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# PREFACE

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This year's edition of the Sociological Eye encompasses many of the topics that are relevant to our everyday lives and reflect the sociological project of understanding social life and social inequalities. Many of the papers were written as capstone projects from the Sociological Seminar, which students take in their final year at LMU as a culmination of their LMU Sociology education. Several of the submissions (Vasquez, Grundy, Redor, & Canyon) focus on gender, bodies, and sexualities, all of which have been the subject of political and cultural discussions and struggles in recent years. Other manuscripts examine the shifting cultural landscape (Nagle, Poon), social problems that continue to plague our society (Goodyear), and global inequalities (Li). This year's issue also includes a study of two industries' Covid responses as they affect workers (Friedler); given the ways in which the pandemic has shaped the 2020-21 academic year, this paper is an especially timely contribution to the Sociological Eye.

# Kyle Friedler

Kyle Friedler is a graduating senior with a major in Sociology and a double minor in Film, Television, and Media Studies and Women's and Gender Studies. Friedler is part of the University Honors Program as well as a runner for LMU's Cross Country and Track and Field Team. During his time at LMU, Friedler has participated in multiple academic projects including two publications in the *Sociological Eye*. He has also received a RAINS Research Fellowship and an Honors Summer Research Grant to write a full-length play. The play, titled *We Need You to Come In* explores themes of isolation, collective trauma, and absurdism as characters navigate a global pandemic. With a passion for social justice, Friedler decided to focus on corporate labor practices for his senior thesis, writing "Pandemic Privilege: Business Policies and Labor Value During COVID-19" under the advisement of Dr. Stephanie Limoncelli and with guidance from Dr. Annamaria Muraco. Friedler is currently in the process of applying to graduate schools with the hopes of continuing both his academic and athletic careers in the following year. Originally from Chicago, Friedler enjoys spending his time exploring Los Angeles whether on runs or during excursions with friends.



## **Pandemic Privilege: Business Policies and Labor Value During COVID-19**

Forcing businesses to adapt to new health and safety concerns, the COVID-19 pandemic offers an insight into how companies value their employees. Early research on COVID-19 suggests that working in essential businesses with in-person relations increases risk of employees both contracting and dying from COVID-19 (Rodriguez-Diaz et al. 2020:51). With serious risks to employee health, the COVID-19 pandemic requires us to analyze how we value and treat our workers. In this study, I will compare how businesses in the restaurant and technology industries value their employees through a qualitative content analysis. Reviewing company COVID-19 statements, I underscore how privilege between and within the two industries forms different corporate practices. Understanding how the COVID-19 pandemic becomes a case study for existing inequalities in the workforce, we can strive towards a future that fairly compensates workers for their labor.

To begin this paper, I will demonstrate the need to compare both the restaurant and the technology industry in my literature review of research on working conditions. The literature review highlights inequalities between both industries, but it also discusses how established telecommuting practices prior to the COVID-19 pandemic affect how technology employees work during the pandemic. Secondly, I continue to detail my methodology and discuss why my research is effective for studying labor policies during COVID-19. In my methodology section, I also define my five coding themes I use to analyze business COVID-19 statements. I trace my five coding themes through COVID statements in my findings section to determine company attitudes towards employees. Finally, I will discuss how the COVID-19 statements reflect inequalities within the restaurant and technology industries and give suggestions for future research in my discussion section.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to gain a social understanding of COVID-19, we must analyze the structures that order how we work and live during the pandemic. Specifically, how and why people are working during dangerous times can offer a unique perspective into labor practices in the United States. In this literature review, I will analyze current literature focused on the restaurant and technology industries to begin drawing comparisons between labor practices within both. Focusing on the structural inequalities in the two industries, this literature review will discuss the lack of knowledge about why we treat workers differently in separate industries. With a lack of comparison between the two industries, we find a distinct knowledge gap that my study will attempt to cover.

## THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

To begin, I will focus on inequalities in the restaurant industry to demonstrate the need to protect and enhance workers' lives. A forefront activist and scholar, Saru Jayaraman, discusses the economic and social barriers preventing immigrant workers from achieving success in the restaurant industry (2014:349). The study clearly demonstrates that marginalized communities make up the majority of the restaurant industry's workforce, which allows employers to justify paying low wages. Focusing mainly on tipped workers who only have a federal minimum wage of \$2.13 per hour, the study could extend to fast food workers still working to demand a fair wage. In both cases, the research illustrates that the restaurant industry does not value their workers enough to pay them living wages. The COVID-19 crisis exacerbated inequalities present in the restaurant industry, so we must look at the treatment of workers during the pandemic to grow our understanding of how restaurant businesses value their employees.

Furthermore, restaurant workers face a series of health and safety concerns. Current literature on health and safety in restaurants also focuses on how immigrant workers are more likely to deal with serious health and safety issues than other restaurant workers. Minkler et al. (2010) study Chinese immigrant workers and their experiences in the restaurant industry. The study suggests that low-income workers are often excluded from educational opportunity and decision-making processes, so they are unable to demand better treatment (2010:7). However, the researchers claim that a community-based approach to employee training and educational sessions can actually increase economic opportunity for immigrants workers. The researchers offer suggestions for education that can benefit the health and safety of restaurant workers. Within the context of a pandemic, Minkler et al.'s study provides an insight into how immigrant workers have little protection against mistreatment. The research demonstrates immigrant workers receive lower wages and have increased health and safety risks. The research illustrates that restaurants already participate in problematic and predatory practices. Studying company policies during COVID-19 can illuminate ways in which businesses are supporting or further disenfranchising their workers.

While the scholarship on the restaurant industry discusses the perilous position of immigrant workers, it also suggests we need to rework our understanding of the economic conditions for low-income restaurant workers. In an attempt to shift narratives towards restaurant worker mistreatment, Kathleen Hunt (2016) builds on Saru Jayaraman's work, focusing on the social movement for fair wages for tipped workers. Hunt's research demonstrates the importance of framing narratives in social movements to create change (2016:168-169). Hunt centers the narratives of tipped work-

ers, describing how tipped workers often struggle through hazardous conditions to continue to support themselves and their families (2016:172). Hunt's findings illustrate that workers often continue to work while sick because the minimum wage of \$2.13 per hour is too low to take time off for illness. Taking Hunt's ideas into the current moment, we find that the COVID-19 pandemic presents a new challenge to employee health. In a global pandemic when working while sick threatens the lives of customers and coworkers alike, the literature suggests economic conditions may drive workers to continue to clock in. Looking at company policies surrounding COVID, we can analyze top-down factors that are keeping employees at work in dangerous conditions.

Furthermore, race and citizenship status are not the only factors that determine employee treatment in the restaurant industry. Armarnani et al. (2019) describes how older employees exhibited lower self-esteem due to customer mistreatment which decreased their productivity during the workday (2019:293). Therefore, if restaurants worked to combat worker mistreatment, they may end up having higher worker productivity. Amarnani et al. demonstrate the necessity for businesses to address customer mistreatment, but the article ignores the dangerous social ideologies that create the mistreatment. Connecting Jayaraman (2014) and Hunt's (2016) work, we can see how intersections of identities create different matrices of inequality in the restaurant industry. We must understand how worker mistreatment comes from a variety of sources based on a multitude of social locations. Studying the COVID-19 pandemic with an intersectional lens, we can see how customer mistreatment and labor exploitation connect to further marginalize already sensitive populations.

The current literature demonstrates a significant amount of mistreatment and inequality already exists in the restaurant industry. We must further examine the strategies restaurants use to maintain customers in difficult times. Lee et al. (2013) provides an interesting theory to view company actions during a global pandemic and analyze corporate responses to COVID-19. Coining the term, corporate social responsibility Lee et al. (2013) provide an insight into how companies are staying open, attracting consumers, and operating during a pandemic.

Through an understanding of the current literature studying the restaurant industry, we can pinpoint different inequalities that operate within the industry while also finding how business practices maintain profits during economic recessions. In the restaurant industry, two major factors determine how and why employees continue to work. First, the literature suggests that workers suffer a variety of mistreatment based on their social identities. Secondly, research illustrates restaurant businesses attempt to maintain sales even during difficult economic times. While the second factor may seem self-explanatory, workers are constrained by economic and social factors that make it difficult to receive fair treatment. Pushed to continue working by low wages, marginalized workers face health and safety issues while also dealing with exploitation by restaurant business practices and customers. The COVID-19 pandemic provides a case study to understand these factors during a revealing historical moment. Problems restaurant workers face during COVID have already existed, but the pandemic makes them more visible.

## THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

Research centered on the technology industry has drastically different motivations and questions than research about the restaurant industry. For example, researchers concerned with the working conditions of technology employees

have studied office space and productivity levels. While employee satisfaction and productivity are studied in both industries, scholarly work about the technology industry focuses on floor plans rather than research on social inequality that we find in the restaurant industry. Pitchforth et al.'s (2020) study demonstrates the lack of knowledge about social factors influencing mistreatment in the technology industry.

Just like health issues we found in the restaurant industry, overwork and occupational fatigue also affects technology industry employees. In the context of the restaurant industry, we easily find scholarship focused on job-related stressors and overwork. Studying the technology industry, the research offers a unique lens we can use to study the COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly, Blair-Loy and Cech (2017) suggest that highly educated managers and professionals in technology industry jobs are more likely to experience overwork than any other group (2017:8). Importantly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, new family demands may challenge people working from home in the technology industry more than before. With children unable to attend school, additional domestic labor may affect productivity in the workplace. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic offers a particularly insightful period to study employee policies and practices.

In addition, we can look at initial barriers to entry into the industry. Zarrett and Malanchuk (2005) trace choices to pursue technology careers back to young ages and families' socioeconomic status. The study demonstrates that women are not only unequal in technology workplaces, like Alfrey and Twine (2016) suggest, but they also face social barriers when pursuing technology related careers. The data illustrates that inequality within the technology industry is systematic and more challenging to combat than hiring racial or gender quotas. The COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to see how COVID policies may harm already vulnerable employees like women of color.

Finally, the technology sector offers a unique case study in the COVID-19 pandemic because remote work already existed in the industry prior to the virus' outbreak in the U.S. Analyzing telecommuting practices between 1989 and 2008, Glass and Noonan (2016) incorporate another factor we must consider when studying the technology industry. The study claims that remote work actually decreases employees' deserved wages particularly when an employee works overtime (2016:238). Along with Alfrey and Twine (2016) and Blair-Loy and Cech (2017), the study demonstrates women receive more negative treatment than men when working from home. The authors claim managers gender their treatment patterns and reward or punish women differently than men when telecommuting (2016:238). While the technology industry easily embraced remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, Glass and Noonan (2016) suggest that many workers may receive less pay than they deserve. With new circumstances requiring remote work, we must look at how businesses attempt to compensate workers fairly and avoid the exploitative practices that Noonan and Glass (2016) describe.

In reviewing the literature on the restaurant industry and the technology industry, multiple themes emerge. For the restaurant industry, health and safety already poses a problem to employees. The new health and safety threat of COVID-19 potentially compounds existing problems and inequalities within the industry. We must look critically at COVID policies to begin to understand the impacts of COVID on vulnerable populations. Within the technology industry, working environments vary drastically from the restaurant industry. Due to barriers of entry and privilege within the industry, technology businesses take advantage of workers in different ways. With the rise in telecommuting and remote work, the technology industry often fails to compensate workers fairly. We must take a holistic approach to analyzing

COVID-19 policies in order to bring attention to, and combat further, mistreatment during the pandemic. Until now, no research has compared the two industries to offer explanations for varying labor practices. Therefore, we must look at labor policies in both industries to gain a fuller picture of how businesses operate during a global health crisis. In doing so, I will add a new dimension to scholarship on labor practices.

## METHODOLOGY

Since current literature lacks a comparison between the technology and restaurant industries, my research will attempt to fill a knowledge gap surrounding business practices and structural inequality. Analyzing policies during the COVID-19 pandemic provides a case study for understanding the larger, social forces guiding business operations. As a result, the conditions of COVID-19 have forced many businesses to alter and explicitly state new policies. With a new wealth of information about how businesses are treating and protecting their employees, we have a unique opportunity to start new conversations about both industries. For this paper, I will use a qualitative content analysis to understand the deeper meanings behind COVID-19 policies.

My project focuses on both restaurant and technology businesses, so I chose to analyze COVID policies from the top twenty-five businesses in both industries (see Appendix). I chose to use data from the largest restaurant and technology companies in 2020. The top 25 restaurant businesses were chosen based on their total sales from the 2019 year compiled by the Restaurant Business annual report. For the top 25 technology companies, I used a list compiled by Disfold.com that used the business' market capitalization to rank each company's size. For both the restaurant and the technology businesses, I made sure each business was headquartered in the United States. Having precise qualifications for each company, I analyzed 50 companies' statements or policies about COVID-19. The majority of companies have statements about COVID-19 on a single webpage. However, some companies have blogs associated to COVID that have evolved over the course of the pandemic. I chose to download the webpage or webpages to center my research. With new updates about COVID-19 in the U.S daily, taking a snapshot of the COVID policies or statements was necessary to ensure the validity and reproducibility of my project.

For my research, I used a qualitative content analysis because I would not find all the answers through a standard content analysis of COVID-19 policies. No company would advertise how their policies are impacting their workers if the outcomes are negative, so I must draw my own conclusions based on the latent content of the websites. I approached company COVID-19 policies with a grounded theory lens in order to understand the meanings behind the statements. In combining the existing literature with the new data available, I am presenting a complete analysis of structural ideologies that influence labor practices. The comparison between policies of restaurant businesses and technology businesses is necessary because it can illustrate how similar structural factors influence different populations.

After downloading all the websites containing COVID-19 policies, I proceeded to code and analyze the data. I searched for major themes that connected to inequalities workers may experience based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and immigration status. Conversations about racial inequality spurred by the Black Lives Matter movement have made their way into corporate practices. Thus, many COVID statements include sections discussing a commitment to equality. However, many company practices may end up reinforcing the issues they claim to oppose within their work-



ing environments. Thus, a qualitative content analysis provides the best way to dive deep into the implications of each policy.

To formalize my coding scheme, I first sorted the restaurant industry statements through five major themes. Themes of cleanliness, care for workers, care for customers, increased reliance on technology, and community aid or corporate social responsibility developed naturally based on the frequency of phrases within the statements. Each theme had related keywords that may have been synonymous with the themes. For example, I would code statements including words about sanitation into the cleanliness theme. Similarly, statements mentioning “our team” would fall into the theme of care for workers. The restaurant industry’s five major themes reflected the five most common aspects of COVID-19 statements.

Building on what I found in the restaurant industry, I matched the five same themes to the technology industry COVID statements. Some themes were more difficult to translate than others, but the process created the most effective way to compare the industries. Noting the frequency differences in thematic elements, I formed a new analysis for the technology industry based on comparison rather than just frequency. My new model for analyzing technology business statements was key in understanding the differences between both industries and the priorities of each company. The technology industry themes were often more implicit to code, involving more qualitative analysis of the latent content of the COVID-19 statements. However, even themes like reassuring investors (care for customers) were present in multiple statements. Thus, frequency did play a factor in determining the five thematic elements within the technology industry as well.

Importantly, the coding method depended on the entirety of COVID-19 statements. Thus, I did not just search for the frequency of keywords or phrases, but I also analyzed the politics of each statement. How statements were organized, how much detail they included, and other implicit factors all developed my analysis and coding method. We must also look at the politics of each statement to gain a broader understanding of how businesses treat and value their employees. The following table summarizes each coding theme and what they imply for company labor practices.

TABLE 1: Coding Themes and Major Implications

COVID Statement Themes	Restaurant Industry	Technology Industry
Cleanliness	Increased labor demands on employees	Technology developed for cleaning procedures
Care for Workers	Defined in relation to customer safety	Absent from greater than 50% of industry statements
Care for Customer/Investors	Reassuring to maintain business	Reassuring to continue supply chain
Technological Innovation	Increased reliance on third-party applications	Focused on advertising or promoting products
Community Aid/Corporate Social Responsibility	Growing business through supporting front-line workers	Growing business through funding education and research

## FINDINGS

With a greater understanding of the inequalities and structural factors guiding the restaurant and technology industry, this study examines the labor practices both industries are continuing during the pandemic. Analyzing the con-

tent of company COVID-19 policies published on their websites will illuminate how different businesses are protecting or abusing their workers. Through my analysis, we will discover how COVID has affected workers in the largest businesses in the United States.

## THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Studying the COVID-19 statements from the 25 largest restaurant companies in the United States, I have identified five key messages that underscore how businesses are treating their employees. The five key themes restaurant businesses emphasize are: cleanliness, care for workers, care for customers, increased reliance on technology, and community aid and responsibility.

### *Cleanliness*

Cleanliness procedures, present in every COVID-19 statement, take many forms from increasing sanitation in the restaurant to new handwashing policies for employees. Restaurants have enacted policies involving cleanliness as the primary means to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks in the restaurants. Interestingly, restaurants already had strict sanitation processes in place. The majority of statements emphasized how their new policies were built upon previously existing ones. For example, the Olive Garden statement claims, “In addition to our already strict restaurant cleaning procedures, which exceed CDC guidelines, we will continue to regularly disinfect all guest and team member touchpoints.” Many of the COVID statements illustrate how restaurants are doing more cleaning rather than fundamentally altering the existing cleaning practices. Similarly, one of the Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) statements claims, “We’re reinforcing our already strict sanitation, handwashing, and health and wellness policies for our employees, and ensuring hand sanitizer is always available in every one of our restaurants.” The universality of cleanliness policies within COVID statements suggests it remains the top concern of restaurant businesses during the pandemic.

While restaurant businesses are concerned about cleanliness within restaurants, they frame cleanliness in terms of customer safety. The Olive Garden cleanliness section falls under the heading “Protecting Your Dining Experience.” In a similar manner, the KFC quote is pulled from a letter from the KFC president that begins, “Dear KFC Guest.” Even if statements mention additional measures to take care of employees, they never exist within the same section as cleanliness measures. To illustrate, we can look at Panera Bread’s statement that includes major headings like “Our Bakery-Cafes & Serving Our Guests Safely” and “Taking Care of Our Panera Associates.” The message about “Enhanced cleaning & sanitization procedures” falls under the first heading rather than encompassing both. By separating employee safety and customer safety, each restaurant business implicitly devalues their workers. While some COVID statements are addressed to the entire community of guests, franchise owners, employees, and other community members, the emphasis on cleanliness for the sake of the customer places the importance of the customer over everyone else. From the statements, each restaurant business is first and foremost dedicated to providing a safe space for the customer to eat, not necessarily a safe space for an employee to work.

Finally, the increased sanitation efforts within restaurants leads to an increase in the workload for employees. Ranked number one in health and safety during the COVID-19 crisis by Ipsos, Panda Express released a 22-page document about their health and safety measures. Specifically, the Panda Express document reveals meticulous steps for

employees to perform after every delivery, every thirty minutes, and every hour in the front of the house and the back of the house. The Panda Express statement reflects the increasing demands for employees. While new safety measures may be necessary, statements do not explain additional compensation for a new workload. None of the COVID-19 statements featured messaging about compensation for employees completing these additional practices. Without clear communication signifying rewards for extra responsibilities, we find a fundamental disconnect between restaurant business expectations and employee compensation.

#### *Care for workers*

At the same time, many of the COVID statements did include sections about how restaurant businesses were attempting to care for their employees during the pandemic. The theme of care for workers appeared in two separate ways in the COVID statements I analyzed. First, care for workers appeared in the general understanding that safe operations protected workers and customers alike. Secondly, care for workers appeared in statements explicitly discussing employee benefits during COVID-19. The first approach expresses a passive appreciation of workers and the second approach represents an active approach to bettering employees' lives.

