can thus be removed from the context of the larger social world in which the individual exists. In this way, a Western, scientific understanding of trauma and its subsequent healing asserts that it is viable to ignore “the socio-political-cultural context in which trauma occurs.”⁶³

61 Boris Drozdek, and John P. Wilson, eds., *Voices of Trauma: Treating Psychological Trauma Across Cultures* (New York: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC, 2007).

62 Neil Bilotta, “Encompassing Acholi Values: Culturally Ethical Reintegration Ideology for Formerly Abducted Youth of the Lord’s Resistance Army in Northern Uganda” (master’s thesis, Smith School for Social Work, 2011), 47.

63 Drozdek and Wilson, eds., *Voices of Trauma*, 9.

This individualization of perceptions regarding the root causes of symptoms, as well as the process of its healing, reflects an ontological distinction between the individual and the community and the individual and the context that s/he is situated in.

Moreover, for the Acholi, knowledge is not only acquired through the perceivable five senses, but through the unperceivable, invisible aspects of the world found in the realm of spirit and the supernatural. Yet in the West, knowledge is constituted as that which can be perceived through the five senses and that which can be proven through scientific inquiry and analysis.

Through this exploratory study, we find that understandings of trauma and conflict-related distress and the modalities in which we heal are indeed culturally specific. Both are valid within the respective culture in which they originate from. For the Westerner, an individualized trauma-therapy whereby the afflicted individual exposes him-or herself to the traumatic memories by talking them through with a psychology expert makes sense. For the Acholi, community-based rituals of cleansing the afflicted-individual of past experiences, and rituals mediated by an *ajwaka* to cleanse the afflicted-individual of *cen* make sense. Both are justified, and neither is more or less valid than the other.

However, when one mode of trauma healing is imported cross-culturally, these healing modalities—and the worldview and embodied philosophy they are embedded in—do become more or less validated than the other. For us as Westerners, the thought that the trauma we are experiencing has its roots in the spirit world does not align with our own culturally-constructed understandings of trauma and the path towards healing from it. The idea of individually working through traumatic memories with the help of a psychologist in order to introspectively rearrange our psychological processes most likely does not align with the majority of Acholi villagers, either.

If Western-based-and-funded NGO operations

involved in psychosocial aid initiatives in northern Uganda want to truly benefit the region and the local peoples they are working with, they must think twice about the modalities of healing they give precedence to; moreover, they must recognize the cultural and psychosocial implications of utilizing those modalities on the local peoples the initiatives set out to help. Yet, as simple and apparent as this seems, this understanding has not been fully implemented in the praxis of psychosocial aid interventions worldwide. Within the case of northern Uganda, the many international NGOs that have implemented psychosocial initiatives for war victims have more often than not focused primarily on “talk therapy” and Christian therapy, overlooking cosmologically-informed understandings such as *cen* that are vital to Acholi understandings of trauma and its subsequent healing.⁶⁴ Whether intentional or not, the implications of exporting Western modes of knowledge and Western modes of trauma healing into non-Western regions of the world are tremendous. Giving precedence to Western understandings of trauma and trauma healing— and thus Western epistemology and ontology—implicates such knowledge as universally valid. This then implicates Acholi understandings of trauma and trauma healing—and thus Acholi epistemology and ontology—as invalid or less valid when compared to their Western counterparts. As asserted by Bilotta:⁶⁵

What persistently remains evident is that if Western-based, combat-related trauma theory is not adapted or translated to fit into the Acholi culture, Western intervention runs a serious risk of post colonial hegemony.

64 Collection of interviews, interview by author, Acholi-region of Northern Uganda, Nov 3-Dec 13, 2012; Bilotta, “Encompassing Acholi Values.”

65 Bilotta, “Encompassing Acholi Values,” 104.

Western intervention runs a risk of post-colonial hegemony because ultimately, importing Western modes of trauma healing into Acholiland amounts to the imposition of Western modes of knowledge onto non-western, war-affected individuals. This imposition could then lead to a drastic alteration of the way in which Acholi individuals perceive themselves and the world in which they exist, which could potentially carry with it grave repercussions for Acholi culture, modes of knowledge, and lived and embodied philosophy. Such an imposition amounts to furthering the “colonization of the mind” that was first established during colonialism, but that is now being (perhaps unconsciously) perpetuated by the “development project.”

Western-based NGOs involved in psychosocial interventions must not only acknowledge this indigenous knowledge and understanding—they must let these local voices and the life-world from which they originate construct culturally-specific healing programs. To not value Acholi worldviews, understandings, and philosophy is to undermine not only the outcomes of such projects, but to undermine Acholi culture and values in a Eurocentric and ideologically colonialistic manner.

Thus, if psycho-social initiatives involved in the healing of war victims in Acholiland are to be meaningful and affective, they must involve self-awareness of the epistemic and ontological orientations such projects are rooted in, and include conscious de-centering of those orientations so as to let Acholi indigenous knowledge become the epicenter from which such programs are constructed. If there is anything we learn from this dialogue, it is that⁶⁶

an emancipatory approach to development
should be able to build on the ability of local
peoples to generate and apply their own knowl-

66 George J. Sefa Dei, Budd L. Hall, and Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, eds., *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2000), 80. 139

edges and cultural and social histories. But for this to happen, there must be an understanding of local conceptions of lived realities and how daily human experiences are sustained by community and individual networks and ties...and by other social support systems.

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Acknowledgments

To start, I want to acknowledge and give thanks to all of the friends I discovered while living in Acholiland, and all of those who participated in my research—particularly ajwakas Mego Santa and Mego Aceng. To all of you: thank you for your all-encompassing generosity, for answering my endless questions (and in return, asking me endless questions), for teaching me to harvest cassava and cook okono, and for shamelessly laughing at me daily, whether it be for speaking broken Acholi-Luo, for my attempts at learning to balance anything and everything on my head, or for all those instances where something seemed to be lost in translation. To my research advisor Daniel Komakech, for the long-winded, engaging conversations that jumped from culture to philosophy to spirituality, and to anything else under the expansive night sky. To Christey Carwile, who although was not a part of this paper in any way, nonetheless provoked and inspired me in ways I'm not even sure she knows. And to the one and only David Abernathy: if it wasn't for you, I don't think my transient, all-over-the-place thoughts ever would have found their way onto paper. Thank you for your persistence, guidance, and comical encouragement throughout the writing process. And finally, to Wes Tirey: I couldn't ask for a more enjoyable editor. Thanks for putting up with my stylistic stubbornness, and for having endless patience with me as I cut this thesis in half.

The Battlefield on Women's Bodies: Comparing the Causes of Mass Rape in the Genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina

Abstract:

In the 1990s, the world was shocked by the brutal use of sexual violence in the genocides in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. While much attention has been given to the causes of that violence in each case individually, there has been little examination of what these cases tell us about the causes of mass rape in genocides more generally. The conflicts and contexts in Rwanda and Yugoslavia differ so extensively that any similarities that exist between them are likely to be either significant contributors to or warning signs of mass rape in genocides universally. This paper uses survivor testimony and secondary analysis to examine the causes of mass rape in each genocide, then examines the similarities between the two. It finds that each case shared similar gender roles, both male and female; that the aggressor party in each case had a cultural memory of having been victimized by the group they were attacking; and that economic troubles created a crisis of masculinity in each state, making men more susceptible to propaganda inciting them to violence. It concludes that male gender roles were one of the most significant contributors to mass rape in both Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Megan Gordon | Global Studies



Megan's passion for issues of genocide began when she followed her inexplicable compulsion to spend a semester in Rwanda studying post-genocide restoration with the School of International Training. That passion expanded to include sexual violence when a brave friend started a blog where she publically discussed her rape and the long

process of recovery. Her thesis topic was the natural product of a desire to merge these two passions. Today, Megan is attending law school at Emory University, where she plans to study international humanitarian law. After law school, she hopes to work for the prevention of war crimes and sexual violence.