Exemplifying the first approach, the top restaurant chain within the study, McDonald's, describes how to make restaurants safer. In the opening sentence, the McDonald's statement claims that "At McDonald's, the safety of our customers and crew is a top priority." The McDonald's statement continues to use a rhetoric of protecting their clients and employees equally. Later on, the statement claims, "You will notice restaurant crew wearing gloves and face coverings, both for your protection and theirs." The use of the second person pronoun "you" shifts the emphasis of the messaging within the statement. However, it is important to note that other statements addressed to the community in the form of letters from restaurant presidents or administrators do not take the same approach. For example, in a Wendy's statement addressed to "Wendy's Fans," President Todd Penegor writes, "the health, safety and well-being of our teams and customers has always been our top priority." Compared to the McDonald's statement, the Wendy's letter seems to center the safety of workers more. The two statements with the same letter-style approach seem to denote different kinds of value the two companies place on their workers. McDonald's gave select employees a 10% bonus back in March while Wendy's gave workers a 10% hourly pay increase beginning in April. The difference between the McDonald's one-time bonus and the Wendy's pay increase over the course of five weeks represents how each business statement highlights the employees' value. With a focus on the customer instead of the employee, McDonald's has compensated their workers less than Wendy's.

In addition to Wendy's, other businesses also explicitly mention how they protect their employees during COVID 19. Even in letters addressed to customers, like Pizza Hut's statement, protecting employees still remains an important feature. The second main heading for Pizza Hut's statement is "Protective Equipment for Team Members," and the website lists a variety of protective gear and policies employees must use. As opposed to the increased labor I discussed in the cleanliness theme, the care for workers sections usually involve the business providing protective gear and other equipment. An increased care for workers from an administrative standpoint suggests some restaurants value their workers and their safety during the pandemic more than other businesses.

### *Care for Customers*

Restaurant businesses also attempted to protect customer health during the pandemic. The majority of statements included information about how the restaurants are deeply indebted to their customers. The wording signifies how restaurants' larger commitment to the customer implies less of a commitment to the worker. Increased care for customers comes with an increased reliance on technology which I will discuss in the next section. However, I still want to demonstrate the unique ways customers are praised and invited to continue supporting restaurants in the COVID statements.

With the safety health issues COVID poses to people eating at restaurants, a significant focus of COVID statements dealt with convincing customers to continue ordering food. Many businesses offered frequently asked question (FAQ) sections on their websites to assure customers returning to eat is a safe enough practice. For example, the Jack in the Box COVID statement just includes an FAQ section with questions like "How has Jack in the Box adapted dining rooms to provide a safe environment for guests and team members?" By providing FAQ sections on the COVID statement websites, businesses are attempting to draw customers in and continue profitable operations despite customer concern.

I also found COVID statements specifically appealing to emotional ties that illustrate how restaurants care about their customers. For example, Popeyes ends their statement by saying, "You are family...everything we are doing is with you in mind. Thank you... and always know that we will do our best to do the right thing for all of our guests." By addressing customers as family members, the businesses attempt to comfort concerned patrons more than concerned employees. While some businesses address customers as family, others group the whole gamut of workers and customers as one family unit. Panera opens their COVID statement by saying, "Our Panera Family is just that—a family made up of associates, guests and the communities we serve... the health, safety and overall well-being of our family, and yours, is always our top priority." With a common perception that family members are safe and careful, people may be more drawn to attend a restaurant that they consider family. Whether customers believe a restaurant is their family as much as these statements seem to suggest is unknown. Increased care for the customer may turn around and reciprocate in increased customer care for employees. However, we must remember how customers treat employee rests on intersections of inequality like Amarnani et al. (2019) discuss.

### *Increased Reliance on Technology*

In addition, a consistent theme across all the COVID statements dealt implicitly and explicitly with an increased reliance on new technology in the workplace. Ultimately, the increased use of new technology and technology dependence in restaurant businesses may harm workers. Online or independent sources reduce the reliance on traditional employees in restaurants, lowering their overall labor value. For my research, I found an increased reliance on technology in two separate ways in the restaurant industry. First, restaurant businesses relied on new technology in providing contactless delivery or service. Secondly, restaurant businesses relied more heavily on third-party delivery apps to fulfill orders. Shifting responsibility from traditional employees to new ordering and service methods offers restaurants an opportunity to justify not compensating workers for increased labor demands. With less face-to-face responsibilities, employee labor has been shifted to additional cleanliness labor. Moving in-person employees from the front of the house to the back of the house, the process of relying on new technologies pushes workers outside of customer sight, making their work invis-

ble. We can understand the shift in labor phenomenon by analyzing the COVID statements restaurants have published.

While many of these restaurant companies already used smartphone applications and online ordering systems before, the COVID-19 pandemic has helped companies develop and promote these platforms more. Starbucks, for example, which had a developed app and rewards system before the pandemic, pushed its customers to primarily use the online app when the pandemic began. In the middle of March, a Starbucks statement urged customers to continue to “walk up and order at the counter, through the ‘order ahead’ feature in the Starbucks app, via the drive-thru and use delivery.” Starbucks’ messaging includes relying on the app to create a healthier practice of giving customers food and drinks during a global pandemic. Universally, restaurant businesses connected using their apps to having safer practices during the pandemic. In early June, Dunkin’ Donuts wrote, “as a precaution, Dunkin’ is continuing to limit service... Guests can order and pay contactless on the Dunkin’ App for a quick, grab-and-go experience.” Importantly, the statement from Dunkin’ Donuts underscores how using the app cuts out the process of someone physically taking an order. Relying more on electronic apps to take orders while staying safe, the restaurant businesses are sidelining their employees in favor of new technologies.

In a similar vein, new technology in the restaurants themselves increases safety while decreasing the role of traditional employees. Along with apps, restaurant businesses have adopted a host of new technologies to deal with the pandemic. From low-level protective shields to higher level technologies, restaurants are embracing new ways to stay safe during COVID. Recently, Wendy’s released a statement regarding contactless soda fountain pouring stations in their restaurants. The press release claims “This latest Coca-Cola Freestyle® technology enables touch-free, mobile pouring – all from your smartphone.” Bringing a whole new soda fountain to the market in the name of safety, Wendy’s continues its commitment to safety. In doing so, the business may reassure customers they are safe when ordering food and drinks from Wendy’s even during the pandemic. However, the new technology may have unknown consequences for the worker. With less service tasks to complete, Wendy’s may now justify demanding workers to continue new, more arduous cleanliness procedures.

#### *Community aid and social responsibility*

The final major theme restaurant businesses address in their COVID-19 statements revolves around each business’ commitment to their community. While many restaurants discuss their extra safety measures for their customers, community aid and social responsibility deals with extra measures businesses are taking for the communities around them affected by COVID-19. Building on Lee et al. (2013), we can see how companies are engaging in corporate social responsibility to maintain and even grow sales when the restaurant industry is struggling to maintain customer support. During the COVID-19 era, however, philanthropic work often centers on essential healthcare workers. By giving aid to healthcare workers, restaurants actively make their own essential workers invisible.

With the risk COVID poses to public health, many companies rallied around supporting essential healthcare workers when the United States first started to deal with the pandemic. In March, Starbucks announced they would “offer free coffee to front line responders through May 3. In addition, The Starbucks Foundation will donate \$500,000 to support front-line [sic] responders.” In addition to the donations, Starbucks also put together a campaign for their own employees to “support and thank front-line [sic] workers.” Requiring employees who continue to work during the pan-

democratic to thank other workers devalues the social position of Starbucks workers, which in turn, reifies practices of paying restaurant employees lower wages.

## THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

The 25 largest technology companies in the United States have different messages about safety policies than the restaurant industry. With many employees working from home, cleanliness and safety are not as important in the technology industry. However, company COVID statements still illustrate how technology businesses are understanding the role of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Analyzing the 25 largest technology companies' COVID-19 statements, I used the same five themes. For technology companies, COVID statements offered new ways to understand how technology businesses value their different workforces. Many of these themes relate to each other, but each have unique implications about employee value in global technology corporations.

### *Cleanliness*

While many technology company operations occur remotely, the technology industry still mentioned their new cleaning and sanitation efforts during the global pandemic. Companies with front-line employees explain how their employees are maintaining cleanliness practices, while other technology businesses detail their efforts to help other people stay sanitized. Similar to the restaurant industry, technology businesses emphasized cleanliness to continue business rather than supporting employees.

To begin, some technology companies with front-line employees discuss how their new policies promote cleanliness in the workplace. When Apple reopened their stores in May of 2020, they released a letter explaining their additional procedures. Like in the restaurant industry, Apple's new policies were framed in a way to keep customers safe while demanding additional labor from employees. The Apple statement claims "Throughout the day, we're conducting enhanced deep cleanings that place special emphasis on all surfaces, display products, and highly trafficked areas." For Apple retail employees, new cleanliness guidelines have the same consequences that restaurant workers face.

On the other hand, many companies without in-person employees also prioritized cleanliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Intel statement highlights how Intel is using a new artificial intelligence technology to help clean hospitals. The statement details how a new robot was recently developed due to the constraints of COVID by saying "In order to detect and avoid humans in the room, the Violet prototype is designed to use motion sensors, an Intel® Movidius™ Vision Processing Unit (VPU) and a Luxonis Depth AI platform for AI, depth, and feature tracking." On top of other projects happening around Intel, the new processing power for the robot "Stevie" was developed quickly when the COVID-19 virus spread across the globe. The statement discusses how the robot helps efficiency in hospitals or high-risk health locations, but does not mention the workers behind the technology. Through their statement, Intel erases the additional labor employees are doing and focuses solely on their new technology in the pandemic.

### *Care for workers*

We must also look at how technology companies discuss new worker policies to understand what they say or do not say about protecting workers during the pandemic. While some technology businesses pledged to help their workers, a surprising number of technology companies did not include their employees in their COVID statements. In total, only

ten out of twenty-four statements (42%) included information about how their businesses were protecting their workers. While some companies like Apple mention reopening their retail stores, their messaging centers around the customer experience. The Apple statement about reopening stores reads “Our commitment is to only move forward with a reopening once we’re confident we can safely return to serving customers from our stores.” The only mention of employees in the statement is when it discusses the additional cleaning procedures that will take place in opened stores.

One possible explanation for why technology companies do not discuss how they are protecting workers is the lack of in-person work technology businesses do. Technology company employees may already be working from home before the pandemic began, so a large portion of labor for these companies remains unchanged. Ignoring how some companies continue in-person operations signifies how technology companies value some workers more than others. For example, lower-income employees receive little to no compensation during the pandemic because the focus of technology companies is centered on their higher-income employees who can seamlessly transition to remote work. There are striking examples, like the Apple statement, of how technology businesses still maintain in-person labor while not writing about their support for that labor. Supporting their front-line workers was universal in the restaurant industry statements. Even with many technology companies employing front-line workers, statements did not always mention extra protections for them. To illustrate how technology companies acknowledged their front line employees while simultaneously not writing about supporting them, we can look at one of Charter Communications’ statements. Charter Communications, the trade company for Charter Spectrum, mentions how they were prepared to meet demands of the pandemic because of their essential workers. The statement claims “Charter literally has tens of thousands of front-line employees on the ground throughout the 41 states where we operate.” The statement then goes on to detail the next subheading, “How is Charter Supporting First Responders and Critical Institutions?” While discussing how Charter supports medical institutions and government departments, the statement fails to acknowledge how the company is putting its own workers in harm’s way by demanding in-person labor.

The lack of support for workers in technology business statements becomes more impactful when we look at all the business statements. Comparing the statements with one another, it becomes clear that companies like Charter and Apple explicitly refused to acknowledge extra protections for their workers during the pandemic. The lack of information about employee support was not simply an overlook, but an explicit rejection of worker compensation. To illustrate how the majority of technology companies fail to support their workers, we can look to a technology company that has in-person workers and writes about how the company supports them. The Amazon COVID statement helps us understand the complicated approach technology companies have to employee support. The Amazon statement’s first heading is about their front line employees. To support employees, the first bullet of the Amazon policy states: “We’re offering a special one-time Thank You bonus totaling over \$500 million. All front-line employees and partners who were with the company throughout the month of June will receive a bonus.” Importantly, Amazon operates the Whole Foods Markets, which is why they have a significant amount of writing about their front-line workers. Straddling the divide between technology company and in-person retailer, Amazon offers significant writing about their employees when other technology companies have no mention of their own staff. We must remember that COVID statements are carefully crafted by each business, and many technology companies have deliberately excluded worker support from their statements.

Therefore, the care for workers that technology companies exhibit, or ignore, also implies a class divide. Many technology company employees have previously worked from home. However, the majority of workers previously working from home were not the front-line workers that COVID statements mention. Companies, like Apple and Spectrum, who exclude supporting workers from their statements do more to disadvantage their lower-income employees. Spectrum employees who must install new routers or work in-person face health risks significantly more than white-collar employees who may have worked from home before the pandemic. Employees privileged enough to work from home can continue operations as normal whereas in-person employees must follow extra procedures to keep themselves and customers safe. In doing so, these companies are furthering the class divide within their own business and devaluing their essential labor force. The employees at the bottom of the corporate ladders have less access to upward mobility. While all company workers do not benefit from the lack of support for them, the top management of technology companies still maintain profits during the pandemic. The COVID-19 statements illustrate how technology companies place less value in the entirety of their workforce than restaurant companies. Specifically, the low wage workers in technology industries are at higher risk for mistreatment than fast food workers.

*Community aid and corporate social responsibility (funding education and research)*

While many technology companies' statements did not include any mentions of caring for workers, all of the technology companies included information about how they continue to support broader communities during the pandemic. However, the goal of caring for the community for technology companies reflects a different position than the caring for community statements from the restaurant industry. For technology businesses, caring for the community happens in the form of actively fighting the global spread of COVID-19. Restaurant businesses allocated large amounts of resources to supporting front line workers and relief efforts, but technology companies focused more on ending the pandemic. The difference in framing comes from the different resources that technology companies have. Developing artificial intelligence or medical equipment can do more for stopping a virus than cheeseburgers and fries. In the process, technology companies' acts of caring for the community still relied upon their established business models.

The logic behind supporting the community seems to reflect a motive to capitalize off of the pandemic. In their statement, Nvidia promised a license of their genome analysis toolkit "NVIDIA Clara Parabrix" to researchers across the country. Their idea, to "supercharge the fight against COVID," suggests the ability for technology companies to provide health officials the tools to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike restaurant companies who offered free drinks or food to supply essential workers, technology companies can take an active role in fighting COVID. Not only can technology companies help the community by helping end the pandemic, but they can also profit off of the fight itself. Releasing technology licenses to researchers becomes an easy way to gain positive press coverage and distribute a product. Through their efforts of community aid, technology companies attempt to profit off the fight against COVID-19 more than restaurant companies could.

In addition to distributing their technologies to fight COVID-19, technology companies are also giving away monetary aid to COVID relief organizations and efforts. Significant resources from technology companies were set aside to help small businesses during the pandemic. At the same time, relief efforts for businesses are often coded as a way to sell new products. The AT&T COVID statement links to a resource page for small businesses. The linked website



includes a chart for “What businesses need” and “Solution and offer.” AT&T’s community relief efforts are disguised ways that AT&T can sell their products even at a discounted rate. In the form of a good deed, technology companies are continuing to promote their services throughout the pandemic. AT&T also provided money to help support online education programs. A more critical understanding of AT&T’s relief efforts suggests that the company is really acting in its own interest. Providing internet and phone services, AT&T is using the pandemic to connect people to the resources they need during the pandemic. At the same time, these technology companies are involved in a process of making the people in their communities dependent on their services that will eventually require payment.

A significant portion of technology companies included their efforts to fund research about COVID-19 and support educational efforts during the pandemic. The differences in technology company approaches mainly depended on the services each company offered. Internet providers like Comcast or AT&T detailed how they were providing Internet for students who needed to connect to school whereas technology companies like IBM or Intel discussed how they funded COVID-19 research. Technology companies seem to promote their research or educational efforts in their COVID statements to further profit from the pandemic. Like restaurant companies, these acts of philanthropy are examples of corporate social responsibility that could lead to more business. Again, technology companies have opted to support research and educational opportunities because of the products they offer. For example, the Comcast statement claims “As schools remain closed...Eligible new customers will receive 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, while eligible university students who live in our service areas can receive a Visa prepaid card worth about two months of internet service.” As an Internet service provider, Comcast already has the resources to support online education. By doing so, Comcast is making itself an essential element in the process of connecting students to their classrooms. Their practice is inherently predatory because, as we have seen with the COVID-19 pandemic, students will need their internet for more than the 60 days Comcast offers. Similar to other Internet service providers, but unlike other technology companies, Comcast funds educational opportunities rather than research about COVID-19 because their business revolves around Internet access.

Importantly, Comcast is one of the few technology companies who mention their workers in their COVID-19 statement. Comcast offers their employees extra paid time off during the remainder of 2020, and they claim to “have committed \$500 million to support our employees through continued pay and benefits where operations have been paused or impacted.” However, the Comcast statement illustrates a unique contradiction with their extra support for employees. In order to provide additional Internet services to “eligible customers,” Comcast must inherently provide more customer support. While Comcast is having their customer service employees work from home, the addition of new customers and new Internet services implies an increased demand for customer service employees. Through the technology company statements, we can see how technology employees may face more dangers while employers gain new customers.

Mainly software and hardware companies continue to fund research about COVID-19 and health care practices. Often, funding research involved product-based ways to combat COVID-19. For IBM, the company has put a significant effort into combatting COVID-19 with their artificial intelligence. One blog post from the COVID-19 site on IBM details how a team at the company started working on an artificial intelligence project to combat COVID-19 without any prompting from management. The statement reads “Within a few days they had virtually assembled an ad hoc team of

developers, designers and other IBM experts, who started bouncing ideas off each other in a COVID-19 data channel they set up on Slack.” Within this quote, we can understand how COVID-19 has changed the working conditions of IBM workers. The artificial intelligence team had already been developed, but the team needed to modify the software to fit the new conditions of COVID. The statement goes on to also say “the group created two complementary COVID-19 tracking tools in just five days—a volume of work that might normally require months to complete.” The IBM statement perfectly illustrates how workers from home are more likely to take on extra work without sufficient compensation. The IBM team developing systems to fight COVID may have received a press release about their efforts, but the statement explicitly details the extra labor they completed. By promoting research efforts to fight COVID-19, technology companies are putting higher demands on their employees, which could cause overwork even in a remote setting.

Through analyzing technology company statements about community aid, we see how the technology industry participates in predatory practices. The additional resources for education or research create new demands for workers that companies fail to adequately compensate. Like restaurant employees, technology employees face greater workloads during the pandemic with little or no rewards for additional labor. Often, corporate social responsibility practices also negatively affect the workers as well. Similar to the restaurant businesses, community aid efforts in the technology industry help contribute to the devaluation of employee labor during COVID-19. The corporate social responsibility aspects of technology industry statements also illustrate how technology companies view the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to sell more of their products. In the next section, we will further analyze how technology companies demand more from workers while refusing to reward them for additional labor.

### *Technological innovation*

One of the most salient features of the technology industry COVID-19 statements revolved around their mobilization of new technology to fight the pandemic. In the same logic as statements regarding community aid, technology companies heavily promoted how their technology could stop COVID-19. First, employees have to quickly create new products in a different work environment. Secondly, technology companies have another opportunity to profit from the global health crisis when highlighting their new innovations.

To begin, we must understand how the development of new technology creates new demands on technology company employees. While technology companies are mobilizing their new products to help stop the pandemic, the process has the potential to overburden employees. Looking back at the Intel statement, we can see how the workers developing Stevie—an artificial intelligence to help clean high-risk healthcare facilities—needed to meet new demands in a condensed time schedule. Information on Stevie focuses on the robot’s functions and features to help efficiency in hospitals or high risk health locations. The team behind the new technological innovation are left unnamed, which further represents how technology companies are more focused on their business than their employees.

Software companies like Intel are not the only businesses depending on new labor sources during the pandemic. The statement from Facebook illuminates how the majority of technology companies have demanded more from their workers during the pandemic. Facebook’s statement both underscores how they are attempting to keep their workers safe, but it also highlights extra demands the company has placed on its workers. After sending workers home at the beginning of the pandemic, Facebook brought “a small number of content reviewers back to offices to support [content review]

efforts in the coming weeks.” Facebook detailed how they were relying on content reviewers to flag posts related to real world harm or false information about COVID-19. While reviewing content is part of a content reviewers’ job description, the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the demands of their work. They must look for new types of posts and may have more posts to look at in general due to increases in social media use while at home. While the Facebook statement stressed they would be taking extra safety measures, it fails to address how workers would be compensated for their additional labor. Technology industry employees find themselves with additional tasks during the pandemic just like restaurant workers. From the statements, we find that companies do not acknowledge the extra work employees perform, but they still profit from it.

Unlike restaurant companies, many technology company statements included information about new products or offers. While some restaurant business statements reminded customers that it was not inherently dangerous to order food from a restaurant, the technology companies often included press releases about new products. Technology company statements suggested they were active fighters against COVID-19 rather than just responding to the pandemic. Having a different frame than restaurant businesses could also explain why many technology companies did not include how they were caring for their workers in their statements. Unlike restaurant businesses, technology companies’ COVID statements read more like sales pitches. Oracle’s statement titled “We’re taking on COVID-19” illustrates how technology companies advertised their products through the pandemic. The Oracle statement discusses the importance of funding a vaccine, and then goes on to say “That’s where Oracle can help. By working together with the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, we’ve been able to provide three African nations... with a modern, cloud-based, electronic health records system to help them manage their large-scale vaccination programs...and save lives.” Oracle mixes in their efforts to aid the community, but the statement reflects a sales pitch. Oracle technology can save lives, so clients must want to use it. In fact, the statement reflects how Oracle is spinning the pandemic to make profits. The statement also introduces Oracle Health Management System, “first developed to manage COVID-19 testing.” The software that technology companies are developing during the pandemic will not just fizzle out when the pandemic has subsided. In reality, the pandemic is an opportunity for technology companies to demonstrate the need for their product in the world. By saving lives through Oracle technology, Oracle creates a new dependence on their services.

One of the major reasons why workers have very little importance in technology company statements is because the customer base for technology companies do not often interact with their employees. Instead, technology company statements demonstrate how companies see the pandemic as a way to sell new products. For the technology businesses, statements have become a way to advertise; not a way to highlight the ways the businesses keep employees safe and healthy.

#### *Reassuring investors (care for customers)*

Technology businesses also continue to remind investors and partners about their ability to profit during the pandemic within their COVID statements. Many technology businesses included reassuring messages, some even directly addressed to investors, in their statements. By addressing investors or shareholders in their COVID statements, technology companies continue to remind us of their main goals in the pandemic. Unlike restaurant companies who simply tried to maintain customers during the pandemic, technology companies attempted to grow during the pandemic.

To understand how technology businesses address their investors through their COVID statements, we can look at the COVID pages from Fidelity National Information Services (FIS). FIS is one of the two technology companies who did not have a specific blog or page published to address COVID-19. However, searching “covid” on their website provides 65 mentions of COVID on their website, primarily from their blog or news updates. Interestingly, these “insights” about COVID detail FIS’s own market research during the pandemic. As a financial services company, their COVID statements are a series of press releases about consumer habits and economic shifts during the pandemic. The FIS “insights” are a prime example of how technology companies work to reassure investors during the pandemic. By focusing on how to reassure investors of the business’ success during a global health crisis, FIS completely ignores their employees. The FIS statements, like other technology statements, resemble a sales pitch to grow business. Instead of supporting employees and communities, some technology companies like FIS attempt to grow business during the pandemic.

## DISCUSSION

My research suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased labor demands on all employees regardless of social status, but companies have failed to fairly compensate workers for their additional responsibilities. In both the restaurant and the technology industries, companies have placed profits before employee well-being. Importantly, studying labor policies during a global health crisis illustrates how companies value and treat their employees. The threat COVID-19 poses to corporate profits and employee health creates a case study for us to understand businesses priorities and methods. With a new look at business practices, my research underscores how businesses continue to exploit workers during a global health crisis.

To begin, the restaurant industry statements reveal how restaurant companies continue to drive profits at the expense of their employees’ health. Overall, restaurant industries promote their efforts of corporate social responsibility to drive profits like Lee et al. (2013) discusses. At the same time, restaurant businesses demand additional labor from their employees through rigorous cleaning and sanitation procedures. Instead of rewarding workers for their extra responsibilities, restaurant businesses continue to automate their production through the use of new technologies. While restaurant businesses detail their safety procedures to reassure customers, employees have shared a different side to the story. In May, five employees sued McDonald’s about the lack of safety measures in place (Eidelson, 2020). Previous research on the restaurant industry suggests many workers do not have the social or economic resources to demand better treatment (Minkler et al. 2020), which could explain why a relatively low number of employees have spoken out about how restaurants do not adhere to the safety measures they detail in their COVID statements. Furthermore, the implicit findings from the restaurant industry COVID statements highlight how restaurant businesses have actively devalued their workers during the pandemic by praising healthcare employees over their own essential workers. The COVID statements signify that restaurant businesses have failed to adequately compensate workers while maintaining operations during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, technology businesses have continued to mistreat their employees, particularly blue-collar employees, by excluding them from COVID-19 policies or not compensating them fairly. Both restaurant and technology businesses attempted to reassure customers of their safe practices, but technology businesses more explicitly prioritized

sales, investments, and products. By actively trying to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, technology businesses engaged in their own version of corporate social responsibility to maintain profit during the pandemic. However, technology business COVID statements often failed to address how companies helped their own workers through the health and safety risks of the pandemic. The lack of substance about employees in technology industry statements reveals how the technology industry relies on logics of the dominant class. The most important lesson from technology industry statements comes from the contrasting treatment of essential employees and employees with the privilege to work from home. Apple reopening retail stores, Texas Instruments continuing factory operations, and Spectrum mentioning their thousands of in-person workers installing Internet routers suggests a lack of attention to the health risks essential employees within the industry are taking. As a whole, the technology industry significantly undervalued their lower-income employees by rejecting mentioning them in COVID-19 statements. The assumption that important employees in the technology industry are safe and need no extra protection because they already work from home suggests technology businesses must reevaluate their business practices for all employees.

Using a research method comparing technology and restaurant businesses, I found that both industries use similar strategies to justify their business practices during a global pandemic. Both industries engaged in corporate social responsibility, they both attempted to reassure customers, and they both relied on new technologies. In turn, employees in both industries were required to perform additional labor. Often, companies did not reward the additional work, and both technology and restaurant businesses failed to adequately respond to new health and safety risks of COVID-19.

Even though many similarities exist between the two industries, my findings also underscore how COVID-19 has illuminated inequality between and within both industries. The majority of restaurant employees face serious health and safety risks by returning to in-person service during a pandemic. While the restaurant industry put significantly more care into establishing protective measures for their workers than the technology industry, restaurant businesses continue to celebrate other essential workers more than their own. Restaurant industry practices have continued to devalue their workforce, which continues to justify their low pay and lower social status. For the technology industry, the class divide within the industry demonstrates how technology businesses disregard their low-income employees. While higher-income employees have also been affected by increased labor demands from the pandemic, blue-collar technology industry employees face health risks by completing in-person work while businesses ignore or dismiss additional compensation. The trends underscore how the COVID-19 pandemic is continuing to impact lower-income employees regardless of industry more.

Even with a thorough methodology, there were some new gaps and questions my research leaves unanswered. Most beneficial to my line of research, I would have liked to cross-reference COVID-19 statements with company actions and practices. It is important to understand that statements written by businesses are biased, and in practice, often disregarded. While I was able to include some news sources into my research, a content analysis of news media throughout the pandemic could also illustrate how companies are truly treating their employees. In the future, a comparison between COVID-19 statements and employee experiences—either through interviews or content analysis—would strengthen the findings of my research. The research material is also still growing as the COVID-19 pandemic continues across the United States and around the world. With a growing historical account of the pandemic, a greater analysis of COVID

statements and secondary sources may reveal new findings in the future. Further research could continue to hold businesses accountable and find new ways for companies to respect their employees.

## CONCLUSION

The statements and policies companies released during the COVID-19 pandemic provide a unique case study for analyzing how companies value their employees. In this study, I discuss how both restaurant and technology companies have continued to devalue their employees during a global health crisis. As previous research on the dangers of telecommuting suggest, new company policies still impacted employees working from home. Comparing the two industries, both sets of employees face increased labor demands with little or no additional compensation. Both industries also continued to devalue and make their low-income workers invisible during the pandemic. The comparison between the two sectors illustrates not only how inequality operates between both industries, but it also describes how inequality operates within each industry. Specifically for technology industry workers, blue-collar positions faced significant challenges in recognition from companies as well as significantly higher health risks. In the future, more work comparing official policies to the lived experiences of employees during the pandemic can continue to illuminate how companies (mis)treat their employees. My research opens the door for more discussion on how corporate policy may support dangerous ideologies about labor value in the United States.

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## APPENDIX

### Top 25 Restaurant and Technology Businesses

Restaurant Businesses	Technology Businesses
1. McDonald's	1. Microsoft
2. Starbucks	2. Apple
3. Chick-Fil-A	3. Amazon
4. Taco Bell	4. Alphabet (Google)
5. Burger King	5. Facebook
6. Subway	6. Visa
7. Wendy's	7. Mastercard
8. Dunkin'	8. Intel
9. Domino's	9. AT&T
10. Panera Bread	10. Verizon
11. Pizza Hut	11. Cisco
12. Chipotle Mexican Grill	12. Comcast
13. Sonic Drive-In	13. Adobe
14. KFC	14. Oracle
15. Olive Garden	15. Salesforce
16. Applebee's	16. Nvidia
17. Panda Express	17. Netflix
18. Arby's	18. Paypal
19. Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen	19. IBM
20. Little Caesars	20. Broadcom
21. Dairy Queen	21. Texas Instruments
22. Buffalo Wild Wings	22. Charter Communications
23. Chili's Grill and Bar	23. Qualcomm
24. Jack in the Box	24. FIS
25. IHOP	25. Fiserv



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## Open for Business!: An Intersectional Examination of Ethnic Restaurants

### INTRODUCTION

Restaurants are an often visited space, and many of the chefs that are employed and the cuisines that are being served hinge on societal understandings of certain ethnic groups (Turgeon and Pastinelli, 2002). The pervasiveness of ethnic restaurants globally calls into question the notoriety we place on certain cuisines and not on others, as well as how we consume not just the food, but the layered ideas with respect to the cuisine. The cultural and social understandings of ethnic restaurants are multidimensional and multifaceted, and the food, decor, and overall atmosphere can evoke and develop a stronger understanding of the current boundaries established (Chan and Farrer 2020). This literature review will take a look at the role of intersectionality, namely the power dynamics of race and class structures, in restaurants and the food industry. This review of twenty scholarly articles, many of which focus on various different ethnic backgrounds and represent a myriad of countries, goes in depth into the structures of race and class and how they play a part in creating identities and ideologies with respect to cuisine and people of color. The primary research question that guided the following examination is as follows: Does the intersection of racial dynamics and class boundaries relate to the ethnic cuisine industry? This will be shown through three main sections: Restaurants as contested spaces and/or sites of familiarity, the layered importance of authenticity, and the employment of specific groups based on racial and economic grounds. Through a mixture of interviews conducted by the researchers as well as ethnographic studies, this literature review attempts to showcase how the intersectionality of race and class impacts the working dynamics of restaurants globally, as well as how people within these countries react to such spaces.

### THEME 1: RESTAURANTS AS CONTESTED SPACES, SITES OF FAMILIARITY, AND/OR AREAS OF CREATING OTHERNESS

Restaurants sprawl out in many corners of towns and cities, and people visit them for a myriad of reasons besides

satiating hunger. The current racial dynamics globally hint at some reasons people go to ethnic restaurants, as they can be spaces to feel at ease with one's culture and spaces in which the preservation of establishing otherness is felt (Davis 2002). The establishment of ethnic restaurants highlights the globalized nature of eating, but also showcases how notions of race play a large part in people's seeking out of such spaces (Turgeon and Pastinelli 2002). These foodways attract people for different reasons, and this section of the literature review will delve into the three main reasons: Restaurants as a site of familiarity, restaurants as contested spaces, and restaurants as a site of creating and establishing otherness.

### *Restaurants as Sites of Familiarity*

Ethnic restaurants provide reprieve and shelter for many immigrants in new environments. The existence of these establishments in foreign nations allows immigrants to feel a connection to their culture, essentially a home away from home (Siu 2008). These ethnic restaurants are also a space that allow for intercultural connections and allow people to consume the culture of the "other." In the example of an Ethiopian establishment in Moscow, African immigrants at a Russian university socialize in a space that they feel rekindles their connection to home (Bondarenko, Demintseva, Usacheva, and Zelenova 2014). In Britain, African restaurants allow African migrants to reminisce of home and for food from their home (Ojo 2018). In areas in which specific ethnic communities are not well established, restaurants may be the only area where they can interact with people of the same cultural and ethnic background (Bondarenko et al. 2014). These spaces also help in the establishment of social identities, as Pottier (2015) states, "... the dishes from home are consumed in public spaces of familiarity, and in a manner that enables social identities... to be expressed and strengthened" (22). Even if the restaurant owners do not happen to be from the same ethnic background as the food they are serving, exemplified by the many Mexican restaurants owned by Guatemalans, Hondurans, and El Salvadorans (Fouts 2011), they get into this business because the foods and cultures are very familiar. The shared connection through food, language, and other cultural identifiers make ethnic restaurants cultural sites of not just the consumption of food, but also of the consumption of ideas (Farrer and Wang 2020). Migrants also visit these restaurants to evoke memories of their life back in their home country, as the decor, smells, and tastes of the food remind them of where they came from (Siu 2008).

Eating at the establishments can also be a mode of challenging anti-immigrant rhetoric and showcasing the world a different viewpoint of immigrant communities. Turgeon and Pastinelli (2002) state "... eating Mexican food can be for Mexican Americans a means of affirming resistance to outside influences and, at the same time, for mainstream Americans, a form of cultural appropriation and domination of Mexican immigrants" (250). Restaurants serve as a border between two separate cultures and identities, and brings them together in a shared space for others to learn from (Walker 2013). Even if participants of the restaurant come from the same cultural background as the food they are consuming, it can still be seen as an active negotiation and contestment of this harmful rhetoric because they are helping dismantle the set notions of foods and cultures deemed acceptable by the public (Walker 2013). In the literal example of a border between the United States and Mexico, restaurants within Mexico are "... important settings for the consumption and production of national identity..." (Walker, 2013, 650). These sites help in the reaffirmation of not just their cultural identity, but also helps define what it means to embody and be a part of their new environment. Lu and Fine (1995) also argue in their article exploring Chinese food within American life that the consumption of this cuisine in restaurants is falling less on Chinese communities and more on American ones, and that these restaurants serve as instruments of

change in relation to social boundaries. These ethnic restaurants allow migrants and certain communities of color to feel a sense of deterritorialized familiarity and comfortability while also showcasing their cultural background in a globalized field.

These examples all present different reasons why people participate in ethnic restaurants, even if they are all for the feeling of familiarity. The examples of African migrants in various different nations (Bondarenko et al. 2014, Ojo 2018, and Fouts 2011) differ from the examples of migrant workers and entrepreneurs from Latin American nations (Turgeon and Pastinelli 2002, and Walker 2013) in that one group attempts to find comfort in a feigned home and community that resembles what they once had, whereas the other takes it further to push-back on harmful rhetoric, using their restaurant and the food they present as the means of achieving this goal. They are similar in that they utilize restaurants as a space to accomplish the feeling of familiarity and comfort, but they differ in their approach (Bondarenko et al. 2014, Ojo 2018, Fouts 2011, Turgeon and Pastinelli 2002, and Walker 2013). All of the provided literature also agrees with Siu's (2008) argument that restaurants are powerful spaces that allow for the reminiscence of the past to occur.

#### *Restaurants as Contested Spaces*

The creation of ethnic restaurants in foreign countries also speaks to the changing social and political nature of globalization. The pervasiveness of Indian restaurants in Britain is linked to the history of colonization, and as a result, many British people have claimed Indian food as their own (Highmore 2009). This becomes more layered when we consider that many of the Indian restaurants in Britain are not run by Indian people, but instead are primarily owned by Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrants (Buettner 2008). These restaurants in Britain act as a means of challenging common conceptualizations in Britain, as Buettner (2008) states "... they challenge common British conceptualizations of undifferentiated Asian population and culture and assert distinct national, regional, class, and religious backgrounds... South Asians perform their own acts of ethnic absolutism that work against reconfigurations of Britishness that include curry as much as the undercut notions of a monolithic diasporic culture" (872). Though there may be differing ethnic groups working in these restaurants, too often are they lumped into the same cultural backgrounds when they all are unique (Farrer and Wang 2020 and Zelinsky 1985).

These restaurants may also attempt to fit themselves into the globalized sphere by trying to merge their identity with that of their host country (Farrer and Wang 2020). In their research looking at Japanese food in European cities, Farrer and Wang (2020) state that "Culinary culture, however, is easily borrowed, and it is the cultural and economic spheres that grassroots culinary politics happens... Ownership of a cuisine is thus fractured and contested, and will likely remain so, since the ownership is both economically valuable and up-for-grabs" (15). However, it is of note that not all restaurants and owners are the same as Fouts (2011) shares that many Latin American owned restaurants tend to avoid serving Tex-Mex flavors. In their research, Ojo (2018) notes that "... ethnic restaurants have become increasingly vulnerable to competition from other forms of eating out" (36). The 'trendiness' of certain ethnic cuisines place these restaurants in a situation where they are participating in the ongoing transnationalism of cooking, but also prohibits them and limits their reach in what they can determine as their own (Chan and Farrer 2020). Not only do certain ethnic restaurants have to establish themselves within a tough industry, but they must also define themselves as a business that people should attend (Ray 2014). Here, we see the difference between how some restaurants operate their business, with some

readily conforming and adapting to their host country's needs (Farrer and Wong 2020) whereas other restaurants will recognize how their cuisine is becoming vulnerable to outside perceptions and can ultimately be forced to change (Buettner 2008 and Ojo 2018). Whereas the Indian restaurants in Britain that are primarily operated by Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrants want to use their business to showcase that South Asians should not be lumped into one monoculture, some Latin restaurants in America refuse to serve stereotypical and changed cuisines because they believe that it will erase their identity and remove the cultural background of their cooking (Buettner 2008 and Fouts 2011).

### *Restaurants as 'Otherness'*

Especially important is the idea of the exoticism of ethnic restaurants in foreign nations. Oftentimes, people visit these restaurants because they are "different" (Davis 2002). This can further racial hierarchies and position certain ethnic groups on top of one another, or as Kim (1999) defines it, "... superior/inferior and insider/foreigner - it emphasizes both that the groups become racialized in comparison with one another and that they are differently racialized" (107). People can definitely visit and dine in these ethnic restaurants because of sheer curiosity or interest as explained by Stock and Schmitz (2019), but Buettner (2008) states that there is active "Resentment of Asian encroachment on the community, penetrating into the private sphere as smells carried through doors, windows, and walls..." (876). In the 1950s, many restaurant-goers in Britain (non-Asians) did not go to Asian restaurants and establishments because they were unfamiliar and uncertain about the dishes (Buettner 2008). Ethnic restaurants can be zones in which people cross the border to try new foods, but too often are stereotypical notions of the foreign perpetuated on these restaurants (Fouts 2011). Turgeon and Pastinelli (2002) also make the claim that the labeling of restaurants as ethnic is a "... rather comprehensive yet precise definition, as being a restaurant whose signboard or publicity clearly promises the national or regional cuisine of another land... the term ethnic refers to outsider" (252). With this understanding, the performance of having a restaurant that serves ethnic cuisine already pushes the "other" narrative, as restaurants are simply another manner in which the elite can display their racial and class superiority over migrant workers (Walker 2013).