I dedicate this work to the survivors, for whom the nightmare never truly ends. May we honor your suffering by creating a world where we can honestly say, "Never again." And to Sarah Silver, who changed the course of my life with one single act of bravery. I offer this work in hopes that these women's courage will one day be unnecessary.

Introduction

The popular thinking around atrocities like genocide and mass rape is that they are acts of evil too terrible to have any logical explanation. This perception is not only incorrect; it is dangerous. When we write these horrors off as incomprehensible, we do not hold ourselves responsible for the contexts that created them, and we prevent ourselves from learning anything that might help us address these catastrophes better in the future.

In the 1990s, the world was shocked by the outbreak of genocides in both Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the end of a millennium that had seen so much human advancement, we were reminded of the inhumanity of which we are capable. Not only were these genocides horrifying for their mere existence, but they were also exceptionally brutal in their sexual violence towards women. Mass rape was a key fixture in the genocides in both Rwanda and Bosnia, and while many scholars have discussed the causes of rape in each case individually, few have examined them for commonalities. Because these genocides occurred during the same time period but were otherwise in two very separate contexts, I believe that a comparison of the causes of mass rape in Rwanda and Bosnia could reveal the causes – or at least the warning signs – of mass rape in genocides more generally.

This paper discusses the causes of mass rape in each case individually before moving to a discussion of their similarities. I used evidence from survivor testimonies in

conjunction with interpretations from scholars such as Wendy Bracewell, Lynda E. Boose, and Christopher Mullins, and I found three key similarities in the causes of mass rape in each genocide. First, the aggressor group in each case had a cultural memory of victimization by the group they were attacking. Secondly, Rwandan and Bosnian culture shared meanings of rape that made it an effective weapon against enemy men, even while women were the ones being attacked. Third, in the years preceding the genocide, each state experienced economic troubles, which created a crisis of masculinity, causing men to feel frustrated and tacked. Third, in the years preceding the genocide, each state experienced economic troubles, which created a crisis of masculinity, causing men to feel frustrated and emasculated. Both governments manipulated these frustrations, presenting participation in the genocides as a way for these men to win back their individual masculinity. Each of these factors combined to create a volatile environment in which women's bodies became a part of the battlefield.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Background

The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, later renamed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was established in 1946. It had a federalist system of government, made up of the autonomous republics of Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina (one for each of the state's main ethnic groups), and with two autonomous provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo, which had slightly less agency than the republics. The republics had so much autonomy that there was little incentive for them to cooperate with one another, but any nationalist competition that might have sprung up was prevented by Josip Broz Tito. Tito led the country from 1953 until his death in 1980, holding the country together with an iron fist and quelling ethnic nationalism in favor of communist

notions of brotherhood and unity.¹ Tito's death was shortly followed by a global economic crash, which increased the competition between the republics. Exacerbated by economic competition, and without a leader like Tito to stop it, ethnic nationalism rapidly took hold. In the words of Michael Moodie,²

The absence of democratic institutions eliminated any possibility that extensive public political activity could be channeled into a civic nationalism to fill the political and ideological void. The alternative was ethnic nationalism, and it came to be regarded as the best way to provide both economic and physical security for a self-defined people. The propensity to nationalist extremism and demagoguery that the absence of institutions also promoted further undermined the ability to channel competing claims and interests into mechanisms that could avoid violent confrontations.

It was amid these growing tensions that Slobodan Milosevic took power in Serbia in 1987, and he immediately began appealing to Serbian nationalism as a way to expand his power. One of his first acts as president was to revoke the autonomy of the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, making them directly accountable to the Serbian government in Belgrade.³ For obvious reasons, the other republics began to perceive Serbian nationalism as a threat, causing them to elect their own hyper-nationalist leaders. The situation escalated, and in 1991 both Croatia and Slovenia declared

1 Michael Moodie, "The Balkan Tragedy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 541 (1995): 103, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1048278>.

2 Ibid., 103.

3 Ibid., 103-104.

themselves independent.⁴ Bosnia-Herzegovina followed suit the next year, holding a referendum for secession at the beginning of March. While Serbia had fought to prevent the secession of Croatia and Slovenia, the potential independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina was seen as a particular threat due to the republic's large Serbian population. These Serbs had boycotted the referendum, and they threatened to declare the independence of the territories inhabited by Serbs if the Bosnian government claimed its independence. Despite their protests, Bosnia-Herzegovina declared itself an independent state on March 3, 1992.⁵ Bosnia's Serbian population sprang into action. Armed and supported by the Serbian government, they promptly took control of Serb-dominated areas throughout Bosnia and began a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Bosniacs.

The Serbian genocide against the Bosniacs (Bosnian Muslims) exemplified one of the most shockingly systematic examples of mass rape ever witnessed. Bosniac women of all ages were raped nightly in Serbian detention camps, and many women were brutally mutilated as part of their rape.⁶ Serbian soldiers frequently took young women prisoner, keeping them as sex slaves, selling them to brothels or other soldiers when they tired of them.⁷ The world was shocked by the creation of rape camps, where women would be held captive and raped until they became pregnant, set free only

4 Ibid., 105.

5 Ibid., 107.

6 "We Survived, We Overcame Fascism," in *I Begged Them to Kill Me: Crime Against the Women of Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Irfan Ajanovic, trans. Dubravka Dostal (Sarajevo: Center for Investigation and Documentation of the Association of Former Prison Camp Inmates of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2000), 98.

7 "Buying and Selling Detained Bosniac Women" in *I Begged Them to Kill Me: Crime Against the Women of Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Irfan Ajanovic, trans. Dubravka Dostal (Sarajevo: Center for Investigation and Documentation of the Association of Former Prison Camp Inmates of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2000), 89.

when it was too late for them to end the pregnancy.⁸ While rape historically has been a part of war, the Serbs brought a shocking level of intention to the practice, consciously adopting rape as a military strategy.

Rape and Gender Roles

Certain aspects of Yugoslav gender roles made women a strategic target during the genocide. In both Bosnian and Serbian culture, a child's ethnicity was determined solely by the ethnicity of the father.⁹ This was key to the strategic use of rape in the genocide, because it meant that if a Bosniac woman was impregnated by a Serb man, that child would be considered fully Serbian. If this had not been the case, if the child would have been half Bosniac and half Serb, then it is likely that mass rape would not have occurred during the genocide, because it would only have contradicted the ethnic purity that was the ultimate goal of the genocide. The concept of mixed ethnicity does not exist in either Serbian or Bosniac society, and this construction made rape a very useful way of expanding one population at the expense of another. Without it, the infamous Serbian rape camps would have been useless. Instead, Serb soldiers held women captive in the camps and raped them repeatedly until they became pregnant, then held them until it was too late for them to abort the pregnancy. Many survivors reported that their rapists gloated, saying that they were carrying "Serbian seed," that they would give birth to little Serb soldiers who would grow up to slit their mother's throats.¹⁰ This attitude—and the actions that accompanied

8 Siobhán K. Fisher, "Occupation of the Womb: Forced Impregnation as Genocide," *Duke Law Journal* 46 (1996): 107, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1372967>.

9 Fisher, "Occupation of the Womb: Forced Impregnation as Genocide," 114.

10 Lynda E. Boose, "National Countermemories: Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement, and Serb Cultural Memory," *Signs* 28 (2002): 75, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/>

it—would not have existed if men were not the sole decider of a child's ethnic identity.