Certain restaurants and ethnic cuisines gain different levels of notoriety, and in comparing one another, it can also foster a sense of othering (Highmore 2009). Davis (2002) notes in their research that "The performance of immigrant foodways can define a group's boundaries, encourage cultural cohesion and represent a 'symbolic assertion of self against the dominant culture'" (73). This example highlights the changing nature of what it means to consume Chinese food as it is often associated with being exotic and mysterious, which correlates with stereotypical and othering notions of Chinese migrants (Davis 2002). In examining the history of tamales and tacos, Pilcher notes that not many Mexican restaurants can price their items as high as those at French restaurants, even if they often use the same ingredients (2014). The differing levels of appreciation and notoriety of certain cuisines and the refusal to see ethnic cuisines as on par with "White" cuisine exemplifies the idea of racial triangulation brought about by Kim (1999). Racial groups, in this case the cuisines presented by varying ethnic restaurants, are placed against one another on the racial triangulation axes of superior/inferior and insider/foreigner, with cuisines coming from European nations put at a higher standard and labeled superior to those from other nations, such as China and India (Kim 1999). With this argument, the horizontal axis of insider/foreigner also showcases the mentality and perception that those cooking these cuisines will forever be foreign, and despite catering to the desire and tastes of those they are serving, will never truly be part of the insider group, thus

perpetuating and continuing the othering of ethnic restaurants (Kim 1999). This shows how White restaurant goers continue to exoticize ethnic cuisine by never truly acknowledging the workers, food, and restaurants as true insiders, as they help continue the narrative that ethnic cuisines are foreign and inferior (Kim 1999 and Pilcher 2014).

These restaurants also adhere to the accomplishment of race argued by West and Fenstermaker (1995), as the cuisine that they serve and the kind of customers they have hinges on societal notions of their ethnic and cultural background. Everything we do, from going to the restaurants to having our waiter, oftentimes dressed in ‘cultural’ garb, greet us with unfamiliar languages, is all within the realm of doing race and class (West and Fenstermaker 1995). Just because we cannot see the performance of doing race or class does not mean that it does not exist, as this very performance is what can attract business and also can continue the narrative of the other (West and Fenstermaker 1995). These literature examples show the importance of race as well as class in determining which restaurants are frequented.

## THEME 2: SERVING A LAYERED AUTHENTICITY

When discussing the food that these restaurants serve, it is also important to understand and see what the customers going into the spaces think in terms of the experience they are going to get (Chan and Farrer 2020). Restaurant owners oftentimes feel the need to cater directly to the tastes of the customers that they are trying to attract, which can alter the original meaning of the dishes they are serving (Turgeon and Pastinelli 2002). The production of an authentic experience, whether it be through the decor or the actual food being served, highlights the varied dynamic between the restaurant owners, chefs, and workers with the customers and restaurant-goers (Lu and Fine 1995). Visuals, such as the decor of the restaurant, as well as the sounds and touch of the actual furniture help develop a restaurant’s atmospheric development of authenticity (Highmore 2009). The definition of an authentic experience is different depending on which side people are witnessing and participating in restaurants, and this section of the literature review will look at the varying layers behind notions of authenticity as well as how it changes in relation to expectations.

### *Catering to Expectations*

Due to being in a new setting, some restaurants feel the need to cater and alter their ingredients, tastes, and expectations to fit with the populace (Fouts 2011). Buettner (2008) states “... authenticity is never simply an objective measurement but rather is determined by the choices and desires of persons seeking to establish, or strengthen, an elevated social position” (883). When looking at the changed nature of traditional Chinese food in American settings, Davis (2002) discovers that “Changes in ingredients, preparation, configuration and combination have material and metaphorical import as modified Mandarin and Szechuan fare has become the standard Chinese food for most urban Americans” (70). Many restaurants conform their cultural cooking to White standards, which can perpetuate idyllic multiculturalism and stereotypes about certain ethnic cuisines (Buettner 2008). There is also a level of expectation that ethnic cuisine served in these restaurants must be cheap and inexpensive (Highmore 2009). The levels of accommodation that restaurants serving ethnic cuisine have to do, from the type of food that they have to put on their menu to how they serve the dishes, transforms the very meaning of what it means to participate in the consumption of ethnic cuisine (Davis 2002). Davis (2002) finds that some Chinese restaurants create a separate Chinese-language menu with ‘unfavorable’ items so that the American customers will not feel disgusted when partaking in their establishment. Though there is constant negotiation

on behalf of the business owners of these ethnic restaurants, patrons still feel that the experience they are receiving is a truly authentic one, which speaks to the manner of coddling that the restaurants have to do to perform authenticity and meet cultural boundaries and expectations (Lu and Fine 1995). Looking at the Indian restaurants in Britain, Highmore (2009) notes that “... the understanding of the Indian restaurant as popular culture is only obscured if it is to be understood either by mourning the loss of authenticity or praising the new hybrid cuisines of a postcolonial ‘multicultural’... Rather, it is only through... tracing the material and historical circumstance within which processes of adaptation and ‘making do’ take place, that it can be understood” (187). When discussing this catering to White expectations and tastes, it is important to remember that these are businesses, and their survival depends on the participation of patrons (Stock and Schmiz 2019). Looking at African restaurants in Britain, Ojo (2018) contends that “... the unpalatable reference to ‘ugali’ (a much loved food in many East African countries) as stick with a picture of an uninviting bowl of the dish prepared in an African village has the potential of repelling non-native interest” (43). Recognizing that certain foods, even commonly eaten in their native land, will not be seen as appetizing and thus making the decision not to put it on the menu is a means of catering to convention for the sake of the prosperity of the business (Lu and Fine 1995, and Stock and Schmiz 2019). Lu and Fine (1995) state that “Authentic food implies that products are prepared using the same ingredients and processes as found in the homeland of the ethnic, national, or regional group. Americanized ethnic food suggests that local and traditional characteristics of the dish as indigenously prepared have been modified or transformed” (538). These examples provided by the given literature showcase how many ethnic restaurants have to alter their identity to conform to general expectations by their host nation in order to succeed.

The focus of labeling certain ethnic restaurants as providing authentic experiences also speaks to the subtle acts of gentrification on these spaces (Stock and Schmiz 2019). In outside patrons determining that certain ethnic cuisines are truly authentic experiences, other dishes, experiences, and the overall notion of an ethnic restaurant get cast aside, pushing further a narrative that is not summarily true (Pilcher 2014). Ray (2014) states that there is “... a trace of the agentic activity of the immigrant restaurateurs struggling to name and define their project under discursive pressure of conceptions of taste and its relationship to race that is pinning them down into a category of comprehensible from the perspective of those that govern (census) and the public that counts (customers and critics)” (381). The continued insistence that certain productions of authenticity are genuine, though allowing restaurants to succeed, can erase the cultural meaning as it becomes a reflection of modern colonialism and erasure of autonomy (Turgeon and Pastinelli 2002). Simple touches such as adding numbers to Mexican and Chinese menus to lessen the embarrassment of saying the words wrong also modify cultural meanings (Fouts 2011). This act of domestication of certain ethnic cuisines prepared by these restaurants, from some Mexican restaurants serving only what the dominant culture enjoys, including “... margaritas, chips and salsa, and fajitas...” (Fouts 2011), to the constant adjustments of spice levels and taste in South Asian restaurants in Britain (Buettner 2008), simply promotes a ‘Whitened’ authenticity (Pilcher 2014). Davis (2002), Ojo (2018), Fouts (2011), and Buettner (2008) all present the idea that the constant changes that these restaurants have to make, even the most subtle of changes including adding numbers to menus, caters to the expectations of White patrons, which can lead to the loss of autonomy and reflect modern colonialist ideas (Turgeon and Pastinelli 2002). Though all the methods presented are different, they all reflect Stock’s and Schmiz’s (2019) argument that constant labeling of these adaptations

as true authentic experiences helps in the loss of cultural identity, and fosters gentrified spaces as the norm.

Some restaurants also understand that if they do not cater to these needs, they may not be successful. Lu and Fine (1995) state “If the [Chinese] food is totally assimilated into the American food pattern, it will lose the patronage of American clients who like it not only because it has been made to suit their taste but also because it is symbolically representative of an exotic other...” (547). German-Arab restaurateurs rarely market their food and restaurants to Arab communities in Berlin, but instead attempt to attract younger, middle class European families with their modified menu, which Stock and Schmitz (2019) note “... the falafel has undergone a reevaluation and bourgeoisification, its own gentrification” (4). Pilcher (2014) even states that “These images of authenticity have achieved importance because they help to mobilize capital and consumer culture that can determine whether people have the actual resources to survive within a city” (458). Though this continues to promote the othering of certain ethnic groups, some feel obligated to make these changes in order to make their business successful (Lu and Fine 1995).

Some ethnic restaurants decide to utilize their host country to modify the meaning of authenticity, an act that can benefit them instead of hindering their cultural identity (Farrer and Wang 2020). Even while celebrating their cultural background and identity, one Japanese chef in Berlin utilized European fine-dining ingredients such as caviar and porcini mushrooms, mixed in jazz music, and utilized a European wine list as a way of showcasing creativity within the ethnic restaurant scene (Farrer and Wang 2020). However, it is important to note that in the other literature provided, many of these ethnic restaurants did not see this modification as a plus, but rather one that had to happen out of necessity because if they did not conform, their business would not be able to succeed. Each restaurant performs and makes decisions based on what they require and see as important for the survival of their business. The example of the Japanese chef willfully using local ingredients (Farrer and Wang 2020) shows that some restaurateurs recognize that changing some ingredients can help their business, not hinder them. This mindset differs slightly from the arguments presented earlier, as some restaurants, like the Chinese restaurants presented by Davis (2002) made modifications because they recognized that the locals would not like the tastes. In the examples of the Japanese restaurant, they used high end ingredients and mixed in Eurocentric decor and presentation to present a higher class meal, whereas the Chinese restaurant had to alter the overall taste to accommodate White patrons that were unfamiliar with the true original experience (Farrer and Wang 2020 and Davis 2002). One example proves the embracing of Eurocentric tastes as the forefront of food, the other shows how cuisines of ethnic restaurants are only acceptable when altered to fit within the narrative of White ‘standard’ cooking.

### *Health Standards*

An interesting discovery in some of the literature was that the modification of certain foods in these restaurants changed ideas of the healthiness of the food that patrons were being served. According to research conducted by Davis (2002), there is a “... contradiction that Chinese food, once touted as healthy, now modified for the American palate, is certified unhealthy” (79). Healthy foods tend to be seen as “... natural, unprocessed, fresh, low fat, nutritious, and high in vitamin and mineral contents...” (Ojo, 2018, 38), and many African dishes have these same qualities, but not very often are they looked at immediately as healthy. The layered assumption regarding the health of the food, especially prevalent in the modification of Chinese food to meet American standards but later deemed as unhealthy, shows that “... when a

dish is adapted to fit presumed tastes of the consumer, there is inevitably a loss of culture” (Fouts, 2011, 320). These examples show that the modifications that ethnic restaurants have to make continue to subject them to standards that they forcibly were put into, as Chinese dishes (Davis 2002) and African dishes (Ojo 2018), once deemed healthy, were labeled as not because of the modifications that they make due to the adherence to certain tastes. These changes help push a loss of culture to meet the standards of White consumers.

#### *Changing Understandings of Authenticity*

The ideas behind authenticity become challenging to describe because people expect different things when discussing an authentic experience (Turgeon and Pastinelli 2002). The whitening and erasure of certain historical foods, such as the example of chili con carne and taquerias in Mexico compared to a modified understanding that Taco Bell represents Mexican cuisine (Pilcher 2014), call into question “... whether ethnic restaurants have not become modernized reflection of colonialism and cannibalism practiced on the home front” (Turgeon and Pastinelli, 2002, 261). There are even attempts to claim ethnic cuisines as belonging to groups of cultural elites, a settler mentality that preserves cultural boundaries and distinctions (Pilcher 2014). The various research indicates that multiculturalism should be celebrated, but too often are current ethnic restaurants simply examples of a fabricated authenticity (Davis 2002). Some ethnic restaurants try to merge global trends, such as veganism and gluten-free items, to attract new customers, but doing so actively shapes preferred palates and tastes in an active process of gentrification (Stock and Schmiz 2019). This section of the literature review can benefit from new and additional research that looks at whether ethnic restaurants are trying to combat these whitening attempts of their restaurant so that they can provide an alternative, and perhaps truer, authentic experience.

### THEME 3: RACIAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS BEHIND EMPLOYMENT AND WORK IN ETHNIC RESTAURANTS

The employment of certain ethnic groups and communities of color showcase the myriad reasons why owners seek these people as well as why these people specifically seek restaurant work. There is a strong correlation between immigrants and restaurant/food industry occupations, which speaks to the nature of the work they are partaking in (Ray 2014). Migrant workers make up large amounts of the ethnic restaurant workforce, and by looking at the history of immigration and the work that people of color, primarily men, could achieve, allusions to the accessibility of work and cultural comfort as well as a myriad of attempts at economic success can be made (Farrer 2020 and Farrer and Wang 2020). This section of the literature review will look at the various different reasons the intersection of race and class play into the employment of certain people.

#### *Cultural Comfort and Accessibility*

Oftentimes, many immigrants moving to new countries seek out ethnic restaurants that they relate to culturally because the owners of these establishments come from the same cultural background and speak the same language as them (Ray 2014 and Siu 2008). Their journey to their new home comes with many challenges and obstacles, and these ethnic restaurants provide them a space in which they can start their new life in a comfortable manner (Siu 2008). From Ethiopian migrants in Russia (Bondarenko et al. 2014) to Bangladeshi migrants working in Indian restaurants in London



(Pottier 2015), people all around the world seek spaces in which they are familiar and comfortable with to find work. People seek these employment opportunities because they contend that it will help ease their transition into their new lifestyle, as the shared language and cultural background will help them feel like they are accepted (Farrer 2020). Some of the restaurant owners actually employ people of the same cultural background as a sort of ethnic solidarity, understanding that these recent migrants may be excluded from other spaces while attempting to find work (Ojo 2018). Also, there are some restaurants that decide to hire people of the same ethnic backgrounds because it helps the restaurant's presence as a distinct culinary experience, a type of symbiotic relationship in which both the restaurant and the workers benefit from (Siu 2008).

There is also a form of ethnic solidarity when it comes to hiring people of the same cultural background, as some restaurant owners feel that it is their duty to help people who are in situations that they previously felt or experienced as well (Bondarenko et al. 2014). In the research conducted within an African eatery in a Russian university, they found that the owner "... rendered support not only to Ethiopians coming to Moscow, but also to other Africans. He offered work or helped people to find it, organized courses in the Russian language, etc." (Bondarenko et al. 2014, 228). In Siu's research of Chino Latino restaurants, they found the presence of Chinese Latinos was widely felt in these restaurants because they tended to be the only space in which Chinese Latino people felt recognized (2018).

One of the major reasons that migrant workers seek out restaurant work is because the food industry is typically readily accessible to them in ways that other job markets are not (Stock and Schmiz 2019). Some migrant workers come to their new host nation without major skills or knowledge of the language, so going to work in a restaurant that relates to their cultural upbringing seemed to be the only thing they could do for a living (Farrer and Wang 2020). This does not only relate to the food industry, as it can be seen in various kinds of service-related jobs that migrant workers seek, and it speaks to the propensity in which migrant workers feel that their best bet in living their new life is to stick with familiarity in cultural background as well as what is readily available for them to do (Ray 2014). Even within these examples, there are different reasons for why these migrant workers are hired. Primarily, shared language and culture (Ray 2014, Siu 2008, Farrer 2020), feelings of familiarity (Bondarenko et al. 2014 and Pottier 2015), and ethnic solidarity (Bondarenko et al. 2014, Ojo 2018, Siu 2008) are major reasons in which migrant workers are hired at these ethnic establishments. These examples show how restaurants are important sites that provide reprieve for new migrants in their new environment.

#### *Attempts at Economic Success to Improve Living Standards*

Some people utilize different cultural and ethnic cuisines different from their own to achieve economic success (Buettner 2008, Farrer 2020). Many of the Indian restaurants in Britain are owned and ran by Bangladeshi migrants because they feel that "... the restaurant business is not a career but a means to an end (which might include returning to Bangladesh, providing the funds to start other businesses, paying for higher education, and so on)... gastronomic excellence is neither an aim nor a realistic possibility" (Highmore, 2009, 183). This speaks to a combination of security within an environment with similar ethnic backgrounds as well as seeing restaurant work (and other service industry jobs) as the best way towards upward mobility (Ray 2014). The restaurants become more a means to an end rather than a vehicle of sharing culture, as they are first and foremost businesses (Highmore 2009). Bondarenko et al. (2014) show that African

migrants manage to improve their living situations compared to what it would have been back home. There might also be an understanding that locations of ethnic restaurants, including Chinatowns and tourist hotspots, allow them to gain more access to economic success (Zelinsky 1985). West and Fenstermaker (1995) argue that “We cannot see the system of distribution that structures our unequal access to resources. Because we cannot see this, the accomplishment of class in everyday life rests on the presumption that everyone is endowed with equal opportunity...” (28). When taking this argument in relation to restaurants, we can see how all of the examples presented are businesses with migrant workers at the helm, with all of them attempting to achieve financial success, or even just stability, by utilizing whatever resources they are presented with (Buettner 2008). Restaurants are avenues that can provide migrant workers a chance to improve their living standards and an opportunity to break the cycle of doing class, or in this case, owning restaurants catering to a whitened experience (Bondarenko et al. 2014).

## CONCLUSION

The intersections of race and class play a heavy hand in the development of what it means to partake in an ethnic restaurant. Ethnic entrepreneurs have to juggle many layered understandings of authenticity and restaurants as a space of developing closeness and familiarity as well as a space of creating otherness, and they all do so in different manners. Deciding to go to which restaurant, the hiring of specific groups, and the food they serve all depend on societal undertellings of what it means to be a person of color in a foreign nation (in this research, White dominated countries). This research shows how the domestication and domination of ethnic restaurants by the hands of the White patrons ultimately alter ethnic restaurants in many different facets. The provided literature, when presented with and against one another, help showcase how ethnic restaurants all operate differently, yet face similar modifications and alterations to ensure economic success within a White dominated space. Though this research only looked at the intersection of race and class in relation to the ethnic restaurant industry, it may be beneficial for the inclusion of gender as well as spirituality in creating an even more comprehensive understanding of where ethnic restaurants are placed within society. Also, other ethnic restaurants and cuisines that were not present in this literature review should be considered as well. Overall, this literature review helps provide the argument that the intersections of racial and class perceptions heavily influence the development and business of ethnic restaurants.

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# Samantha Vasquez

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## **Asian American Sexuality: The Invisibility of LGBT Asian Americans in American Culture**

Asian American communities in the United States experience oppression and discrimination from White Americans and other groups of color respective to their immigration history, assimilation status, and ethnic identity, fostering psychological impacts such as anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. As their experiences are distinct to Asian Americans, lack of literature or education of specific nuances and breadth of topics in the community hinder their ability to seek appropriate mental health services. While literature about the model minority myth and media representation is increasingly apparent in Asian American studies, perspectives of Asian Americans in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community—and the harassment they face—remain scarce. Asian American youth and young adults subsequently have little information on their multiple identities or how to navigate them, further alienating them from White American culture.

The content of this paper argues for the inclusion of gay Asian American perspectives in the White LGBT community, problems in navigating intersectionality, and an expansion on academic and recreational literature to educate and inform audiences on Asian American sexuality. The literature review provides supporting research relating to gay Asian American perspectives, supporting the dialogue surrounding their experiences, and outlining historical barriers that contribute to current attitudes. Implications of this research contribute to the need for additional resources and appropriate mental health services for the community. Introduction to recent or current campaigns and activism in the gay Asian American community will conclude this paper, providing relevant and accessible resources.

### INTRODUCTION

Asian Americans have been disproportionately excluded from White American culture since their arrival to the U.S. in the late 19th century. While historical movements (e.g. labor protests, Civil Rights movement) have successfully integrated Asian Americans in parts of American culture, they remain alienated and underrepresented in predominantly White spaces. The following research attempts to examine the factors and barriers that prevent Asian Americans from being included in White, gay culture, including but not limited to passive, subservient images of Asian men, the model

minority myth, and traditional Asian family dynamics.

Historical stereotypes of Asian and Asian American men and women include gendered images of the emasculated, inferior Asian male, and exotic or passive Asian female. These stereotypes, defined as a generalization based on positive or negative assumptions, originated in the West as Asian immigrants began their lives in the United States. Bachelor societies, created due to the influx of male immigrants and lack of women, contributed to the image of Asian men as asexual and unattractive. Additionally, their smaller frame and perceived meek demeanor labeled them as feminine compared to their masculine White counterparts, even if they are not gay (Tewari & Alvarez, 2008). As a result of these images, gay Asian men feel as though they need to suppress their femininity to escape the belief that they are passive and subservient.

Interestingly, Shinsuke Eguchi (2011) cites feelings of internalized racism that many gay Asian men encounter, particularly regarding who they choose to maintain relationships with. His experience with the White savior complex, the stereotype that White men will enter relationships with Asian men or women, and their strength and dominance will rescue the demure, passive Asian, contributed to his conflicting feelings towards other gay Asian men. He did not want to be associated with the image that gay Asian men are passive and weak, therefore he initiated relationships with White men to “prove” he was not that stereotype. Eguchi negated the racism towards his community by internalizing it and striving to please the dominant White gay community. Eguchi expresses his struggles with accepting his femininity, as he was expected or assumed to be a domesticated gay Asian man from his White partners; though Eguchi has come to accept his femininity as a part of his identity, many gay Asian men do not feel similarly.

Gay Asian men who present more masculine do so because of their fear of harassment from their straight peers and attempt to remain closeted in front of such peers and their families. In educational settings where bullying and discrimination are prominent, Asian men feel as if they need to adhere to a White standard and prove that they are not weak or feminine. In conversation with gay Asian men in the San Francisco Bay Area, Ocampo and Soodjinda (2016) cite those who related their bullying in grade school to appearing too feminine among others, stating that they quickly learned to suppress their gay identity to improve their chances of not getting bullied (p. 493). This perceived need for gay Asian men to go unnoticed and suppress their gay identity is also attributed to the pressures of academic achievement and the model minority stereotype. Development of the model minority myth outlined a standard for Asian Americans, conflicting with the free expression of their gay identity.

The model minority stereotype indicates that, in educational settings, Asian Americans always achieve high grades in math or science and study consistently instead of going out or participating in extracurriculars; though the implications may seem harmless and flattering, these expectations create an enormous pressure on individuals to measure their success in school with White Americans’ expectations for them. If an Asian American student feels that they aren’t achieving this standard, they may feel that they aren’t Asian enough or worthy enough to be associated with the stereotype. Therefore, one’s racial or ethnic identity may not be as salient or prominent because of the model minority myth (Tewari & Alvarez, 2008). In this way, Asian Americans feel excluded from both White spaces and Asian American communities as they are looked down upon by White Americans and shunned or disappointed by Asian Americans. This stereotype created a culture of high achieving Asian Americans in education, economics, and citizenship. White Amer-

icans labeled Asian Americans as the minority that receives high academic achievement, influenced by Asian values of motivation and dedication to “make it” in America. The belief is that they are only successful in this country because they exist above the loud, troublemaking Blacks and Latinos and keep to themselves; they can attain high economic status—for a minority—because they are the model citizen. The implications of the model minority myth demote other groups of color while seemingly uplifting Asian Americans; however, Asians will remain at this position and will never surpass White Americans.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Ocampo and Soodjinda (2016) examine the relationship between the model minority stereotype and Asian American sexuality, noting how pressures from family and American culture prevent gay Asian men from expressing themselves openly. One interviewee acknowledges this relationship by saying, “being gay disrupts one’s ability to fulfill these expectations [of being a model minority]” (p. 481). The stress and anxiety surrounding one’s growing interest in their sexuality may prevent them from obtaining the grades necessary to please society and their families. Asian Americans already have to navigate their ethnic identity in predominantly White spaces (e.g. schools) and the added confusion of sexuality negatively impacts their mental health. However, because Asian Americans are expected to do well in school, one cannot sacrifice their academics for self-exploration. The authors expand on this dilemma in describing the consequences if one “comes out” or acknowledges their sexuality: an individual will attempt to understand their sexuality and this stress will result in poor grades, their perceived failure will alienate them from their community and potential academic resources, and their open sexuality and poor grades will further alienate them from their families—potentially losing any family ties while they are already feeling lost. Just as Asian Americans do not want to “cause waves” in White communities and lose their standing as model citizens, gay Asian individuals do not want to “cause waves” in their families by expressing their sexuality.

Rosalind Chou (2012) explains how the model minority stereotype also harms Asian American men in negotiating their perceived historical and current images. When the model minority stereotype depicted Asian Americans as the favorable minority, the old image and stereotype of Asian men as violent and hypersexual was lost; however, the model minority stereotype emphasizes the current image of Asian men as nerdy, unattractive, and feminine. The model minority stereotype continues to do more harm to the Asian American community than its seemingly positive connotation, creating a clear divide between Asian Americans and White Americans—particularly in Asian Americans’ presence in predominately White spaces like the gay community.

Attitudes surrounding masculinity and the model minority stereotype are perpetuated in Asian families where strong traditional, collectivist values are upheld. Asian families remain largely patriarchal in which the husband and male members exert power and dominance as the masculine figure and “head of the household”, while the women hold the subservient role in household duties and raising children. The expectation for men to uphold strong roles in the family further emphasizes their feelings to exude masculinity and suppress any indication that they are gay. In this way, they are attempting to escape stereotypes that White Americans have portrayed of them. In addition to traditional roles in Asian families, Tewari and Alvarez (2008) explain the collectivist values present in Asian American culture, particularly the

importance of group community, respect, and suppression of emotion. In comparison to American individualistic values, Asian Americans value the interest of the family and respecting elder members, as well as the common occurrence of restricting conversations of emotion or feelings. Asian American individuals feel as though they must protect the interest of the family in hiding their sexuality, as they fear losing face in the community. While few families may be accepting of their child or family member coming out as gay, the larger community frowns upon homosexuality and prefers to refuse any mention of the existence of gay family members.

Not only do the aforementioned barriers restrict Asian American individuals from expressing their sexuality from their families and communities, but they also contribute to the exclusion of Asian Americans in the White LGBT community. Gay Asian Americans are seen as “outsiders among outsiders” and do not fit into the discussion of the White, gay community (Bui, 2014, p.129). While the gay community is outside of broader American culture, it is predominately White and still the majority, while LGBT groups of color remain a level below the White, gay community as they navigate their dual-identity as gay racial minorities. Additionally, while the model minority stereotype and family pressure keep Asian Americans focused solely on their studies, there are fewer opportunities to engage in LGBT clubs or organizations. When Asian Americans and other groups of color attempt to join such organizations, there is little representation that they can relate to. Worthen (2018) expands on this idea in addressing the image that “gay equals White”, particularly in the Southern parts of the U.S. where Asian American representation in the gay community is scarce. Though even in diverse populations such as San Francisco or Los Angeles, LGBT people of color feel socially isolated among both heterosexual White America and gay White America. In hopes to combat this exclusion, American culture and the LGBT community need to recognize the distinct experience LGBT people of color face and work to include their voices across all platforms. To do so, communities must learn of the intersectionality of racial and sexual identity, beginning with an expansion in academic literature and recreational media representation.

Asian Americans are challenged to manage multiple social identities as they experience different social groups relating to ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. LGBT Asian Americans, however, may encounter multiple oppressed social identities (e.g. transgender Asian American woman). The following reviewed research explores the intersectionality of LGBT Asian Americans and advocates for their inclusion in future research.

Tewari and Alvarez (2008) introduce the several ways individuals may choose in managing these identities: one may focus on a single social identity (e.g. Asian American or LGBT), one may choose to compartmentalize their multiple identities into categories (i.e. the saliency of their identity shifts with their settings and social context), or they will integrate multiple identities into one holistic identity. The problems with the model minority stereotype and stereotypical images of Asian men and women further emphasize people of color’s differences from White American culture and influence an individual’s decision in which way they present (or do not present) their social identity.

With Asian Americans in the LGBT community, social identity development may prove more difficult because of the multiple identities they must navigate and present. Leong (2014) echoes the ideas above about the separation and compartmentalizing of identities, specifically in Asian families and their feelings towards accepting an LGBT in their family. He explains that the Asian American experience, for LGBT members, is split into two identities: the family identity in which they are involved in their cultural values and practices, and the LGBT identity. In his introduction, Leong

(2014) uses the example of a young gay man who attempts to suppress his identity in front of his family and community, even though he is “out” to them; he explains that while the family holds negative feelings for the LGBT community as a whole, they are conditionally accepting of their son’s gay identity because he has learned to prioritize his cultural identity. For many individuals who have traditional Asian families, they may need to suppress their gay identity to maintain family balance and not lose their support.

In contrast, Eguchi (2011) prefers to place his sexuality first and his Asian American ethnic identity second. His experience may be different than other Asian Americans because he did not grow up in America and came to the U.S. as an adult, however it is important to recognize this perspective as well. At any particular time, a gay Asian American individual may feel that they do not want to limit themselves any longer and will begin to express themselves freely, as Eguchi (2011) cites how fluid identities can be and are constantly changing. He expresses his sexuality first and ethnic identity second in this moment, but he realizes that it can shift according to social context and periods in his life, which reflects the model minority myth and how racial identities can become less salient in White spaces.

Leong (2014) includes the perspective of LGBT Asian Americans in the political atmosphere and their feelings of invisibility in those movements. Those active in the political movements of the Civil Rights era and anti-Vietnam war movements cited that they did not want to disclose their sexuality during that time in fear of losing their credibility and tainting others’ view of them. Asian Americans in this period fought for their representation in schools and stood with fellow Americans against the war, but still felt isolated because of their sexuality. While they joined fellow groups of color against White racism, they could not yet address the oppression and subtle discrimination from the White gay community.

Unfortunately, no matter how hard Asian Americans try to assimilate into White American culture, they will never be fully accepted. They can learn to suppress themselves and focus on one social identity, but they cannot escape the racial features that make them stand out. While hate crimes and blatant harassment of Asian Americans have occurred in the U.S. throughout history, there was special attention paid to Truong Loc Minh in Laguna Beach in 1993 (Leong, 2014). The Los Angeles Times reported that Truong was hospitalized after getting beaten up by a group of White teenagers outside of a gay bar in Laguna Beach, and it is debated whether they were motivated to attack him based on his race or perceived sexuality (Dizon, 1993). It is unknown whether Truong is gay, or he just happened to be in the wrong area at the wrong time, however his case sends a clear message that Asian Americans and LGBT people of color will not be tolerated in White spaces.

Barnett et. al (2019) examined the psychological research regarding LGBT people of color in the fifty years following the Stonewall riots that heavily shifted conversations with the gay community. The authors reflect on the predominantly White gay community and the lack of perspectives from people of color, particularly in psychology literature where it is assumed that gay means White. In their content analysis and referencing Huang and colleagues (2010) they found that such literature from 1998-2007 covered only 1% of racial and ethnic minority issues. Though this disparity indicates how people of color are continuously overlooked in the literature, they maintain that research performed in the last decade does experience gradual growth in listing more minority issues.

The extensive coverage of the analysis of the last fifty years reiterates the problem of Asian American and people



of color's exclusion from White spaces, despite the gradual growth in research in the last decade. People of color remain on the outside of this conversation because they are not recognized as assimilated members of society, despite decades of existence in this country. Since White American culture still associates Asian Americans and people of color as foreigners and "other", their underrepresentation in discussions extends to literature. In Asian American studies, sexuality and LGBT experiences are scarce except for a few chapters or articles of the main stressors and a more general overview of their identities. This community needs extensive, in-depth research in academia that will, in turn, educate and inform related communities. As described in this paper, the model minority stereotype applies to several Asian American experiences and receives widespread attention in education; LGBT Asian American perspectives cannot be lost or glossed over in the breadth of topics related to their experiences. Mainstream coverage of LGBT Asian Americans will not only educate those academics and students but will allow youth and young adults to feel as though they are not invisible in their communities.

The literature presented in this paper attempted to cover the factors through which LGBT Asian Americans are isolated from multiple communities in dominant White American culture. Implications of this research indicate a need for the inclusion of their perspectives in a way that they are represented fully, rather than a mere overview of their history. Their acceptance into the dominant culture is vital to their ability to be heard, seen, and understood, and only then will they be comfortable enough to seek mental health services.

## DISCUSSION

Asian Americans in the LGBT community face an incredibly difficult challenge in trying to seek acceptance from their Asian and American cultures, and there needs to be more literature regarding their experiences. They already struggle with being a racial and ethnic minority in White American culture, and the added stress of exploring their sexuality is not discussed enough. The limited exposure to gay Asian Americans in academic studies prevents youth and those managing multiple identities from learning about others' experiences and could contribute to difficulties accepting themselves. An expansion in research studies and incorporation of LGBT people of color in academic resources will help normalize self-exploration and self-acceptance.

The psychology field and mental health professionals are in desperate need of appropriate, culturally competent services that can accommodate the distinct Asian American experience. Immigration-related mental health problems alone are barely addressed in the community, and LGBT experiences remain almost nonexistent. As academic literature becomes readily available about these perspectives, there will be an increase in awareness and education about the psychological impacts of their dual-identity stressors and mental health issues. Along with the emphasis on the relationship between cultural issues and LGBT identity, professionals will be better equipped to speak with Asian Americans about their mental health. Service providers who are Asian American, have training in their experiences, or both, will likely eliminate biases about the community and ease feelings of uncertainty in seeking help.

The Asian American community is incredibly diverse in both ethnic identity and ideologies, factors that the model minority myth works to eliminate in lumping all Asians and Asian Americans together into one monolithic community (Museus & Kiang, 2009). Additionally, the Asian American LGBT community is just as diverse, just as sexuality

is a spectrum; it is incorrect to believe any person in the community can fit into four labels (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender), therefore we cannot expect Asian Americans in the community to adhere to one image of what it means to be LGBT and Asian American. Included in this new literature should be the narratives of women of color, trans people of color, and various gender identities. It should be noted that the majority of the literature provided in this paper is heavily focused on gay Asian men; their experiences cannot encompass the widespread attitudes and behaviors of the entire Asian American LGBT community, but that is what is available at this current moment. This disparity in perspectives contributes to the feelings of invisibility by LGBT Asian Americans and should be reworked.

With more inclusion of these varying attitudes and behaviors in literature and extensive mental health services, younger generations may be more interested in learning about what it means to be LGBT and Asian American. If they witness a shift to open discussion surrounding sexuality while they have previously been concealed from these topics, they can cultivate an inclusive community that they have been lacking. Generations who were raised in the U.S. are typically more progressive and accepting than their traditional families and may be inspired to promote acceptance and seeking help in their Asian American communities if they are properly educated. If such institutional and personal changes are implemented, they will have more opportunities to educate others who may feel more apprehensive to express themselves freely. Additionally, they will be equipped with the extensive information necessary to inform their parents' generation about the experiences of others. While the older generations may not be as receptive to these changes, the information is available for anyone to learn from. With these changes, LGBT Asian Americans will have the opportunity to create the community they have been historically excluded from.

In addition to the scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles and books referenced in this paper, outside influences also contributed to the research. Topics not included in this paper, that equally contribute to the LGBT Asian American experience, involve a lack of representation of LGBT people of color in film and television, individuals who struggle with their sexuality but have no other personal influences or characters to turn to, and feelings that one cannot simply be a member of the LGBT community without their racial or ethnic identity status being referenced. Websites and organizations that aided this paper's research include the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance Campaign and their leaflets distributed to Asian communities in several different languages, GLAAD Asian Pacific Islander Resource Kit and their informative page for media professionals to approach the topic of LGBT Asian Americans, and API Equality-LA and their campaign for an increase in access to mental health care for LGBT Asian Americans.

Though this paper focuses primarily on academic research about the invisibility of LGBT Asian Americans, outside resources proved particularly helpful in recognizing the changes already implemented in the local and national community.

## CONCLUSION

Though this paper is unable to cover the perspectives of the entirety of the LGBT Asian American community, the main points included shedding light on the historical and current experiences that contribute to their exclusion and isolation from the dominant White American culture. With the limited amount of resources currently available to students and interested audiences, it is clear the change that needs to occur. However, noting the gradual growth from

Barnett et. al (2019), there may be an increase in literature and representation required to aid these communities in the coming decades. In the meantime, the LGBT Asian American community and their allies should become increasingly active in their activism and fight for representation. While these communities are demoted to a status of invisibility in American culture, there are steps to ensure that their perspectives and experiences are properly understood and included in future discussions.

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# Erin Redor

Erin Redor is from Santa Clarita, California. She is a Junior Liberal Studies major with a Sociology minor. Her involvements at LMU include LMU Tour Guides and Sorority and Fraternity Life. She is on track for receiving her elementary teaching credential and M.A. through LMU's Educational Studies 4+1 program. Her passions include educational equity, healthy relationships, and fun.



## The Body: Structural Control and Individual Agency

Bryan Turner holds that the body should be treated as an integral part of sociology. Other works, along with Turner's, have commented on the social, political, and ethical significance of the body. The body is not inherently political, nor an inherent source of agency. It has been abused by structures in power and morphed into a social and political playground. Although these powers attempt to use bodies to judge and control the public, individuals have historically used counter-cultural means to reclaim their bodies as a space for agency and expression.

To have a body is, perhaps, the most obvious shared experience humans take part in. There is no culture, identity, or religion that can exist without the presence of the human body. Even practices that promote the inexistence of a physical form cannot exist without the denial of the human body. Because the body is the most integral part of the human experience, when sociological endeavors do not consider the significance of the body, those sociological endeavors are not complete. Sociologist Bryan S. Turner aimed to fill those sociological gaps through research in what was coined "the sociology of the body". His work began with an interest in medical sociology and has evolved into his notion that the body must be treated as an integral part of general society (Turner B. , 2018). Now, the ownership of one's own body may seem like an indisputable source of agency and control: it is the individual who chooses how to adorn their body with clothing and accessories and along where (the physical places) they take their body. Despite this apparent control, the body is also used as a domain for institutional control ethically, politically, and in the context of what is commodifiable. Moral character is defined by how much of the body one shows, especially if that person is a woman. Politically, bodily control has been used as a platform for candidates to project their own authority. Attempts to deviate from cultural norms through transgressive fashion trends are commodified. Participation in counter cultures, however, along with the rising popularity of what was once deviant, such as pornography and other forms of sex work, challenge notions of bodily control. The body is not inherently political, nor an inherent source of agency. It has been abused by structures in power and morphed into a social and political playground. Although these powers attempt to use bodies to judge and control the public, individuals have historically used counter-cultural means to reclaim their bodies as a space for agency and expression.

## THE ETHICS OF THE BODY

Certain institutions, especially religious institutions, determine the quality of a person's moral character based on their bodily characteristics (Turner B. S., 2006). Sometimes this is done metaphorically: faithful ones sit on the right hand of god, while the left hand is sinister. Within Christianity, holy blood and bone is collected from saintly-figures and the blood of Christ is representative of salvation. Sometimes judgement of moral character is done more literally—ethical standing is determined by physical appearance, specifically by clothes and accessories people choose to put on their bodies. How much skin are you allowed to show? Usually the less one shows, the more virtuous they are perceived, and the more skin one shows is directly correlated to how deviant one is.

Blood, as well as other bodily fluids also contaminate and disrupt social relations. Turner argues internal fluids that appear on the outside of one's body warn death, disease, or change (Turner B. S., 2006). For example, Turner points to a universal fear of female menstruation. To men, the "leaking bodies of women are sources of pollution" (Turner B. S., 2006). While the fear of "leaking bodies of women" is known to be a male fear, women also hold a sense of shame around menstruation. In feminine hygiene advertisements, movies and television, and other forms of media, menstruation is conservatively referred to as a woman's "the time of the month" or "gift from mother nature". Of course, advertising is a male-dominated field, so this female shame attached to menstruation stems from male fear. If women cannot even experience referring to menstruation for what it is without either using an idiom or causing male discomfort, then they do not have inherent control over their bodies.

## THE BODY POLITICIZED

Within the sociology of the body, societal control is related to bodily control. Dominant political concerns and anxieties are often associated with disturbed images of the physical body. The fall of medieval social order, for example, aligns with the bubonic plague (Turner B. S., 2006). Politicians often run on platforms of fighting against diseases like cancer or AIDs and donate large sums of money to foundations supporting those causes in order to relieve peoples' fear of illness and lack of autonomy (Frank, 1990).

Donald Trump's 2016 presidential election win can be largely attributed to support from the Evangelical Church (Turner B. , 2018). In this case, sociology of religion and the body intersect. Turner points to a deep anxiety in conservative America about the role of men that is connected to the rise of women in education and their growing importance in the workplace (Turner B. , 2018). Simply put, when women gain control, men fear losing control. Donald Trump combatted this deep anxiety with his pro-life platform and rejection of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling. His political strategy delegating abortion grants Evangelical Christian men a form of control. Social struggles over human reproduction have been reflected in controversies between matriarchy and patriarchy as forms of bodily control (Turner B. S., 2006).