Rape was not only meant to increase the Serbian population, but also to decrease the Bosniac population by preventing raped women from having children in the future. In Bosniac culture, rape carried such a strong stigma that it was likely to render the raped woman ineligible for marriage in the future, especially when the rape resulted in an illegitimate child.¹¹ In the words of one survivor, "They wanted women to have children to stigmatize us forever."¹² However, in the event that a man did choose to marry the dishonored woman, the expectation was that the trauma of a violent sexual assault would prevent her from having sex or bearing children in the future.¹³ Mass rape was meant to expand the Serbian population at the expense of the Bosniac one by interrupting the reproductive cycle of a generation through stigma that would render a woman unmarried and trauma meant to make her unable to have children.

Gender roles in Serb and Bosniac society meant that rape, in addition to being an assault on a woman, was also an attack on her male relatives. Both cultures are extremely patriarchal, with women viewed as caretakers and men as their providers and protectors.¹⁴ This dynamic made rape

10.1086/340921.

11 Ibid., 73.

12 Fisher, "Occupation of the Womb: Forced Impregnation as Genocide," 112.

13 Muhamed Filipović, "Socio-Psychological and Anthropological Analysis of the Criminal Character, Especially of Atrocities Against Bosniacs During the Serb Aggression Against Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *I Begged Them to Kill Me: Crime Against the Women of Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Irfan Ajanovic, trans. Colleen London, (Sarajevo: Center for Investigation and Documentation of the Association of Former Prison Camp Inmates of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2000), 66.

14 Maria B. Olujić, "Embodiment of Terror: Gendered Violence in Peacetime and Wartime in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 12 (1998): 34: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/649476>.

primarily an assault on the victim's family rather than on the woman herself.¹⁵

Rape not only dishonored and stigmatized the victim, it brought tremendous shame to her husband, her father, and the other men in her life who were supposed to protect her. Thus, women became a tool to humiliate and demoralize the enemy.¹⁶ Serbian soldiers used this shame to force evacuations, counting on the families' desire to leave the site of such humiliation. Some soldiers even admitted to their victims that they had been ordered to rape them so that their families would leave the area.¹⁷

Gender roles shared by the Serbs and Bosniacs made mass rape into a weapon of genocide. With ethnicity determined solely by the father, rape became an effective way to both increase the Serbian population and decrease the Bosniac one because of the trauma and stigma associated with rape. Gender roles also meant that rape was primarily an attack on the men in a woman's life, who were exposed as being unable to fulfill their duty to protect her. The Serbs understood these dynamics, and used them intentionally and systematically in their attempt to destroy the Bosniacs.

Cultural Memory

One of the most significant and fascinating factors contributing to the mass rape of Bosniac women was the cultural memory of the Serbian people, most notably their memories of the Battle of Kosovo Pjole and the Turkish domination that followed.¹⁸ The Serbs were defeated by the

15 Boose, "National Counter-memories: Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement, and Serb Cultural Memory," 72.

16 Maja Korac, "Serbian Nationalism: Nationalism of My Own People," *Feminist Review* 45 (1993): 110, url: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1395351>.

17 Fisher, "Occupation of the Womb: Forced Impregnation as Genocide," 110.

18 The concept of cultural memory was introduced in the 1980s by German Egyptologist Jan Assman. It is the way a society remembers and reconstructs the key events in its history from which it draws its iden-

Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Kosovo Pjole in 1389, beginning five hundred years of Turkish domination.¹⁹

This domination created what Lynda E. Boose calls “the central narrative of Serbian national selfhood: defeat by the Turk at the Battle of Kosovo and a heroic masculinity kept alive by Serbia’s implacable determination to avenge its captivity.”²⁰ Even after Serbia regained its freedom in 1877, the Turks were still perceived as a constant threat, waiting for the right moment to return and recapture what was once theirs.²¹ This led the Serbs to think of themselves as constant victims, their national consciousness “situated for perpetuity in the place of resentment and unassuaged revenge within a story that promises to confer heroism in the present only through return, repetition, and revenge.”²² The Serb nation lived in constant fear of the Turk and of experiencing victimization once again, a fear that became dangerous when projected upon the Bosniacs.

This projection was made possible by the relationship between religion and ethnicity in Yugoslavia. There were distinct connections between ethnicity and religion—most Croats and Slovenes were Catholic, most Serbs and Macedonians were Orthodox Christian, and most Albanians and Bosnians were Muslim. These associations were so strong that ethnic identity was often equated more with religion than territory of origin.²³ This relationship connected the Bosniacs with the Turks in the Serbian consciousness.

While there is a certain logic to this equation, it was largely contrived through the Serbian government’s manipulation. For more on the subject, see Assman’s article “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”

19 Boose, “National Counter-memories: Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement, and Serb Cultural Memory,” 78-79.

20 Ibid., 79.

21 Ibid., 78.

22 Ibid., 80.

23 Ibid., 75-76.

ulation of cultural memory. One of the most overt examples of this was through the figure of Prince Lazar, who led the Serbian forces in the Battle of Kosovo. Prince Lazar died in the battle, and has long been considered a Serbian national hero.²⁴ In the previous month leading up to the five-hundredth anniversary of the battle, Slobodan Milosevic had Lazar's body exhumed and his coffin carried through every Serb village and town, where citizens dressing in black and came out to mourn their fallen hero. This had the effect of making Serbs feel as if the Battle of Kosovo had only recently claimed Lazar's life and their freedom, but Milosevic did not stop there. He followed this with a massive ceremony commemorating the battle, where Milosevic himself entered the ceremony by dropping out of a helicopter, dressed in military uniform, while a television announcer equated him to Prince Lazar. Having primed the population by reminding them of their past losses and relating himself to their historic hero, Milosevic chose this moment to first mention the possibility of going to war in Bosnia.²⁵ This strategic decision was meant to connect the current threat with the historic one, garnering support for the war by making Serbs feel as if they were facing the same threat once again.

Once the war began, news coverage played a key role in the government's manipulation of cultural memory. The primary news program on RTVS, the Serbian national television network, was so tightly controlled that its content had to be approved by the highest level of the national government.²⁶ At the time, roughly 60% of the Serbian population watched the nightly news on RTVS, and what they got was "news" constructed specifically to engender nationalism and public support for the war.²⁷ Stories about the war were

24 Ibid., 80-81.

25 Ibid., 80.

26 Zala Volčič, "Blaming the Media: Serbian Narratives of National(ist) Identity," *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 20 (2006): 321.

27 Ibid., 320.

typically portrayed as a strict dichotomy between the good Serbs and the evil other, and other groups were described in terms of absolute stereotypes. As one Serb recalled,

I remember we were bombarded by slogans like... 'Croatian and Muslim forces want to eradicate all that is Serb in this area'...or...we were told that there are concentration camps for Serbs and brothels with Serbian women....These were the lowest of the low media mechanisms.

News coverage emphasized the violence that had been committed against Serbs, often showing gruesome images of mutilated civilians or corpses, but neglecting the destruction caused by Serb offenses.²⁸ The war was portrayed as a purely defensive response to outside aggression. Serbs were constantly being entreated to protect themselves through news coverage designed to engender fear in the population.²⁹ Media coverage tapped into the Serb's cultural memory by portraying Serbia as a nation struggling to survive on the brink of renewed victimization by a historic enemy.

This portrayal had a significant impact, causing Serb soldiers to approach the war in Bosnia as if they were finally taking their revenge on the Turks. The examples of this projection are widespread. In July 1995, after capturing the city of Srebrenica, General Ratko Mladic stated "We present this city to the Serbian people as a gift. Finally, the time has come to take revenge on the Turks."³⁰ Many women who survived the rape camps later reported being called "Turkish whore" by their attackers.³¹ One survivor reported that those held in the prison camp Omarska were greeted every morning by their attackers, saying "God help you, Turks!" to

28 Ibid., 322.

29 Ibid., 321.

30 Ibid., 79.

31 Ibid., 75.

which they were forced to respond, "God help you, Serbs."³² Another Bosniac woman described being interrogated by Serbian soldiers with a group of Bosniacs, "They insulted us, called us 'Turks'...and were hitting our men with rifle butts... They kept telling me that they would take their revenge on us, the Bosniacs, for the defeat at Kosovo."³³

While this perception was enabled by the connection between religion and ethnicity, it was whipped into a frenzy by the government's manipulation of cultural memory. By convincing the people that they were once again fighting the Turks for their lives, the government unleashed a centuries-old desire for revenge in a population willing to do anything to survive.

Crisis of Masculinity

In Serbian culture, a man is defined by physical strength and dominance, virility, and financial security.³⁴ This worked in conjunction with the ideals that women should be passive, maternal, and vulnerable. However, the economic troubles accompanying the fall of socialism in Yugoslavia created a crisis of masculinity in Yugoslavia, in which the economic context prevented men from being able to fulfill the duties that defined them as men.³⁵ Unemployed men were forced to postpone marriage because they could not support a wife. Many even lacked the funds to take women on dates, which prevented them from asserting their virility through sex. Men often lacked the money to even go out for drinks with their friends. Magazine articles with titles like "It's Not Easy To Be A Man" discussed the challenges of being a man in Serbia, focusing on the economy, women's emancipation (as result of socialist ideals of equality), and Serbia's low birthrate relative to the other

32 "We Survived, We Overcame Fascism," 98.

33 "Buying and Selling Detained Bosniac Women," 84.

34 Wendy Bracewell, "Rape in Kosovo: Masculinity and Serbian Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 6 (2000): 575.

35 Ibid., 570.

Yugoslav republics. This low birthrate was most commonly blamed on women for putting their careers ahead of their nations, but it also caused some to question the virility of Serb men.³⁶

These issues were compounded by the case of Djordje Martinovic. Martinovic was a Serb farmer living in Kosovo who, in 1985, was found in a field with a bottle up his anus. Upon being discovered, Martinovic claimed that he had been attacked by a group of masked men who had placed the bottle on a stick and sodomized him with it. At the hospital he admitted that he had done it to himself in an act of self-stimulation, but he later returned to his original story.³⁷ While media outlets in other republics treated it as a joke, the Serbian media exploded with outrage about the case, relating it to impalement Serbs had suffered at the hands of the Turks.³⁸ The outrage was so great that it was still being discussed as late as 1991, six years after the incident, under headlines such as “Crime Like in the Time of the Turks.” It created a platform for Milosevic to falsely accuse Kosovar Albanians (who were, incidentally, also Muslims) of committing acts of genocide against the Serbs in Kosovo, prompting a group of intellectuals in Belgrade to submit a petition calling for Milosevic to revoke Kosovo’s autonomy, on the grounds that “the case of Djordje Martinovic has come to symbolize the predicament of all Serbs in

36 Ibid., 577.

37 Boose, “National Countertermories: Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement, and Serb Cultural Memory,” 85.

38 This impalement is, in fact, a myth. While Turks did impale Turkish traitors on a stake, they never did this to the Serbs. The myth comes from a popular Serb novel, *The Bridge on the Drina*, written by Ivo Andric. His novel’s hero is a Serbian peasant who resists Turkish domination and is impaled on a stake as punishment. *The Bridge on the Drina* is required reading in Serb schools, leading to the proliferation of the myth of impalement. For more on the subject, see Lynda E. Boose’s article “Crossing the River Drina: Bosnian Rape Camps, Turkish Impalement, and Serb Cultural Memory.”

Kosovo.” Milosevic promptly obliged them.³⁹

The Martinovic incident sparked a series of allegations that the Kosovar Albanians were mounting a campaign of genocidal rape against Serbs in the province, and even though evidence indicates that this was not the case, this created an ideal setting for the conflation of national dignity with individual manhood.⁴⁰

There is one notable case that exemplifies the degree to which Serbian men were affected by the alleged rapes of Albanian Serbs. In the village of Prekale in Kosovo, Serb villagers organized an armed community watch group after an Albanian man attempted to rape a Serbian villager. This move was highly publicized in Serbia and was very popular, until one iconic photograph was taken of a Serbian woman holding both a gun and a baby, armed to protect herself and her children from assault. This photo was both an outrage and an indictment to Serb men, with one commentator stating,⁴¹

When mothers and sisters speak out, then something is really out of order; then the ‘last days’ have really come; for the holiest mother of all – Serbia – has chosen to speak through them, to send a summons, almost a cry to the men, to those who can defend her, calling on them to prove themselves to be men at last, and to take on the task of her defense. This act of defense will be a holy act – paying a debt to Mother.

The economic troubles that faced the dissolving socialist state made it difficult for Serb men to meet the ideals of what a Serb man should be—strong, virile, and financially secure. The nation’s conflicts with the other republics were portrayed in a way that encouraged men “to identify their manhood with a collective entity such as the nation,”

39 Ibid., 86-87.

40 Ibid., 568.

41 Ibid., 575.

creating a militant nationalist ideology based on the manipulation of traditional masculine values.⁴² The nationalist dialogue focused constantly on Serbian weakness,⁴³ but offered militarism as a way for men to win back both individual manhood and the dignity of their nation.⁴⁴ Participating in the war allowed men opportunities to reclaim their masculinity through displays of physical strength. Rape was an ideal way to prove manhood, because it allowed men to both prove their virility through sex and to prove their superior strength over the men who were supposed to protect the raped woman.

Economic struggles in Serbia created a crisis of masculinity, in which Serb men were unable to fulfill their roles as men. Serbian nationalists played on these frustrations, constantly discussing Serb weakness and portraying individual masculinity as directly related to the dignity of the nation. This was compounded by the incidents in Albania, which was seen as a direct challenge to Serbian manhood, both national and individual. The allegations of genocidal rape in Albania and the nationalist Serb response served to redefine rape as a weapon of national conflict, setting the stage for it to be used against the Bosniacs.

Rwanda

Background

To explain the Rwandan genocide of 1994, it is necessary to begin with pre-colonial times. The Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups made up the majority of Rwanda's population. Historically, Tutsi were cattle herders and Hutu were farmers, though these roles were relatively fluid; if a Hutu learned to be a herder and acquired many cows, they could become a Tutsi, and vice versa. The groups lived in relative harmony this way until colonial times, when first German

42 Korac, "Serbian Nationalism; Nationalism of My Own People," 109.

43 Bracewell, "Rape in Kosovo: Masculinity and Serbian Nationalism," 571.

44 Ibid., 569.

and then Belgian colonialists transposed their fascination with race onto Rwanda. They used the phrenology of the Tutsi to conclude that they were the superior group, and used this understanding as a justification to discriminate against the majority Hutu and place the Tutsi minority in a superior role. Under the colonial regime, Tutsi were given privileged access to education, employment, government positions, and other opportunities for advancement, though not so much that they could ever have challenged Belgian power. This situation caused the Hutu to resent the Tutsi as well as the Belgians, and in 1959 the Hutus rebelled. They replaced the colonial regime with a Hutu-dominated government and promptly began a campaign of reverse discrimination against the Tutsi. For decades, outbursts of violence against Tutsi went unpunished, and many Tutsi fled to neighboring countries seeking safety and relief.