Political bodily control is not just found in campaign trails and elections, the feeding of institutionalized populations is also a form of political control. Food given to armies, jails, and government-regulated workhouses is in the form of empirically based rations (Aronson, 1984). The government employs science in the endeavor for social control by extending a rationalized calculation of how much food a body needs for nourishment and, in some cases, the least amount

of food a body needs to survive. Based on those scientific findings, the amount of food that is given to institutionalized populations corresponds to how valuable those populations are to the institution. The inability to decide how much one is able to eat takes away a form of bodily control.

## THE BODY COMMODIFIED

According to Seidman, capitalism searches for markets to sell to, and the body is seen as a site of domination (Seidman, 1996). Transgressive fashion trends, the things people choose to put on their bodies, while meant to express a sort of intentional deviance from cultural norms, are a commodity in itself (Langman, 2008). While these trends may seem to relieve the domination of the contemporary mainstream world, they in fact support oppressive structures as they directly benefit capitalist corporations (Langman, 2008). Mass production is widely known to hurt marginalized individuals who are grossly underpaid to make those clothes. As trends accelerate in pace, more and more people are taken advantage of.

Additionally, the aging body is seen as a global threat to economic growth, especially in the case that that body meets a health issue (Turner B. S., 2006). In the early stages of capitalism, medical science sought to improve health care for a healthier working class, which would lead to an efficient labor force. Late-stage capitalism, however, does not need a large labor force at full employment, working full time because technology has made labor more efficient (Turner B. S., 2006). Still, medical science seeks more ways to prolong human life with the expectation of prolonged human productivity. (Turner B. S., 2006). In this case, goals for an efficient workforce are prioritized above individualism. Overall, bodies are not seen as a mode of agency, but more as a means of productivity.

## THE BODY AS A SOURCE OF AGENCY

Recently, body art and modification has grown in popularity as a means to assert personal control, along with uniqueness (Langman, 2008). In fact, tattoos and piercings, banned in many workplaces, continue to critique aesthetic blandness. Langman suggests that the different forms of body modification and transgressive fashion trends should be understood as the resurgence of the medieval carnival. In reference to Bakhtin, the carnival is defined as: "...a popular festival that sprang from commoners, peasants, townsfolk, artisans and the lower classes, not the aristocracy; and indeed, carnival stood in opposition to the feasts and jousts of the elites...much of its fun, joy and humor came about because so many of the activities were transgressions of moral norms and various social practices" (Langman, 2008).

Youth, childhood, and adolescence is concerned with establishing self, yet finds conflict with parental units that represent control. Young people are most stereotypically known to wear transgressive fashion trends, and while these trends are essentially commodities, they grant the ability to join subcultures which function as communities that grant meaning and identity (Langman, 2008). According to Langman, these communities are a "second life" outside of officialdom and are, therefore, inherently utopian (Langman, 2008). These communities are also inherently carnival.

Popularized in the 1960s, punk culture was understood as an expression of working-class anger—a direct attack on how workers were supposed present themselves, as well as attacking other more conservative bodily standards of that time (Langman, 2008). While a spiked collar is just an object, wearing one is a tangible protest against the mainstream.

Goth culture, originating in the late 1970s, can be identified by black clothing, dark makeup, and a focus on theatrical, gloomy rock music (Langman, 2008). To be a part of goth culture was to have an awareness of death and to critique conformity and the dehumanization that occurs in the workplace. It allowed people to participate in the economy, while disidentifying with other parts of society.

The rising popularity of pornography is a critique of social hierarchy, and challenges ideas about the relationship between morality, control, and the image of the body. Pornography has often been seen as a means of dehumanization, exploitation, domination of women for male pleasure, but feminist theorists have argued otherwise—that female participation in porn and other forms of sex work enables women to take control of their own bodies (Langman, 2008). Women who choose to participate as sex workers or pornographic performers are able to profit off of the one thing they truly own, which is the greatest example of bodily autonomy. Now, there is a debate about whether a woman showing a lot of skin is an autonomous woman or an immoral one. The rising popularity of pornography has also allowed popularized female sexual pleasure and fantasies of their own. While pornography may have, at one point, been a male dominated field, as it becomes more visible in mainstream society and as more female porn directors are able to pull the strings, women are granted more opportunities to control their bodies both sexually and professionally.

## CONCLUSION

The body has been used to define what is moral and immoral and there has always been a desire to use the understanding of mental and physical health to grasp social disturbances. Bodily control, especially control of female bodies, along with initiatives promoting healthy bodies, has been used as a political scheme to grant those conforming to norms, especially men, control. Even attempts for agency through the adornment of transgressive fashion trends ends with commodification. Still, the body remains the center of an individual's experience. In response to the commodification of transgressive trends, Seidman says “Nevertheless, it does seem better that people feel comfortable enough with their bodies to touch, shape, decorate, and expose them freely than that we should cover, hide, and feel shame at the apparent willfulness of the body” (Seidman, 1996). While institutions of power continue to commodify the body and abuse it for political gain, the possibility for individual agency lies in structures that allow people to challenge norms.

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# Sam Goodyear

Sam Goodyear is a senior sociology and international relations student who is passionate about working towards social change. Throughout college, they cofounded the LMU Outdoor Club, worked as a personal trainer and group exercise instructor at the Burns Recreation Center, was a research fellow of LMU's Global Policy Institute, and participated in a cultural immersion trip to the Dominican Republic and Haiti with Ignacio Companions, following up the experience with academic research on the countries' race relations and vulnerability to the climate crisis. In the Fall of 2019, they studied and interned in London, working with a nonprofit organization to fund health research. Sam enjoys researching to determine patterns in the world, especially in terms of social issues and social justice. They are interested in exploring topics such as gender equality, racial justice, homelessness and/or economic hardship, LGBTQ+ issues, and education, all from an intersectional lens. They also find both national and foreign policy issues compelling to research, particularly in their relation to human rights. Post-graduation, Sam hopes to work directly with some of the communities mentioned prior with nonprofit organizations or through post-graduate service. In later years, they intend to continue and expand on research around social issues and apply this knowledge to public policy so that the policies implemented are beneficial to those who are most vulnerable and most impacted by them. In their free time, they enjoy surfing, hiking, music, and creative writing.



## Intimate Partner Violence & Women of Low Socio-Economic Status

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN OF LOW-INCOME: BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Violence between partners can occur in all relationships, and the victim is not limited to one specific sex or gender, statistics show that intimate partner violence is a significant social problem that does target certain groups, particularly women. "In over 90% of the violence by intimates recorded in the NCVS from 1987-91, the victim was female," (Bachman, 1994). Violence in marriages, as well as injuries thereafter, are not uncommon, according to Sorenson, Upchurch, and Shen in an article titled "Violence and injury in marital arguments: Risk patterns and gender differences" (Sorenson, Upchurch, & Shen, 1996). Not only do women experience more intimate violence than men, and that this is the primary form of violence that they will experience in their lifetimes, but also that they are significantly more likely than men to be injured during the assault (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

From Kimberle Crenshaw's "Beyond Racism and Misogyny: Black Feminism and 2 Live Crew," the concept of intersectionality is explained. Crenshaw argues that social injustices such as racism and sexism do not happen separately from each other, but rather the ways such identities overlap each other create a specific experience for an individual. In order to truly understand a social issue, a person's multiple identities must be taken into account. With this understanding, it would not be enough to study intimate partner violence against women, as women have multiple identities and therefore will have differing experiences from each other (Crenshaw, 1993).

Further, research shows that income plays a role in determining intimate partner violence (Sorenson, Upchurch,



& Shen, 1996). Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in an article titled “Domestic Violence: Violence Between Intimates, Selected Findings” concludes that the highest rates of violence were experienced by women who had under \$10k of income, while the lowest rates were experienced by women who had over \$30k of income (BJS, 1994).

With both the knowledge of women’s intersecting identities in mind, as well as the knowledge that women with lower incomes experience more violence from a partner than women with higher incomes, this paper will address the intersecting identities of class and gender, focusing on the factors that determine intimate partner violence against low-income women in particular. It will ask the question: What are the theories and important predictive factors that can explain the issue of intimate partner violence against women of low socioeconomic status at the hands of men?

The arguments of scholars that will be explored in this paper will include: there is a positive correlation between the bargaining power a woman in a relationship with the intimate partner violence she experiences (Macmillan & Gartner, 1999), there is a negative correlation between the bargaining power a woman has in relations to the intimate partner violence she experiences (Bowlus and Seitz, 2006), and a combination of the two (Henke 2019). Additionally, arguments that use the gender wage gap as a predictor of violence will also be explored (Aizer, 2010). This paper will analyze other variables that may be at play in the case of intimate partner violence against low-income women to deepen the understanding of the issue’s risk-factors. It will also review other arguments regarding this violence, such as theories of why a woman would stay in a relationship with her abuser. Finally, it will explore considerations for future research and provide an overview of its main findings.

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE & INCOME, RESOURCES, AND BARGAINING POWER: A POSITIVE CORRELATION

As previously stated, the primary victims of intimate partner violence are women, by an overwhelming majority - regardless of income levels - though, women of lower incomes are significantly more likely to experience such violence. Rather than gender being an independent variable in these studies, this section largely analyzes the relationship between income as the independent variable, and intimate partner violence against women as the dependent variable. However, several studies do not use income as the independent variable and rather use something relating to it, such as bargaining power, which will be discussed further.

### *Resources, Bargaining Power, Income, & Intimate Partner Violence*

Scholars have not only studied women’s income specifically, but have also looked more generally at all of their resources in relation to intimate partner violence. Farmer and Tiefenthaler’s “An Economic Analysis of Domestic Violence” argues that the more access to outside means a woman has, including income, welfare, shelters, divorce settlements, and access to other supportive means, the less likely she is to experience violence from her partner because she will be more of a threat (Farmer and Tiefenthaler, 1997). This sets up the basis for the theory of bargaining power, which is determined by a woman’s resources.

Richard Pollack’s “Bargaining Power in Marriage: Earnings, Wage Rates and Household Production” points out that household production, not just employment or income, is a source of bargaining power (Pollack, 2005). However, some scholars have argued contradictory pieces when it comes to intimate partner violence, low-income women, and bar-

gaining power. For example, in Macmillan and Gartner's "When She Brings Home the Bacon: Labor Force Participation and the Risk of Spousal Violence Against Women," the authors argue a positive correlation between bargaining power and intimate partner violence against low-income women. They propose the "male backlash theory" stating that when a woman has a change in employment status and becomes more financially independent, this causes the man's sense of dominance to feel threatened, which will result in more violence on her by him. So, if a woman was to gain more income independently of the man, then this would make her more at risk for violence (Gartner and Macmillan, 1999).

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE & INCOME, RESOURCES, AND BARGAINING POWER: A NEGATIVE CORRELATION

### *Resources & Intimate Partner Violence*

The work of other scholars, such as that of Bowlus, Seitz, and Aizer, have opposing views to the work mentioned prior, arguing that there is a negative correlation between the resources a woman has and intimate partner violence. For example, in Ana Aizer's "The Gender Wage Gap and Domestic Violence", she acknowledges and refutes the male backlash theory, with her findings being inconsistent to it. She also references and discredits theories of "exposure reduction," which states that when women work more violence decreases because they are home for less hours. She finds when women work more, violence decreases during non-working hours as well (Aizer, 2010).

### *Income, the Gender Wage Gap, & Intimate Partner Violence*

It is not just direct income or bargaining power that is important, but also relative income. In Aizer's research, she focuses not on a woman's income levels individually, but on income in terms of the gender wage gap and domestic violence against women, relating to women of low-socioeconomic status. Ana Aizer's "The Gender Wage Gap and Domestic Violence" argues that a decrease in the gender wage gap decreases violence. Based on her studies, reductions in the gender wage gap make up a nine percent decline in violence between 1990-2003 (Aizer, 2010). This emphasizes a positive correlation between the gender wage gap and intimate partner violence. As noted earlier, women of low-income are much more likely to experience intimate partner violence at the hands of their male partners than women who make more than thirty-thousand dollars per year (BJS, 1994). Aizer elaborates further on this and shows that the gender wage gap could also be a causal factor of women's lower incomes, and thus also being a predictive factor of intimate partner violence (Aizer, 2010). It can also be inferred, based on her work, that if the gender wage gap decreases, a woman's wage will increase, which would then decrease the intimate partner violence against her (Aizer, 2010), assuming that the gender wage gap closed from an increase in women's wages rather than a decrease in men's wages. Still, the work of Aizer and other scholars shows that the variables of income and intimate partner are related by a negative correlation.

In Bowlus and Seitz's article "Domestic Violence, Employment and Divorce", the authors indicate that the more income a woman has, the less violence she will experience against her. They argue that when a woman increases her financial independence, this can be a way of limiting abuse (Bowlus and Seitz, 2006).

The work of some authors highlights methods that differentiate actual income from potential income. Richard Pollack's "Bargaining Power in Marriage: Earnings, Wage Rates and Household Production" argues that wage rates, not actual earnings, determine bargaining power (Pollack, 2005). Aizer's work on the gender wage gap supports and elabo-

rates on this. It is necessary to look at the prevalence of “relative female labor market conditions, which can explain a decline in domestic violence” even when women don’t work, she argues (Aizer, 2010). Henke and Hsu continue on Aizer’s findings on the gender wage gap and intimate partner violence, further differentiating between the roles of actual income and the potential for more income in determining the predictive factors of intimate partner violence (Henke & Hsu, 2019).

Another way of making sense of these findings is to be more specific in the types of violence women experience, as done in Henke & Hsu’s article “The gender wage gap, weather, and intimate partner violence. Review of Economics of the Household.” This article focuses on two pre-existing and conflicting theories on how a woman’s bargaining power affects intimate partner violence. The first states that if an abuser commits “expressive violence” then bargaining power decreases rates of intimate partner violence. However, the second states that if the abuser commits instrumental violence, then an increase in the woman’s bargaining power may increase her partner’s violence on her. The author argues that both types of violence exist, and an increase in a woman’s bargaining power does reduce the expressive violence on her (Henke & Hsu, 2019).

#### *Important Variables to Consider*

While research that uses income and intimate partner violence against women of low-income as key variables is extremely important, there are other major variables and predictive factors that could be at play. This section will examine key differences in some studies of scholars, and will provide an emphasis on other variables that may be involved in intimate partner violence against women of low socioeconomic status, including race/ethnicity, pregnancy, substance usage, hot weather, marriage, age, education, and past experience with violence.

#### *Race/Ethnicity*

Studies of many scholars find that race and ethnicity play a major role in the violence a woman experiences at the hands of her partner. Langer & Sonis’ “Risk and Protective Factors for Recurrent Intimate Partner Violence in a Cohort of Low-Income Inner-City Women” explains that ethnicity plays a role in predictive factors of recurrent violence, and about one in two women in their study experienced recurrent intimate partner violence (Langer and Sonis, 2008). They also found that Latinx women reported less violence, as did the work of other scholars (Langer & Sonis, 2008; Sorenson, Upchurch, & Shen 1996).

Frias and Angel’s “Stability and Change in the Experience of Partner Violence Among Low-Income Women” provides a major contribution to this topic as well which is crucial in acknowledging to best understand intimate partner violence against women of low-socioeconomic status. The authors had similar findings to the work of Langer, Sonis, Sorenson, Upchurch, Shen, and others, pointing out that African American and Hispanic women not only experience intimate partner violence differently than Non-Hispanic European-American women, but can also have different predictive factors, and even have differing effects in terms of long-term prevalence. Additionally, one of the most prominent takeaways of their research was that not only were Hispanic women the least likely to report intimate partner violence, but the most likely to remain in the relationship if it occurred (Frias and Angel, 2007). This can help better understand the findings of Langer and Sonis, as it is possible that the lower rates of violence against Latinx women was not due to actual lower rates but due to underreporting, or even both.

Work of scholars such as Sokoloff and Dupont also specifically mention the role of intersectionality, in line with Crenshaw's arguments of intersectionality. Not only is it important to consider intersectionality when considering women in relation to class, but also the other identities these low-income women may have such as race/ethnicity (Crenshaw, 1993; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005).

### *Pregnancy*

Understanding themes of where and when violence first occurs can help researchers understand a woman of low-income's likeliness to experience intimate partner violence. Sagrestano, Carroll, Rodriguez, and Nuwayhid's "Demographic, Psychological, and Relationship Factors in Domestic Violence during Pregnancy in a Sample of Low-Income Women of Color" finds, based on a sample of low-income women of color, that a woman's first time experiencing domestic violence is often when she is pregnant (Sagrestano, Carroll, Rodriguez, and Nuwayhid, 2004). This is supported by the work of other scholars who find that pregnancy is a risk factor of intimate partner violence for women (Yakubovich., Stöckl, Murray, Melendez-Torres, Steinert., Glavin, & Humphreys, 2018). This research may support the argument that the more resources and outside options a woman has, the less likely she is to experience intimate partner violence, as a woman is very vulnerable and has fewer options for herself when she is pregnant.

### *Substance Usage*

Substance usage has also been studied as a potential factor that correlates to intimate partner violence against women of low-income. While some studies that explore substance usage and intimate partner violence look at the use of substances in women after the abuse, the authors of "Intimate Partner Violence, Substance Use, and HIV Among Low-Income Women: Taking a Closer Look" complete a cross-sectional analysis and focus on substance usage as a potential factor to consider in abuse. "Women who used any drugs are almost three times as likely to experience IPV compared to their nondrug using counterparts," the authors find (Burke, Thieman, Gielen, O'Campo, and McDonnel, 2005). While this is not to imply that a woman's usage of drugs causes of the IPV that is done onto her, rather, it shows differentiation in low-income women who use drugs and don't, which may provoke further questions. What is not noted is whether or not a woman using drugs is more likely to be with a man using drugs, nor if that has any effect. It is also important to note other factors that differentiate women who use drugs as opposed to women who don't, such as education levels.

### *Marriage, Age, and Education*

Education, income, and age predict violence in marriage (Sorenson, Upchurch, & Shen, 1996). Women who are married are found to be less at-risk for intimate partner violence against them (Yakubovich., Stöckl, Murray, Melendez-Torres, Steinert., Glavin, & Humphreys, 2018). However, being cohabitated but separate was found to be a risk factor (Frias and Angel, 2007). Initiation of abuse, or abuse presuming after a period without it, was more frequent in women who were younger and had less education. This was also true of women who had experienced severe intimate partner violence previously (Frias and Angel, 2007). Conversely, older age was found to be a protective factor (Yakubovich., Stöckl, Murray, Melendez-Torres, Steinert., Glavin, & Humphreys, 2018). Not only was the victim's education level important to consider, but as were her parent's education level. If a woman's parents' education levels were less than a high school degree, she had a higher risk of experience intimate partner violence.

### *Hot Weather*

Henke & Hsu study the effects of hot weather in relation to intimate partner violence and the gender wage gap in their article “The gender wage gap, weather, and intimate partner violence. Review of Economics of the Household.” They find that hot weather is an important factor to consider in studying intimate partner violence (Henke and Hsu 2019). This applies especially to women of low socioeconomic status because they likely have less means to control the temperature in comparison to women with higher incomes.

### *Previous Experiences with Violence*

Whether or not a person’s previous encounters with violence in any area of life has a relationship to the intimate partner violence they experience has been debated. Langer and Sonis find that violence outside the home was a predictive factor of intimate partner violence within the home, in a study sample involving low-income women of color (Langer and Sonis, 2008).

## WHY WOMEN STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

A woman’s previous experiences with violence may not only be a predictive factor of intimate partner violence against her, but may also be a factor that makes her more likely to stay in an abusive relationship, as argued by Richard Gelles in his article “Abused Wives: Why do They Stay?” Gelles finds that if a woman had experienced abuse in childhood, then she is more likely to stay in the abusive relationship as an adult, which could therefore put her at risk to experience more violence. Not only this, but the less severe the abuse the man does, the more likely the woman is to remain in the relationship (Gelles, 1976).