In 1990, a group of these refugees formed an army called the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and invaded Rwanda from Uganda. Many of these soldiers had grown up in Uganda and had for years been petitioning the Rwandan government for the right to return to their homeland. After being denied repeatedly, they decided to repatriate by force. The war ended in 1993 with the Arusha Accords, a power-sharing agreement brokered by the UN. However, the standing government, led by Juvénal Habyarimana, had no interest in sharing power with the Tutsi. Instead, the government convinced the Hutu population that the Tutsi were planning to force a return to the colonial arrangement, where the Tutsi had power while the Hutu had none. They struck fear into the hearts of the population, convincing many that the Tutsi were returning to kill their families and take their land. Thus, they incited a genocide of unprecedented popular support, with neighbors killing neighbors and friends killing friends. Much of the killing was perpetrated by the Interahamwe, a notorious paramilitary group made up primarily of young Hutu men. The genocide was

ended when the RPF reactivated its forces (which had been demobilized by the Arusha Accords) and took complete control of the country. Around 800,000 people were killed. Rape was extremely widespread during the genocide, and it took many forms. Women may have been raped by an individual attacker or gang raped by soldiers or Interahamwe. Interahamwe also took women as sex slaves, usually with one man keeping a particular woman for himself, but sometimes groups of Interahamwe would hold women collectively. Often women were killed after they were raped, but others were spared, often because their attackers assumed that someone else would kill them eventually.⁴⁵

This explosion of violence towards women was caused by a combination of factors. First of all, the government manipulated the Hutu memory of oppression at the hands of the Tutsi, convincing them that the genocide was necessary for their very survival. Secondly, economic downturn in the country caused a crisis of masculinity for impoverished Hutu men who had no means to advance themselves. Thirdly, Tutsi were perceived as elite, with Tutsi women considered especially beautiful and sexually desirable. Propaganda played off both these factors, framing the genocide as “work” and Tutsi women as especially untrustworthy. Where economic troubles had taken power from Hutu men, the genocide gave them the opportunity to reclaim it, exercising newfound power over women who were previously considered out of their league. Gender roles increased this power dynamic by making rape an assault on the men in the victim’s life, allowing rapists to use women to demonstrate their power over other men.

Cultural Memory

The Hutu experience of indirect colonial rule under the Belgians created a cultural memory of oppression at the

45 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996), 50-51.

hands of the Tutsi, which the government used to convince the population of the necessity of the genocide. This was based largely on the discrimination the Hutu had experienced at the hands of the Tutsi and the Hamitic Hypothesis, which led the Hutu to believe that the Tutsi did not belong in the country to begin with. Faced with the impending repatriation of many Tutsi, the government convinced the Hutu that they were about to experience that oppression all over again.

Much of the Hutu's negative attitudes towards the Tutsi date back to the Belgian's Hamitic Hypothesis. Hutu generally have wider faces and noses, bigger lips, and are shorter than the Tutsi, who are tall and thin, with long fingers and noses. The Belgians took this to mean that the Tutsi were of a different race than the Hutu, one more closely related to Caucasians, because their facial structures were more similar. The Hamitic Hypothesis held that the Tutsi were descended from the Nilotic people and that they had migrated from northeastern Africa (closer to the Caucasus region) to Rwanda, where they had conquered the Bantu people, from whom the Hutu were descended.⁴⁶ Based on this logic, the Belgians believed – and taught Rwandans to believe – that the Tutsi were superior, that they were more beautiful and intelligent. Under the colonial regime, Tutsi were given more opportunities for education and employment than the Hutu, and they were given a large degree of power over their countrymen. They were an elite, and while they lost this privilege when the Hutu took control after the 1959 revolution, the perception of Tutsi as a resented elite remained.

After the RPF invasion and the subsequent Arusha Accords, nationalists feared that the Tutsi return would mean a return to the old order. The government encouraged this fear, using propaganda to convince the already impoverished Hutu that the Tutsi were returning to steal their

46 Ibid., 15.

land and limit their opportunities even further. More than twelve extremist newspapers were started in Rwanda in the early 90s, spreading the perceptions of the Tutsi as foreign conquerors determined to return to power.⁴⁷ These appeals to the Hutu memory of subjugation by the Tutsi struck fear in the heart of the population, convinced them that they had to fight to defend their lifestyles and homes, and unleashed violence upon the Tutsi population.

Cultural Meaning of Rape and Perceptions of Tutsi Women

Gender dynamics in Rwanda are very similar to those in Yugoslavia. Rwandan culture is very patriarchal, and a child's ethnicity is determined entirely by the ethnicity of their father. A woman's primary role is that of wife and mother, valued by the number of children she produces.⁴⁸ Traditionally, women were not allowed to own or inherit property;⁴⁹ they were to be cared for and protected by their father, husband, or brother.⁵⁰ Women without men had very little value to their community.⁵¹ Sexual purity is highly valued, and rape is extremely shameful. A victim who admits to her attack is considered unmarriageable and risks being cast out of her family and community. For this reason, many women do not tell anyone what happened to them because of the shame it will bring.⁵² Despite the premium placed on purity, a woman who is raped might tell a doctor that she had sex with a stranger rather than admit to having been assaulted.⁵³ This humiliation revealed itself in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, where many women who testified about their assaults would only testify behind a screen and under a pseudonym. Even with the possibility

47 Ibid., 15-16.

48 Ibid., 20.

49 Ibid., 69.

50 Ibid., 19.

51 Ibid., 73.

52 Ibid., 72.

53 Ibid., 73.

of these protections, women testifying in three different trials did not mention that they had been raped until shortly before or even during the trial. When asked why they had not informed the prosecutor sooner, they explained that they were ashamed, and since they had not been directly asked about their assaults they did not volunteer the information.⁵⁴ These dynamics made rape an extremely destructive weapon against all women, but it became even more powerful when combined with Hutu perceptions of Tutsi women.

All Tutsi were considered to be a proud, arrogant elite, simultaneously envied and despised for their supposed superiority.⁵⁵ This stereotype was dangerously intensified when applied to Tutsi women, who were considered to be especially beautiful and sexually desirable.⁵⁶ One Tutsi woman, interviewed by Human Rights Watch for the report *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence During the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath*, describes it this way:⁵⁷

Tutsi women were considered more beautiful, which bred hate against them. The Kinyarwanda word used as Ibizungerezi about Tutsi women [which means beautiful or sexy]. It led to jealousy, to a hate that I can't describe...I was told that I couldn't work in certain places because as a Tutsi woman I would poison others.

In a culture that valued women's purity, the supposed hyper-sexuality of Tutsi women was portrayed as

54 Christopher W. Mullins, "We Are Going to Rape You and Taste Tutsi Women: Rape During the 1994 Rwandan Genocide," *British Journal of Criminology* 49 (2009): 725, accessed February 15, 2013, doi: 10.1093/bjc/azp040.

55 Adam Jones, "Gender and Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Genocide Research* 4 (2002): 78, accessed February 13, 2013.

56 Ibid., 75.

57 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 16.

especially dangerous. The Hutu believed that the RPF would somehow use these women and their sexuality to secure their control of the country.⁵⁸ In the words of Adam Jones, propaganda portrayed Tutsi women as “a population of potential Mata Haris, ready to use their supposed sexual advantage to subvert the nation.”⁵⁹ Propaganda worsened the situation by exacerbating existing prejudices towards Tutsi women. One of the most notorious examples of propaganda was the Hutu Ten Commandments, printed in the extremist magazine *Kangura*. These commandments contained instructions for the way Hutu should behave in relation to the Tutsi, and four of them dealt specifically with women, urging the Hutu not to be taken in by the Tutsi women.⁶⁰ These commandments furthered the idea that Tutsi women possessed a uniquely dangerous sexuality and could not be trusted, portraying them as “seductress-spies.”⁶¹

It is unclear whether rape was ever adopted as an official strategy in the genocide.⁶² What is clear is that mass rape was fueled by the dangerous combination of resentment and desire with which Hutu men viewed Tutsi women. One of the driving factors was the curiosity Hutu men felt about the alleged sexual superiority of Tutsi women. Rapists expressed this curiosity to their victims with amazing frequency, saying things like “We are going to rape you and taste Tutsi women.” One Interahamwe leader instructed his men to “take Tutsi women and see how they are made.”⁶³ At the trial of Jean-Paul Akayesu at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, witnesses testified that, after they had raped Tutsi women, Akayesu would say to his men,

58 Ibid., 17.

59 Jones, “Gender and Genocide in Rwanda,” 78.

60 African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair, and Defiance* (London: African Rights, 1995) 42-43.

61 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 18.

62 Ibid., 79.

63 Mullins, “We are Going to Rape You and Taste Tutsi Women: Rape During the 1994 Rwandan Genocide,” 728.

“So, never ask me what a Tutsi woman is like.” At the trial of Mika Muhimana, a witness described watching Muhimana come out of his house, telling the troops assembled outside, “I’m going to show you what a Tutsi girl looks like.” He then forced a naked Tutsi woman out of his house, where the soldiers killed her. In another incident, Muhimana led a group of Interahamwe in an attack on a hospital where many Tutsi had gathered. He took a group of young women into a private room, where he forced them to remove their clothes and lie on their backs on the floor in front of the Interahamwe, so that “they could see what the genitals of a Tutsi looked like.”⁶⁴ Before Elizabeth’s husband was killed, one Interahamwe told her, “You Tutsi women are very sweet, so we have to kill the man and take you.”⁶⁵ Clementine was gang-raped by five men who said, “We want to see how the Tutsikazi [Tutsi women] look inside.”⁶⁶ These are only some of countless examples. The words of Hutu attackers prove what a strong contributory role sexual curiosity, created by dangerous stereotypes, played in mass rape in Rwanda.

The negative stereotypes of Tutsi women made rape an appropriate weapon against them, a way to humiliate and bring down these proud women, to punish them for their hyper-sexuality.⁶⁷ In one example, recounted by Juliana, a survivor who was told the story by a Hutu family who witnessed it, one man in a group of Interahamwe lectured the Tutsi women they had captive, saying, “You Tutsi women, you have no respect for Hutu men. So now, choose between death and marriage to a Hutu Interahamwe.” Then, Juliana said,⁶⁸

64 Ibid., 729.

65 Ibid., 45-46.

66 Ibid., 46-47.

67 Lisa Sharlach, “Gender and Genocide in Rwanda: Women as Agents and Objects of Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 1 (1999): 394, accessed February 13, 2013.

68 Jones, “Gender and Genocide in Rwanda,” 81.

They went looking for the most filthy-looking vagabonds, jigger-infested and God knows what else. They looked for the kind of man who was least likely to get a woman under normal conditions. There were so many women that they could not find enough of these dirty men. But so intense was the fear of being killed that the women would plead and ask these men to take them.

By forcing these women to be married to – i.e. have sex with – the ugliest, dirtiest, most impoverished Hutu men, the Interahamwe completely humiliated these women and stripped them of any supposed privilege they might have had. Vanautie, who was forced into a similar marriage, still lives with her husband and her mother-in-law, who often tells her, “You Tutsi girls, you are too proud.” (Many women whose families have been killed stay with these husbands because they have nowhere else to go.)⁶⁹ Denise was raped by an Interahamwe who said, “You Tutsikazi⁷⁰, you think you are the only beautiful women in the world.”⁷¹ A woman who is raped loses her value in the community.⁷² This makes it an ideal weapon to punish women who are proud and elite, to strip them of their power, and to destroy them emotionally before killing them physically.

Rapes were often accompanied by abuses specially intended to humiliate both the victim and any witnesses, such as making the victim walk naked before the Interahamwe.⁷³ One group of Interahamwe attacked a home where two families were having dinner; after raping two of the

69 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 61-62.

70 Tutsi women

71 Ibid., 63-64.

72 Ibid., 25.

73 Mullins, “We are Going to Rape You and Taste Tutsi Women: Rape During the 1994 Rwandan Genocide,” 731.

women in front of their families, they stuffed food into their vaginas before killing them, an act clearly meant to further degrade the women.⁷⁴ In one case, a secondary school girl was forced to strip naked and do gymnastics⁷⁵ in front of a group of Interahamwe before they raped her.⁷⁶ Scenes like this were common, with public rapes often used to both humiliate the victim and her family and to terrorize their community into submission. The Interahamwe would also position dead bodies so as to humiliate their victims even in death. They would leave women's bodies out in the open, naked and with their legs spread. In one case, they positioned the body of a child on top of her mother's corpse so that it looked as if they were having intercourse.⁷⁷ In light of their supposed arrogance, rape was an effective tool not only for demonstrating the attacker's lack of esteem for Tutsi women, but also for shaming them, stripping them of honor so that they could no longer consider themselves superior. As one survivor said, "these rapes were really designed to humiliate us." In the words of Christopher Mullins, the rapes served⁷⁸

to add socio-cultural insult to physical injury for the victim and the ethnic group itself. Not only will the population be destroyed – the ultimate goal of any genocide – but, before the destruction occurs, all dignity and rights held by the population will be removed. Thus, rape can be seen as a way to tarnish the reputation and memory of a people before killing them off.

Rape and accompanying humiliations were meant to degrade proud Tutsi women, and sexual mutilations were also

74 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 45-46.

75 This has also been translated as "exercises" or "marches."

76 Ibid., 729.

77 Ibid., 730.

78 Ibid., 731-732.

used to strip them of their supposed desirability. Rapes were frequently accompanied by mutilations such as cutting the genitals or removing breasts;⁷⁹ one woman even had acid poured into her vagina.⁸⁰ Disfiguring Tutsi women negated their sexual power by making them ugly and undesirable, physically marking them as having been used and humiliated.⁸¹

The government intentionally manipulated the existing stereotypes of Tutsi women in a way that unleashed violence against them. By portraying these women not only as hypersexual, but also as proud and extremely deceptive, the government painted them as a dangerous enemy that needed to be dealt with. The violence against these women turned sexual as men sought to satisfy their curiosity about these particularly desirable women. Rape provided a perfect way for men to both satisfy this desire while putting these proud women in their place.

Rape brought extreme shame and stigma to victims. It humiliated them and robbed them of any value that they had in their community. It was the ideal punishment to Tutsi women, a way to bring them down from their place of pride and punish them for the arrogance. It also allowed Hutu men a chance to satisfy their curiosity for these supposedly superior women to whom they had always been denied access, to take what they wanted while humiliating and degrading their victims.

Crisis of Masculinity

Economic troubles in the years before the genocide created a large class of impoverished young Hutu men. These men had few prospects for improving their lives, and they experienced a crisis of masculinity: their poverty meant that they were powerless, that they lacked control over their lives and could not achieve those things that

79 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 62-63.

80 Ibid., 62-63.

81 Ibid., 41.

defined a successful man in Rwandan society. Without employment or land, they had no economic security and could not support a wife or family.⁸² This powerlessness caused the men to feel frustrated and emasculated, and they lacked conventional means to reclaim their masculinity. The genocide provided these impoverished men with a way to take back their manhood by achieving status through violence and gaining property through looting.⁸³ This created a dynamic of class revenge.