Bowlus and Seitz reference the works of scholars that states a woman stays in an abusive relationship due to psychological factors, such as learned helplessness. They also argue that women stay in the abusive relationship if the man abuses and repents, which creates the cycle of violence. Other scholars also consider emotional connections to their abusers as a predictive factor. “Fighting for women who have been brutally beaten by their lovers, yet who still want to protect their abuser, is a difficult experience” (Whitfield, 2006). However, Bowlus and Seitz quickly refute theories that assume learned helplessness and emotional connections as causal factors of intimate partner violence against low-income women. They find this particularly troubling considering 29% of married women and 50% of divorced women have been victims of abuse (VAWS; Bowlus & Seitz, 2006). This is further supported by statistics, as women who experienced abuse are more than 1-5x more likely to divorce their husbands (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Even after analyzing the study differences, it is important to discuss the limitations of each study in order to gain the most accurate understanding of the work and draw important conclusions. Some limitations of existing research include: the potential for underreporting, the varying definitions of variables, and the circumstances of the perpetrator.

### *Underreporting*

Women did not report intimate partner violence most commonly because they believed it was a private or personal matter, according to the NCVS (BJS, 1994). The potential for and likeliness of underreporting will be present in

these studies (Burke, Thieman, Gielen, O'Campo, and McDonnell, 2005), and it is important to recognize and control for this when possible.

Aizer controlled for this by using the hospitalizations of women as a measure for intimate partner violence, and further used the statistic of how many hospitalizations are a result from intimate partner violence to avoid underreporting (Aizer, 2010). Though, as discussed in the context of hot weather and bargaining power, women of low-income may have fewer resources, and may therefore avoid hospitalizations when possible, or may have other factors keeping them from seeking care even when it is necessary, such as household responsibilities or caretaking roles.

### *Defining Variables*

It is important to have a clear definition of intimate partner violence, as it is possible that the variances in reporting of violence across races and ethnicities is due to a lack of consensus on what is considered intimate partner violence, and what is abnormal behavior (Yoshihama 1999; Sokoloff, & Dupont, 2005). In his work, Gelles makes the distinction between what is viewed as normal violence, legitimate violence, or violence for "good reasons." (Gelles, 1976). Further, races and ethnicities may report violence differently due to not only their likeliness to speak on the matter, but also their understandings of the definition. Specifying this definition of domestic violence may create less variances in reporting among race or ethnicity, though this does not change the experiences of those women. This lack of consensus on the definition of IPV is also not limited to race but can occur among all women, even those of the same race or ethnicity.

The way in which each variable is defined, specifically in relation to what determines a woman as low-income, is also important to consider. Some scholars use a woman's current wages or employment status as way of determining their income levels (Farmer and Tiefenthaler, 1997; Bowlus and Seitz, 2006). While this is a method of conducting research on intimate partner violence and women of low-income, it is also important to note a woman's relative labor conditions in this definition, discussed earlier in Aizer's work on the gender wage gap (Aizer, 2010). This allows consideration of a woman's bargaining power based on her future wages. A woman's bargaining power is best determined by taking into account her other options, especially economic ones which is why potential wages are important.

### *Circumstances of the Perpetrator*

This paper thus far has largely considered factors of a woman's life or circumstance that may be risk factors of intimate partner violence. However, characteristics of the man involved should be largely taken into account as well, not just the woman's (Yakubovich, Stöckl, Murray, Melendez-Torres, Steinert., Glavin, & Humphreys, 2018). "Men who have strong attachments to and who fear negative sanctions from significant others are less likely to be wife abusers than are men who do not have such attachments (Lackey & Williams, 1995)." In Gelle's book, he references control theory, a theory of which asks why men are not violent (Gelles, 1976). Considering the circumstances of the man involved in these studies is critical.

### *Reverse Causality*

Gibson-Davis, Magnuson, Gennetian, and Duncan's "Employment and the Risk of Domestic Abuse among Low-Income Women" is one of the few articles to highlight aspects of reverse causality, considering domestic violence as a factor that prevents higher income levels, rather than considering how low-income levels may predict violence. "Given these high rates of abuse, it is not surprising that welfare-reliant women mention domestic violence as a barrier to em-

ployment,” (Gibson-Davis, Magnuson, Gennetian, & Duncan, 2005). It assumes that the violence an abuser commits on a woman affects her wage & employment opportunity and status. This can be by a means of affecting her productivity, or in another scenario, can occur if the abuser intentionally negatively affects the woman’s labor market opportunities (Anderberg & Rainer, 2013), though this is largely not the main argument of many scholars.

#### *Gender Identity: Author’s Notes*

Some studies have used the terms women and female interchangeably, though inaccurately, so it is important to note that this dialect assumes the women being studied are cis-gender women. However, this not specified in each study and therefore it is assumed that this work is relevant to all women. Nonetheless, in recalling the ways multiple identities intersect with one another, it is important to take into account women’s relationship to the LGBTQ+ in order to yield findings most applicable to all identities.

## OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

After analyzing research on intimate partner violence against low-income women, there are several important takeaways. First, one main theory has proven to best explain this issue: the less bargaining power, resources or income a woman has, the more intimate partner violence she will experience (Bowlus & Seitz, 2006), though a range of others have also been studied, including theories that argue the opposite (Macmillan and Gartner, 1999). The strengthening of a woman’s social networks has also proven to be important in preventing intimate partner violence (Frias and Angel, 2007).

However, there are more factors to consider than simply income and bargaining power in terms of intimate partner violence against women, including race, pregnancy, marriage, education, age, and a woman’s past experiences. Race and ethnicity are crucial factors in shaping women’s experiences with intimate partner violence. Women of different backgrounds also report violence differently (Frias and Angel, 2007). Pregnancy has been found to make a woman more likely to experience intimate partner violence, likely because she is vulnerable and has less resources (Sagrestano, Carroll, Rodriguez, and Nuwayhid, 2004; Yakubovich., Stöckl, Murray, Melendez-Torres, Steinert., Glavin, & Humphreys, 2018), which strengthens the theory of bargaining power and intimate partner violence as a negative correlation. In terms of why women stay in a relationship with her abuser, scholars found that if a woman has had previous experiences with violence, she may be more likely to stay in the relationship. Previous experiences with violence are also predictive factors of intimate partner violence (Gelles, 1976). Younger women and women with less education are more likely to experience intimate partner violence (Yakubovich., Stöckl, Murray, Melendez-Torres, Steinert, Glavin, & Humphreys, 2018).

Considerations for future research include the potential for underreporting, as well as definitions of variables, specifically in terms of income and violence. Projected income, not just actual, as well as labor market conditions, play an important role in the risk factors of intimate partner violence against low-income women. Labor market conditions vary by race as well. Clarifying what is considered abuse or intimate partner violence is important, as women, specifically those of different races and ethnicities, have differed in their own personal definitions (Yoshihama 1999; Sokoloff, & Dupont, 2005). More research on factors regarding the perpetrator of the violence, as opposed to the victim, is also important to consider (Yakubovich, Stöckl, Murray, Melendez-Torres, Steinert, Glavin, & Humphreys, 2018). Reverse causality should also be discussed (Gibson-Davis, Magnuson, Gennetian, & Duncan, 2005; Anderberg & Rainer, 2013).

It is clear that scholars have studied the relationship between intimate partner violence and women of low-income for many years, as well as the risk factors of it, other extraneous variables, and even the reasons women would stay in relationships that involves intimate partner violence. It is important to study these topics as they contribute to a greater understanding of how to prevent it. These works can be used as a basis to raise public awareness and create a safer world for people of all genders and classes.

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# Gilbert Nagle

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## Changing Attitudes Regarding Love and Sex in Pop Music from 1980-1999

### INTRODUCTION

Recorded music is a qualitative form of an artist's expression. When music is shared with others, it enables listeners to gain great insight into an artist's thoughts and perspective. When a shared sense of an attitude around a particular piece of music unites individuals and their perceptions of the social world, that musical work gains popularity. However, these shared attitudes that popularize music are not consistent over time, therefore pop music is representative of a shared attitude in relation to a specific time or era.

Being that pop music is a product of society and human interaction, it has great sociological significance. Symbolic interactionism theory offers an ideal lens through which we can analyze the correlation between popular music and the shared attitudes of society that they reflect, being that it is rooted in the idea that individuals in society share symbols to convey meaning and communicate (Ritzer, 2008). This means, lyrically, that popular music represents an unspoken similarity of individuals' shared personal attitudes among a larger group. Utilizing content analysis on pop music lyrics, I compare the shared attitudes of love and sex between two decades. In this study, I ask: How have attitudes regarding love and sex changed in pop music lyrics from the 1980s to the 1990s in the United States?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Media depictions of Love and Sex*

Attitudes about love and sex are not limited to their representations in pop music. Any form of popular media can communicate a population's attitudes regarding love and sex. In Dillman Carpentier, Stevens, Wu, and Seely's (2017) study, researchers utilized content analysis to examine the extent and nature of sexual and loving content in television programs popular with millennials. This study found that almost one-third of the sampled scenes contained an element of sexual and/or loving content, recognizing that around 13% of scenes contained sexual content without the co-existence of love, and about 10% of scenes displayed love without sex (697). Most notably, they found that only 7% of scenes feature both sex and love (697). Being that this study found the co-occurrence of love and sex to be the rarest depiction

of sexual and/or loving content, this research suggests that media content that focuses on predominantly sex or predominantly love resonates with the attitudes of millennial audiences more than the co-occurrence of both. However, these statistics do not dramatically represent this attitude, displaying that attitudes depicting love and sex in media are relatively fluid with audiences.

However, sexual content in the media was not always socially acceptable. Webber's (2019) study provides a sociohistorical lens that analyzes the widespread criticism of a television show's sexual content in the 1990s. Dawson's Creek was a popular T.V. drama where teen sexuality was a central theme, however, this theme was largely considered taboo and culturally wrong by some American audiences and institutions at the time (51). For instance, the New York Post labeled Dawson's Creek as a show with "an immoral exploitation of youthful curiosity about sex" (54). However, Webber emphasizes that this show has a storyline predominantly centered around a heterosexual love triangle (60). Today, this show would not be considered to be pushing the sexual boundaries of media content at all. In the late 2010s, animated television shows like *Bojack Horseman* and *Big Mouth* emerged and engaged with various social and cultural sensitivities, many of which are sexual in nature (Falvey, 126). Praised by critics, these shows promote objective cultural scrutiny to vocalize current anxieties. These shows may still be seen as too sexually explicit by some audiences, but the majority of audiences recognize that this content is working to address complexities in our modern social world through explicit sexual themes. In regards to music between these two eras, Flynn, Craig, Anderson, and Holody's (2016) article examines objectification in pop music lyrics in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Utilizing quantitative content analysis, they found that about 31% of sampled songs mention attractiveness, and about 45% depict physical objectification (169,170). These findings suggest that attitudes prioritizing physical intimacy was popular with music audiences in the late 2000s and early 2010s. These findings in combination with the growing normalization of sexual content in television programs suggest that society is becoming more widely comfortable with sexual themes in media, allowing new popular media content to surpass the previous cultural constraint of censorship.

#### *Sociological application of music analysis*

When using pop music as a tool to analyze audiences' attitudes towards love and sex in different decades, it is important to examine the extent and limitations of this device. As briefly stated in the introduction, symbolic interactionism theory enables popular music to be used as a tool to examine shared attitudes. The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology states this unique theoretical perspective "...refers to humans' distinctive use of language to create symbols, common meanings, for thinking and communication with others" (Ritzer, 2008: 4917). Being that popular music's lyrics represent an unspoken shared attitude of individuals, recognize the extent and limitations of utilizing this correlation is vital. In Tony Waters & David Philhour's (2019) article, the researchers found that music recognition reflected national borders with different songs being popular in Germany, Thailand, and Tanzania. This displays how the popularization of music is a specific and unique event that is directly representative of a specific population's shared perspective.

#### *Advancements & Progress*

As time progresses, each decade's relationship with popular music is unique due to innovation and increasing diversity in modernity (Mullen 11). John Mullen's (2016) examination of popular music in the 1970s found that music radio became much more accessible and that teenagers had increasing spending power, suggesting that the music indus-

try was growing and becoming more freely accessible to audiences in the 1970s (11). Mullen also noted that there were increasingly more cultural freedoms, which suggests popular music is working to become more representative of listeners by displaying a greater variety. However, Lopez (1992) found that radio formatted songs dominated airplay in the 1970s, creating more a homogeneous type of popular music (68). Therefore, Lopez suggests the radio industry created self-inflicted restraints on innovation and diversity. However, in agreement with Mullen's research, Paul Lopez's (1992) study, analyzing diversity and innovations regarding pop music in the 1980s, agrees that there is more cultural freedoms and musical diversity as time progresses, recognized through growing varieties of musical formats featured on radio (68).

However, Hendy's (2000) article, analyzing pop music's relationship with radio play in the 1990s, disagrees that music consumption is becoming more accessible as time progresses. Specifically focusing on BBC radio 1, a station with a near-monopoly on pop music radio in the UK, Hendy found an interesting paradox (743). In the 1990s, the BBC was faced with the growing privatized competition of music radio, therefore, BBC radio 1 was curated to air "new music first" to display their thoughtful connection to new and changing cultural dimensions (744). However, this near monopoly, presenting itself as a gateway to a more representative listening experience, is self-contradictory. Hendy found that BBC radio 1 was establishing its own musical standards as the UK's cultural norm, inherently creating a homogeneous type of music (758). This shows that although there is increasingly more musical diversity and accessibility, corporations and institutions still work to mold the popularization of society's music.

Fortunately, today, social media is enabling music listeners to lessen the impact of corporations and institutions by allowing listeners to share music with each other directly. In Sinclair, Tinson, and Dolan's (2019) article, in-depth interviews were conducted with music listeners to examine how modernity has changed listeners' relationship with music. This study found that the amount of music accessed by participants is being influenced by their social media interdependencies which listeners use to share information about new music (509–522). These findings suggest that music consumption is becoming increasingly more convenient and socially acceptable and accessible more freely in a wider growing number of spaces, enabling more listening freedom than ever before.

## METHODS

### *Sampling*

In this study, I utilize content analysis on Billboard's Hot 100 annual songs to examine changing attitudes in pop music. Billboard, an American entertainment media company, ranks new music's popularity based on sales, radio airplay, and online streams data. I compiled the longest-running top song of each year from 1980 to 1999, being a total of 20 songs, 10 from each year of the 1980s, and 10 alike from the 1990s. When two or more songs had an equal longest duration at the top of the chart for the same year, I chose to include the song that's respective album had the most commercial success in the United States.

### *Procedure*

I coded lyrics that refer to or explore love and/or sex through any explicit or implied romantic and/or sexual lyrics. The two categories I generated to organize and recognize any changes in attitudes between these two decades are 1) physical intimacy and 2) emotional intimacy. Although some songs have lyrics that feature both physical intimacy and

emotional intimacy, only one of these binaries is central to each song. For songs to qualify under the category of physical intimacy, songs must contain lyrics that prioritize sexual physical interaction over an emotional connection. In regard to the category of emotional intimacy, lyrics must depict an emotional connection that goes beyond sex. Songs in this category can have the co-occurrence of physical intimacy and emotional intimacy as long as physically intimate lyrics are used to communicate or support a connection that transcends physical gratification. For example, a qualifying song could contain physically intimate lyrics if the artist uses it as a device to support the central theme of emotional intimacy.

All songs were also examined under five subcategories to find deeper correlations and societal implications. My subcategories are 1) the gender of the lead vocalist, 2) the use of falsetto, 3) initiative regarding the tone of intimacy, 4) genre, and 5) the presence of a lead instrument. The gender of the lead vocalist is coded as binary, male or female, being that none of the sampled artists identify as non-binary. The use of falsetto will also be coded as binary, being that any single use of falsetto qualifies the song. The subcategory of initiative regarding the tone of intimacy is to determine who is enacting agency, being the vocalist, or the subject of the song. The genre is not determined by the broader musical genre that the artist is recognized under, but the specific musical style of each song. Lastly, lead instruments are recognized by the use of a recurring riff or progression that is central to the song or featured in an instrumental solo. My last two subcategories, being genre and the presence of a lead instrument, did not illuminate any themes that suggest larger trends.

## FINDINGS

Focusing specifically on physical and emotional intimacy, the data displays a shift in these two decades. In the 1980s sample, 50% of the songs' lyrics hold emotional intimacy as a central theme, with 40% of these songs having the co-existence of physical and emotional lyrics. 30% of the songs sampled from the 1980s hold physical intimacy as a central theme. The remaining 20% of songs do not contain lyrics that feature any element of physical or emotional intimacy. In the 1990s sample, 80% of the songs are centered around emotionally intimate lyrics, with 25% of these songs having the co-existence of physical and emotional lyrics. Only 10% of the sampled songs from the 1990s have physical intimacy as a central theme. This data displays that there is an increasing number of songs that hold emotional intimacy as a central theme from the 1980s to the 1990s. Interestingly, songs with the central theme of emotional intimacy accompanied by the co-existence of physically intimate lyrics were constant in both decades, being two songs per decade. Now that the basic correlations regarding intimacy have been found in these two decades, reoccurring themes that were found through subcategory coding can be explored.

### *The Pursuit of Personal Pleasure*

When coding all songs that are centered around physical intimacy, an interesting lyrical theme presented itself. All four of the physically intimate songs, three from the 1980s and one from the 1990s, featured the pursuit of physical pleasure. First, Olivia Newton-John details how sexual tensions rise after a date in her 1981 track, *Physical*. In her track, *Physical*, she describes her sexual urge:

Tried to keep my hands on the table

It's gettin' hard this holdin' back

If you know what I mean (1981)

Newton-John's lyrics insinuate how she is anticipating sexual pleasure after a date she initiated. In Joan Jett & the Blackhearts's 1982 song, I Love Rock'n' Roll, Jett details seducing a young man at an establishment. Repeatedly throughout the track, she invites the young man by singing, "I love rock n' roll so come and take your time and dance with me" (1982). In this lyric, she is insinuating how she wants to engage in a sexual experience that will satisfy her. In Steve Winwood's 1988 track, Roll with It, a recurring sexual relationship is explored. Although more abstract, Winwood's lyrics reflect upon this relationship sharing, "I swear by stars above, sweet as honey" and later, "Hang in and do that sweet thing you do" (1988). In these lyrics, he fondly thinks back on past sexual experiences with the subject of the song and wants this sexual relationship to continue.

Moving on to the 1990s, Los del Río's 1995 song, Macarena also exhibits the personal pursuit of pleasure, featuring the protagonist looking for hook-ups and reflecting upon past experiences. Recalling a sexual experience, the female vocalist attempts to justify her act of lust, stating "Now come on, what was I supposed to do? He was out of town and his two friends were so fine" (1995). This lyric shows her prioritizing instant gratification over social norms. The data clearly displays that all songs that are centered around physically intimate lyrics feature the pursuit of personal pleasure. Being that three out of the four physically intimate songs are from the 1980s, the data suggests that physical intimacy as a central theme is a decreasing trend from the 1980s to the 1990s. However, the nature regarding the pursuit of personal pleasure suggests that physically intimate central themes are become more extreme with time, being that the three physically intimate songs from the 1980s are not explicitly describing the social or emotional expense of others.

#### *Communicative Dedication*

Another interesting recurring theme presented itself when coding all songs centered around emotional intimacy with the co-existence of physically intimate lyrics. These songs, being 20% of the 1980s sample and 20% of the 1990s sample, feature lyrics that communicate emotional significance through personal dedication. In Kenny Rogers's 1980 song, Lady, the protagonist explains how deeply he cares for the woman he loves. In a plea for unification, Rogers sings "forever let me wake to see you each and every morning" (1980). This lyric displays that he wants to share his time, every morning and night, with the woman he loves to communicate his emotional intent to her. Madonna's 1984 track, Like a Virgin, communicates an alike message. Although this song has hypersexual lyrics, Madonna develops the message beyond physical intimacy by singing, "Been saving it all for you 'Cause only love can last" (1984). This line communicates that she is only having sex with her significant other to symbolize her investment in the longevity of the relationship.