The poor state of Rwanda's economy in the years before the genocide created a class of impoverished Hutu men who stood to gain from the genocide, and it added a dynamic of class revenge that contributed to mass rape. In 1990, the economy was already fragile due to a drop in global coffee prices (one of Rwanda's main exports) and strict structural adjustments that had been imposed on the country by the International Monetary Fund. By 1993, the cost of war with the RPF took up 70% of the state's annual budget. With the added detriments of poor weather and the displacement of farmers by war, the economy was in shambles. Young men had a few options for employment even under normal circumstances: they could either inherit farm land from older relatives, clear new land to farm, become a client of someone more wealthy, or seek formal employment, usually in civil service. However, by 1990 even these options were dwindling. Structural adjustment programs made finding any kind of employment difficult, and family land plots could only be divided and passed down so many times before there is nothing left to give. In addition, cash crop plantations limited the amount of unused land available to clear.⁸⁴ Twenty-five thousand men found employment in the military during the war, but half of them stood to lose their jobs when the Arusha Accords took effect, under a clause that called for the demobilization

82 Jones, "Gender and Genocide in Rwanda," 67.

83 Ibid., 68.

84 Ibid., 66-67.

of half the military. Eighty-six percent of Rwanda's population was living below the poverty line. This national poverty had especially detrimental effects on young Hutu men who had recently come of age but had no means to achieve that which defines a man in Rwandan society: economic security, a wife, and a family.⁸⁵

This created a crisis of masculinity in Rwanda. When economic troubles prevent young men from achieving that which defines a man, they can feel powerless, frustrated, and emasculated. This frustration can bubble over or be intentionally channeled into violence, specifically violence against women as men turn to rape as a way to prove their masculinity.⁸⁶ The government understood this, and they used propaganda that appealed specifically to these frustrated young men, framing the genocide as a way to reclaim their masculinity. Propaganda referred to the genocide as “work”, and “interahamwe,” now used to refer to militia groups of killers, used to be a term for communal work parties. “Clearing the bush”, clearing forest to make it farmland, was now used to mean killing Tutsis. Most of the killers were unemployed young men or people who had been displaced from their homes by the war.⁸⁷ This framing was intended to appeal to them specifically by framing the genocide in terms of work, which men traditionally valued but currently lacked.

It is clear that this framing was meant to appeal to men specifically, because in Rwandan society women were primarily wives and mothers who did not commonly work outside the home.⁸⁸ The gendered nature of these appeals was made even clearer by the speeches of government leaders. In 1993, Colonel Théoneste Bagosara gave a speech in which he said that young, married men “with something to

85 Adam Jones, “Gender and Genocide in Rwanda,” 67.

86 Christopher Mullins, “We Are Going to Rape You and Taste Tutsi Women,” 732.

87 Ibid., 67.

88 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 72.

defend” were especially needed as communities formed militias of “robust young men.”⁸⁹ The year before, Léon Mugesera, leader of the dominant National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND), gave a speech meant to garner support for the genocide, saying, “I know you are young men...who do not let themselves be invaded, who refuse to be scorned.”⁹⁰ By framing the genocide in terms of traditional masculine values of physical strength and hard work, the government made it appealing to impoverished, unemployed young men who felt that they had lost that which made them men. Indeed, the Interahamwe recruited mostly among these poor men, and most of the killers in the genocide were either unemployed or had been displaced by the war.⁹¹ This framing opened the floodgates for sexual violence because it led naturally to men displaying their strength and physical manhood through sex.

The patriarchal structure of Rwandan society allowed Hutu men to demonstrate their power over Tutsi men by raping their women. While men of all classes and occupations raped during the war, the majority of rapists were members of the military or Interahamwe, poor men who had something to prove, and rape allowed them to prove their masculinity through displays of power over both men and women.⁹² Rwandan society is extremely patriarchal, with women viewed as dependents to be managed and protected by their husbands or male relatives.⁹³ Men were supposed to protect the women in their lives, and not being able to protect them from the extreme trauma and dishonor of rape meant that they failed in their role as men. Rapists took advantage of this dynamic, emasculating Tutsi men before they killed them by forcing them to witness,

89 Jones, “Gender and Genocide in Rwanda,” 68.

90 Ibid., 67-68.

91 Ibid., 67-68.

92 Sharlach, “Gender and Genocide in Rwanda: Women as Agents and Objects of Genocide,” 394-395.

93 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 19.

and sometimes even participate in, the rapes of their wives or relatives.⁹⁴ This allowed Hutu men to reclaim their masculinity by demonstrating their power over Tutsi men by forcibly claiming Tutsi women as their own.

Hutu men were also able to reclaim their masculinity by exercising extreme power over Tutsi women in a variety of ways. Most basically, raping these desirable women, whom they had previously been denied, was in itself a reclamation of masculine power. Not only was it a forcible demonstration of their masculinity, raping women who were supposedly too good for them allowed these men to display their power and agency over the societal structures that had previously denied them what they wanted. One Tutsi woman said that, before he raped her, her attacker said “that marriage had been refused to them [Hutu men], but now they were going to sleep with us with out any trouble at all.” Another woman described being raped by three men, who, during the rape, discussed how they “hated [Tutsi] and now they were going to freely take advantage of us....They meant that Tutsi women and girls didn’t like Hutu men and refused to marry them. And they said now they could do everything they wanted with us.”⁹⁵ Another woman was told by her rapists, “You can’t shout – you must accept everything we do to you now.”⁹⁶ On a more personal level, militia leaders encouraged rape as a way to settle pre-existing interpersonal grievances. Sometimes men would rape women whom they had unrequited feelings for or who had previously rejected them.⁹⁷ One woman was held captive and raped by an Interahamwe named Rafiki, whose romantic interest she had previously denied.⁹⁸ Each of these examples demonstrate the Hutu understanding that they were reclaiming masculine power through rape.

94 Mullins, “We are Going to Rape You and Taste Tutsi Women,” 722.

95 Ibid., 729.

96 Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives*, 46-47.

97 Mullins, “We are Going to Rape You and Taste Tutsi Women,” 730.

98 Ibid., 728.

Similarities Between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda *Gender Roles and Rape*

In both Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina, women were primarily wives and mothers and the men in their lives were charged with their protection. Rape brought severe stigma and dishonor to the victim, severely damaging her future prospects and likely rendering her unmarriedable. However, because it was men's duty to protect women, rape was primarily an attack on the victim's husband or male family members. It exposed them as being unable to fulfill this important duty, humiliating them severely. This was used with especial intention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where mass rape was generally more intentional than in Rwanda. Serb soldiers were ordered to rape, with the goal of causing the victims' families to leave an area in favor of a place where people did not know of their shame. Additionally, in both countries the ethnicity of the father was the sole determinate of the ethnicity of his child, regardless of the mother's origin. Once again, this was used much more consciously in Serbia, where soldiers embarked on a campaign of forced impregnation to increase the declining Serb population. No similar campaign existed in Rwanda, though many women did become pregnant as a result of their rapes and have given birth to children who are considered Hutu.

Cultural Memory

Both Tutsis and Bosniacs were perceived as historic enemies threatening to return to domination, though for the Bosniacs this was only indirectly through their religious association with the Turks. The governments used propaganda to convince their people that these historic threats were once again imminent, creating an atmosphere of great fear and unleashing the unhindered violence that can only come in a fight for survival.

Crisis of Masculinity

Both states experienced periods of severe economic downturn in the years before the conflicts broke out. In each case, this created a crisis of masculinity, where economic circumstances created large populations of frustrated, impoverished men who were unable to achieve their culture's markers of masculinity. Their governments understood this, and they intentionally framed the conflicts in a way that conflated national dignity with individual manhood, presenting participation in genocide as a way for men to win back their masculinity. Due to each culture's definitions of manhood, this reclaiming of masculine power included rape, which was the ultimate physical display of masculinity because it allowed both Serb and Hutu men to prove their superior strength and power over other men while simultaneously displaying sexual prowess.

Final Conclusion

No single phenomenon is solely responsible for mass rape in either genocide. It took a combination of factors to lead to violence, and the removal of one could have been enough to prevent mass rape. While Bosnia and Rwanda shared particular gender roles, a cultural memory of victimization, and a crisis of masculinity, there were also other key factors at play in each case. However, these similarities do reveal something very important: mass rape does not exist in a vacuum of conflict. It is rooted in peacetime gender roles, particularly male gender roles. If men were not so strongly socialized to be economic providers, an economic crisis would not leave them feeling as if they were no longer men, and a male identity that was not rooted in physical strength would preclude militants appealing to men by marketing violence as a way to regain masculinity. Additionally, rape would have made a less effective weapon if men were not charged with the duty of protecting and

providing for the women in their life, because it could not have been used as a tool to emasculate and demoralize the victim's male relatives. Rape would also be slightly less effective as a weapon if women's purity was not so highly valued that rape attached lasting stigma to victims. However, the trauma of rape is so inherent that no societal change could significantly lessen the impact that it has on survivors. When considering the causes of violence towards women, the intuitive approach is to look at the way the society treats its women, but the way Rwandan and Bosnian culture defined their men was one of the most significant contributors to mass rape in the genocides.

It is also important to note that, in each case, a cultural memory of oppression and victimization convinced the aggressors that they were fighting for their very survival. The violence in these cases was not cold and calculated; it was an emotionally charged fight to destroy the enemy before it was too late. The Serbs and the Hutus were convinced that what they were doing was an act of self-defense, that if they did not commit genocide themselves then it would be committed against them. It is human nature to do anything to survive, and a similar level of brutality – though not necessarily sexual – is likely whenever a group believes they are being threatened with extinction.

These similarities are significant, but they are not conclusive. More research is necessary to determine if the pattern continues across other genocides. If it does, then this combination of factors could be used as an early warning sign for mass rape in genocides. Even if it does not, hopefully these findings can start a conversation about what we teach our boys about what it means to be a man and how that contributes to violence against women.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Jeff Keith, for his constant support and enthusiasm. I would also like to thank my thesis advisor, David Abernathy, for teaching me that the ever-intimidating thesis was actually doable. Finally, I would like to thank Sarah Silver, whose bravery in sharing her story sparked my passion for working to create a world free of sexual violence.



Feature

Obscure Genres and Obscene Content: Forrest White Talks About His Senior Thesis



Forrest White is preparing for his senior thesis. Currently a junior English major with a concentration in creative writing here at Warren Wilson, he is beginning research on the *fabliau*, a form of writing most prominently seen in medieval France.

“It’s a short narrative, oftentimes obscene,” White said, “and abounding in scatological

references and humor.”

White told me that he first encountered this style of writing in David Mycoff’s Chaucer class, where many of these tales were reworked into Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

“I found myself drawn to this sort of obscure genre of work,” White said, “My very first instinct was to be like: Why the hell do these even exist? What’s going on? What even called for these *fabliaux*?”

He detailed in brief an example of a typical (though admittedly one of the less obscene) *fabliau*. It’s a story of a man and his wife, and the man has been imprisoned for some kind of petty crime, and while he is in jail, his wife conceives a child.

When the man is released and returns home, he’s obviously surprised to find his wife now has a son, being that he could not have helped at all in the child’s creation due to his imprisonment. The wife gives her best explanation to him, saying that in the dead of winter she had been walking along, and, just when she had been thinking about him her hardest, she swallowed a snowflake, and that must have been how the baby was conceived.

The man accepts this explanation, and raises the son as his

own. When the boy is 10 or so, the father takes a trip to Morocco, and he brings the boy with him. When he returns, the boy is nowhere to be found. The mother freaks out, and the man explains to her that since the boy was born from snow, he melted in the Moroccan sun.

While this is one of the tamer *fabliaux*, it is indicative of the kind of writing generally contained within them.

“In all of these *fabliaux* you have these absurd themes, as well as a lot of political commentary,” White said. “There are a lot of corrupt priests and cuckolded husbands, promiscuous women, and ambiguous, flamboyant courtiers. So you’re dealing with a bunch of these archetypes.”

In the spring, White will be working with David Mycoff on an independent study to hone in on what aspects of the *fabliau* narrative style he’ll focus on in more detail for his thesis. He’ll be sifting through primary texts, as well as translations, to get a broader understanding of the style and the elements contained within.

White also plans on tying in his work as a creative writing student with his thesis.

“I’m going to use some of the more noteworthy, complex, fun, and obscene stories as a framework for a collection that I’m thinking is going to be set in dirty, ‘80s New York,” White said. “Grimy, gritty, transvestites, neon. I just think it would be a lot of fun to re-tell and re-craft these *fabliaux*, which have really gone out of the scene, for obvious reasons, since they were written in the 14th century.”

He said that he hopes that this kind of creative synthesis will lend him a greater appreciation for the genre as a whole, and that using these *fabliaux* as the base for his creative re-imagining will add a blend of traditional and contemporary themes to his portfolio. White begins his research next semester.



Empowering Students with Interactive Education: Emily Ehley talks about Program Planning



During the first term of each semester, it is not uncommon to hear endless accounts of the horror of Program Planning, a term class required for all Outdoor Leadership and Environmental Education Majors. In one of my classes, one brave student, hair frazzled and eyes wide, admitted that she thought that she was going crazy. How can this be? How

can a term class have such an effect on its students?

Intrigued to learn more about the monster of a class, I sat down with a senior in her last semester, Emily Ehley, an Environmental Education major, to hear her story of surviving (dare I say thriving in the face of) the class. She told me of what she ended up designing, how she did it, and what she plans to do after graduation.

Ehley said of the class, “It requires its students to design an educational program.” These programs are not intended to be implemented, but must be written as if they were. “This is not easy task,” she stressed.

With much hard work, she ended up designing an after school program for 9th graders in South Africa. The idea for the project stemmed from her experience volunteering in South Africa. While there, she says, “I worked with an organization that provided for the community a program geared towards environmental education and literacy promotion.”

Her experience with the organization sparked an

idea in her because she identified a definite need in the community; students were losing interest in school and struggling with literacy. Deeply impacted by the struggles of others, she designed a program focused on attending to those obstacles, which are of the most impoverished children in the area. In the class, “the students are provided with an experience that increases their engagement in school and that teaches them a skill set which can help them later on in life.”

Emily said the children in the program experience “a combination of a play space and environmental education. There is also a large literacy component which asks the children to engage in story telling and speaking.” This is important because most of the children in the area grew up speaking the local dialect, but in school are required to speak English. The children, through no fault of their own, have not been prepared to meet the demands of the educational system. Through engaging in the program, the children acquire practice with English. The students through this practice gain a better chance at succeeding in school.

The final component of the program asks the students to determine an environmental need in their community and design a project that meets that need. By identifying and solving a problem, the students empower themselves to become active agents in the face of the obstacles in their lives. This is important because living in poverty is developmentally stifling to a child’s sense of agency. Anything that can counter that does a great service to the community.

Emily’s favorite part of creating the program was working closely with her classmates in Program Planning. She did not feel like she was on her own because of the community that was created in the class. On the difficulties of finishing the project, Emily (with a certain sense of humor) said, “Everything was the hardest part of doing the term class; the class takes place during the time span of one

term, so everything has to be accomplished at a very fast pace.” During the class, one has to choose the topic of the program, design it, create all the potential materials that someone who wanted to implement the program would need (which almost completely fills a normal-sized binder), and then professionally compile and organize all of the material. To accomplish all of this within one term is no easy feat.

Running on the cross country team helped her to get through it. She does not think that she could have gone through it without running. Her support networks also tremendously helped her to accomplish the project. She is grateful to her friends, family and classmates for being so supportive to her.

For several months following graduation in December 2013, Emily Ehley is going to be working at a local farm. In July 2014, she plans to work with CitiYear. After that, she might want to go back to South Africa. Even though the projects made in Program Planning are not normally implemented, if she goes back to South Africa, then she hopes to implement the program.