Focusing on the 1990s, Boyz II Men's 1994 track, I'll Make Love to You, communicates this sentiment very directly. The lead vocalist sweetly sings:

Girl your wish is my command

I submit to your demands

I will do anything,

Girl you need only ask (1994)

These lines display the submission of the protagonist's will to please his significant other. In Santana and Rob Thomas's 1999 collaboration, Smooth, the protagonist is very attracted to a woman, however, he recognizes that he needs a deep

connection to sustain this relationship. Thomas sings in the chorus:

And if you said this life ain't good enough  
I would give my world to lift you up  
I could change my life to better suit your mood  
Because you're so smooth (1999)

In these lyrics, Thomas is communicating that he would prioritize this woman over everything else to have a connection with her. These examples display how all of the songs that are centered around emotionally intimate lyrics with the co-existence of physically intimate lyrics feature personal dedication as a device to communicate romantic significance. Analyzing this trend accompanied by the intersection of gender in the data displays an interesting shift. These two songs from the 1980s are performed by one male and one female lead vocalist. However, both of these songs from the 1990s are performed by male lead vocalists. The data may be suggesting that there is a shift in audience preferences regarding the presentation of masculinity from the 1980s to the 1990s.

### *Female Agency*

The last recurring theme presented itself when coding initiative regarding the tone of intimacy. In the 1980s sample, 50% of the songs display vocalist/first-person agency, with 20% of these songs featuring a female vocalist. In regards to the 1990s sample, 90% of the songs display vocalist/first-person agency, with 55.6% featuring a female vocalist. This displays a trend of female agency increasing from the 1980s to the 1990s. Examining this trend accompanied by the type of intimacy being central, the data shows that 100% of 1980s songs that feature a female vocalist with first-person agency are centered around physical intimacy, specifically, Olivia Newton-John's 1981 song, *Physical*, and Joan Jett & the Blackhearts's 1982 song, *I Love Rock'n' Roll*. In the 1990s, 80% of the songs that feature a female vocalist with first-person agency are centered around emotional intimacy. Also, 100% of songs in the 1990s sample that features a female vocalist with first-person agency that is centered around emotional intimacy feature falsetto, being Whitney Houston's 1992 *I Will Always Love You*, Mariah Carey's 1995 *Fantasy*, and Brandy and Monica's 1998 *The Boy is Mine*. Whitney Houston's 1992 track, *I Will Always Love You*, was the longest-running top song of 1992 and 1993. This displays that there has been more stylistic vocal expression of emotional intimacy along with the increase of female agency from the 1980s to the 1990s. This may suggest that women's agency depicted in music is moving away from male heterosexual lyrical expectations, focusing on subject matter and perspectives that relate to the social world's conceptualization of femininity.

## DISCUSSION

This study analyzed how attitudes regarding love and sex have changed in pop music lyrics from the 1980s to the 1990s in the United States. The data suggests that emotional intimacy is a growing theme, being that there is an increasing number of songs that hold emotional intimacy as a central theme from the 1980s to 1990s. Songs with the central theme of emotional intimacy accompanied by the co-existence of physically intimate lyrics have remained consistent. Through coding the data, three themes emerged in the pop song's lyrics, being the pursuit of personal pleasure, communicative dedication, and female agency. All of these themes suggest societal implications; however, it is important to keep

in mind the limitations brought forth by prior literature. When reviewing literature regarding media depictions of love and sex, I found that the reviewed sources suggest that as a society, we are growing to be more widely comfortable with sexual themes in media, enabling new innovative media to be explored and not excluded by previous cultural constraints (Dillman, 2017; Falvey, 2020; Flynn et al., 2016; Webber, 2019). In other words, our society's relationship with the media is perceived as becoming more liberal and accessible over time. When applying a sociological lens to music, I found that the reviewed sources suggest that the popularization of music is specific, uniquely representing a population's shared perspective (Ritzer, 2008; Waters & Philhour, 2019). In short, popular music is specific to population and location. In regards to reviewing previous literature about advancements and progress in the music industry, I found that the sources suggest that music consumption is becoming increasingly more interconnected and socially acceptable in a growing number of spaces (Hendy, 2000; Lopez, 1992; Mullen, 2016; Sinclair et al., 2019). This means that music's integration into daily activities is increasing. Understanding these limitations enables a deeper and more applicable understanding of how attitudes in pop music regarding love and sex have changed from the 1980s to the 1990s.

When analyzing the theme, the pursuit of personal pleasure, I found that the data suggests that physical intimacy as a central theme is a decreasing trend, however physically intimate central themes have become more extreme with time. I utilized Hart & Day's 2020 article, an analysis of sexual and emotive lyrics in modern music genres, to examine if my finding coincides with a greater trend supported by academic literature. As of 2018 and reaffirmed in 2019 by Statista, a data company specializing in market and consumer data, Rap/R&B is the most popular musical genre (Watson, 2020). Given this data, Hart & Day's findings both contest and validate my own. Their findings indicate that the lyrical content of Rap/R&B songs contain the highest frequency of sexual lyrics (Hart & Day, 522). This challenges my claim that physical intimacy as a central theme is a decreasing trend, displaying that physical intimacy is a common central theme in the most popular genre today. However, my claim that physically intimate central themes have become more extreme with time is validated by Hart & Day's results. Their findings also note that the genre of Rap/R&B has a strong correlation between sexual lyrics and angry emotive lyrics, displaying that physical intimacy in Rap/R&B often co-exists with anger (Hart & Day, 523). These findings validate my claim that physically intimate central themes have become more extreme, being that the most popular genre today has a strong correlation between physically intimate lyrics and attitudes of aggravation.

The other two presented themes, communicative dedication, and female agency both suggest changes regarding the presentation of gender identity. When exploring communicative dedication, the data suggests that audiences' preferences regarding the presentation of masculinity are shifting, welcoming more sensitive and non-stereotypical portrayals of men. When analyzing female agency, the data suggests that audiences are gravitating towards music that depicts women's agency, shifting the American cultural perspective away from male heterosexual norms and perceived ideals. To support or refute these claims, respective data on femininity and masculinity in pop music trends need to be explored. Understanding that my data are based on a limited and non-probability same, my claims cannot be extended to music in general. However, Modernity Theory addresses the causation of my claims (Cohen, 2020). Modernity theory is "the historical emergence of the individual as an actor and how individuality changed personal and institutional relations" (22). As modernity progresses, individualism has become an increasingly important and integrated social facet in society,



allowing more subjectivity to be central in media themes and narratives. Although I cannot validate these claims, it is important to recognize that society's changing environment has enabled the emergence of these subjective narratives to exist and be popularized by members of society.

For future research, I suggest that changing attitudes regarding the presentation of gender roles in pop music need to be explored to bring forth data that is representative of the music industry's trends. However, as previously stated, the developments of modernity work against gathering collective information on the music industry, being that research is increasingly centered around specific intersections in the social world. Therefore, I suggest future research will increasingly need to address larger societal trends to bring meaning to research's analysis of specific intersections.

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# Alexis Canyon

Alexis Canyon ('21) is a senior who will graduate with a B.A in Sociology and a minor in Psychology this spring at LMU. As an Alternative Breaks leader, she was inspired to focus on the power of service and cultural exchange. She believes that the exchange of knowledge has the power to change the world. Having traveled to different countries, she has a keen ability to understand the macro, mezzo, and micro societal issues. This alternative sociological approach gives her a more well-rounded understanding of our social world. Alexis draws inspiration for her research and writing from listening to a wide variety of people's stories. From these experiences, she learned that an individual's purpose does not lie within their materialistic accomplishments but rather their lived experiences. The story that we create for ourselves is our purpose. She strongly believes that "we all have a story to share." This literature review was intended to explore the intersectional constructs of masculinity and blackness. While exploring the concept of sexuality, she strongly believes that the sexualization of black bodies has led to increased incidents of police brutality. It has also influenced how black men perform, interpret and understand cultural expectations. As an African American woman, she is affected by the murders that occur in her community. She stands for the Black Lives Matter movement and she hopes to inspire change through research. As an Undergraduate Research Assistant for Psychology of Applied (PARC@LMU), she is extremely passionate about discovering new perspectives. In the future, Alexis plans to continue researching the issue of criminality, and how it affects communities of color. As an advocate for social justice, she wants to change the world!!



## Comparative View of Black Masculinity

Black masculinity is a unique topic that explores the social notions of both masculinity and blackness. The affirmation and performance of masculinity guides cultural norms. This includes things like hypermasculinity, violence, hyper-sexualization, homophobia and the objectification of women. This literature review intends provide an historical context about the creation and performance of black masculinity.

### INTRODUCTION

Masculinity is complex and plural and appears differently across racial lines (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As a result of intersecting identities (i.e. race, class, sexuality, socioeconomic status, etc.) black men experience masculinity and race differently. For Black men, the definition of manhood is situated within racial, political, and economic oppression (Wise, 2001). "Historically, African American men were depicted primarily as bodies ruled by brute strength and natural instincts, characteristics that allegedly fostered deviant behaviors of promiscuity and violence" (Collins, 2004, p.152). These controlling images confine black men to their racialized bodies. "The black body and representations of black masculinity are socially constructed kinds of gender and racial performance that are historically marked by notions around criminality, deviance, and pathology and that are deeply implicated in the construction of an African American-

ized white masculinity mediated through popular culture media” (White, 2011, p. 23). The duality of black masculinity was naturalized by dominant narratives, which depicted black men as hypersexual, crime-prone assailants (Hunter & Davis 1994; Collins 2004) versus the “good Black Man who distances himself from blackness and associates with white norms” (Copper, 2006, p. 853). Gause (2008) refers to maleness as a mentality that operates with the same principles as biology. From an early age, black men are socialized to conform to cultural and physical scripts of white masculinity. These narratives are simultaneously rationalized, materialized, performed, and internalized by Black men (Ongiri, 1997). “Self-representations of black male youth who construct their identities based on these mediated images rely on definitions of manhood that are deeply dependent on traditional notions of heterosexuality, authenticity, and sexism” (Gause, 2008, p. 44). Subsequently, Black men employ these stereotypical representations and become sites for white consumption.

The controlling imagery of Marvel characters like the Incredible Hulk legitimize notions of white masculinity. The development of one’s masculinity implies that men are expected to suppress emotion. The physical transformation and emotional suppression (i.e., beast-like transformation) of the Incredible Hulk implies that men are socialized agents of patriarchy. The cultural scripts of physical toughness, aggression, and force have legitimized ways for men to achieve and maintain power. The violent narratives of white supremacy have naturalized the construction of black masculinity. By remaining invisible, dominant ideologies linguistically conceal the power of dominant groups. Black maleness is both interpreted and performed. It is a concept that symbolizes male behavior and expression. The multidimensional understanding of gender is naturalized through labor, violence, and sexuality (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Specifically, the performance of acceptable masculine behaviors can attempt to conceptualize the construction of spaces that both reinforce and deconstruct the dominant narratives of masculinity.

Sociologists have produced an impressive body of literature about black male masculinity and sexualities. The era of slavery naturalized the black male identity, which is under constant surveillance (Crystal, 2014). Thus, the intersection of race and gender inequalities produce natural and complex identities. The intersection of these social constructs places men of color at an exclusive social location that influences the construction of racialized identities. After reviewing the literature, it poses the question; do black men’s experiences of racism and race affect their construction of black masculinity? The question recognizes how White America’s hegemonic ideologies of masculinity deny access to social privileges and practices. While examining the causes and consequences of black masculinity, the paper aims to identify three trends in how sociologists understand black masculinity and emasculation.

## STREET CREDIBILITY

White America’s imagery of contemporary black masculinity emphasizes a ghetto - specific persona that reinforces a dominant pathology of hypermasculinity (i.e. hyper aggressiveness, hypersexuality, excessive emphasis on the appearance of wealth, and the absence of personal accountability) (Hunter & Davis, 1994). “The poverty and desperation among inner-city black youth also ripened conditions for the rise of street drug gangs in the 1980s,” therefore external conditions incline inner-city boys to participate in hypermasculine and violent behaviors (White, 2011, p. 28). The historical implications of enslavement suggest that low - income communities became politicized arenas of patriarchy. The

cultural imperatives of survival conceptualize how manhood appears, specifically the perception of masculine demands. The concept of street credibility addresses the performance of masculinity while examining how race informs racial and gendered politics. Early Europeans linked criminality to blackness which routinized practices of violence and aggression (Collins, 2004). The inherent controlling image of criminality continues to protect and maintain racial inequality. In *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and New Racism*, Collins argues that “being tough and having street smarts is an important component of Black masculinity” (152). Street credibility is enabled through institutionalized gender roles therefore individuals attain street credibility through dominant performances of masculinity. The persona of the thug (i.e. gangsta) is inherently violent which is associated with one’s physicality and ability to assert dominance over other men (Collins, 2004). In *Integration Matters: Navigating Identity, Culture, and Resistance*; Chapter Two - Black Masculinity, Gause (2008) notes the behavioral and physical mannerisms that comply with the scripts of masculinity include “physical posturing, style of dress, dialect, walk, greeting behaviors, and how one is accessorized—in diamonds, platinum, and cars” (50). Black men feel obligated to metaphorically and physically dominate their opponent. “At the center of the way Black male selfhood is constructed in white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy is the image of the brute, untamed, uncivilized, unthinking and unfeeling,” (hooks, 2003, pg.12) In order to maintain “street credibility,” there is an external and internal obligation to enact attitudes of violence and aggression.

### *Violence & Aggression*

Historically, the performance of white masculinity included acts of psychological and physical violence towards African American men and women (Orelus 2010). The violent form of masculinity exerted by white slave masters was replicated by the enslaved population.

“Man, of the enslaved male, who were powerless and deprived of their own maleness and masculinity in the sugarcane plantation and the cotton field, ended up engaging in acts of violence against their wives and children as well as against other male slaves” (Orelus, 2010, p.70).

This display of masculinity by slave owners deprived black males of their maleness. To compensate for emasculation, white slave masters authorized black males to utilize violence to establish patriarchal power. Orelus (2010) and hooks (2003) argue that external performances of violence towards black bodies led to increased acts of violence against enslaved wives, children, and other male slaves. To understand how notions of patriarchy are interwoven within the fabric of America, hooks explains that patriarchy was taught by white slave masters. hooks (2003) writes

“Transplanted African men, even those coming from communities where sex roles shaped the division of labor, where the status of men was different and most times higher than that of women, had to be taught to equate their higher status as men with the right to dominate women, they had to be taught patriarchal masculinity. They had to be taught that it was acceptable to use violence to establish patriarchal power” (2)

The imagery of an uncivilized and brute prescribes a conscious and unconscious obligation to be more violent.

Within the scope of police brutality, modern forms of violence are reinforced by scripts of criminality. In *A Preliminary Examination of Hegemonic Masculinity: Definitional Transference of Black Masculinity Affecting Lethal Tactics against Black Males*, Monell (2019) examines how masculinity is displayed among authoritative figures, specifically addressing the case of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown. The author evaluates the racial and gender implications that

lead to lethal discourse. The inherent authority that men feel obligated to possess reflects a policing perspective. Monell (2019) suggests that,

“Zimmerman (identifying as a Hispanic) seemed to demonize black males resulting in another death of an un-armed black male teenager. The powerful takeaway here is that George Zimmerman is a part of a minority group, but when prompted to act on behalf of a law enforcement institution did offer adverse estimations about Trayvon Martin, resulting in Trayvon being killed” (524).

Gause (2008), Collins (2004), and Monell (2019) acknowledge that the performance of masculinity evokes physical scripts of violence and aggression. Specifically, men feel obligated to control other men. The cultural and physical codes of masculinity inform interactions; resulting in behaviors of violent policing (Monell 2019). This is evident in the number of police killings executed by authoritative male figures. Authoritative figures (i.e. police officers) have constructed codes that “define black males as having a predisposition towards violence” (Monell, 2019, pg. 521). Connell contends that confirmation of power and control over subordinates could take the form of oppressive regulation when challenges are perceived to be threatening enough to conclude that lethal force is necessary (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Zimmerman’s actions to confront Martin could serve as “authentic indicators of cultural codes” (Monell, 2019, p. 522). Both Monell (2019) and Connell (2005) argue that masculinity promotes oppressive social regulation.

### *Rappers & Athletes*

The subjective construction of maleness incorporates the notion that masculinity means exhibiting “extreme toughness, invulnerability, violence and domination, hypermasculinity, misogyny, and homophobia” (Oware, 2011, p. 22). This embodiment and performance of black masculinity manifest itself in male gangsta rappers. Rappers engage in verbal and physical battles to exhibit forms of hyper-masculinity. The ghettoized pathology of gangsta rappers reinforces the promotion of dangerous personas. The adoption of street credibility relies on the creation of violent and dangerous personas which is “embedded in one’s ability to exploit others at the expense of victimizing them” (Monnell, 2019, p. 520) The projection of toughness through physical and verbal domination reinforces notions of respect and credibility. The primary means of establishing masculine credibility relies on resolving disputes with violence. Collins (2004), Monnell (2019), and Oware (2011) recognize that this type of masculinity informs a code of the streets whereby impoverished environments foster violent altercations. Thus, males are perceived as both violent and aggressive. In *From Jay-Z to Dead Prez: Examining Representations of Black Masculinity in Mainstream Versus Underground Hip-Hop Music*, Belle (2014) contends that the dominant and deviant performances of rap music rely on institutions that dictate human behavior. “Black masculinity performances in mainstream hip-hop continue to uphold patriarchal and racist ideologies, while Black masculinity in underground hip-hop pushes the need to transform urban Black communities from the bottom up” (Belle, 2014 p. 299). Belle (2014) and White (2011) acknowledge that hip hop is a symbolic site of masculine performance. The hardcore presence of hip-hop (i.e. facial expressions, walk, demeanor, physical posturing) transcend ideals of physical and psychological hardness (Collins 2004; White 2011). The economic positionality among inner-city black youth [ripeness conditions] and increases participation in street gangs, therefore reproducing violent behaviors.

The lyrical composition of songs reinforces a narrative of street credibility, hyper-violence, and heteronormativity. Belle references a song where “a man is identified as being “a pussy” because of his false bravado. Because the said

man would not “bust a grape in a fruit fight,” the suggestion is that he is not a man, because he cannot exert violent force onto another man as well as engage in a fight. Often in mainstream hip-hop, one has to prove his manhood by committing violent acts to maintain his “street credibility” (Belle 2014 p. 296). Institutions attempt to reproduce and control deviant behaviors; therefore, the performance of black masculinity continues to uphold racist and patriarchal ideologies.

In the realm of sports, the imagery of black masculinity has become a marketing icon designed to sell. Historically, white men have exerted control of black male bodies. During the era of slavery, white masters would make their slaves compete. The ideological fixation of hyper-violence is represented by an athlete’s physicality and performance in the game. In sporting arenas, the expression of manhood (i.e. violence and aggression) is highly encouraged. The physical construction of the space attempts to appeal to the white patriarchal culture (Griffin and Calafell 2011). Therefore, scripts of black masculinity are governed by white men.

## SEXUAL OWNERSHIP & CONTROL

The commercial enterprise of the slave trade and chattel slavery naturalized agency over black bodies (White 2011). The story of Emmet Till, a fourteen-year-old brutally murdered by white residents was a symbolic representation of how black people pose a sexual threat towards whiteness. (Ongiri 1997) Black Masculinity is associated with the use of the body, therefore, harnessing the power to yield control of the body has led to the sexualization of black bodies. The commercialization of sports further deploys an understanding that confrontational body contact (i.e. physical violence) is a symbol of masculinity. In *Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept*, Connell, and Messerschmidt (2005) defines masculinity as a socialized concept that marginalizes and neutralizes the body. White (2011) agrees that the black body becomes a discursive text that becomes appropriated by other bodies. The historical ideologies of black male deviance and criminality influence collective appropriation. Within the context of sports, music, and history, the attempt to control black bodies has influenced how black men identity and interact with their maleness.

Historically, western traditions present black male bodies as sites of inherent deviance (Collins, 2004). Scientific racism is rooted in the biological construction of the body which signifies an actor’s capacity to perform particular tasks (Hickey, 2006). The threat of sexual deviance authorized discrimination and exploitative practices. The sexualization of black male bodies led to state-sanctioned violence and control. After the Emancipation, black male sexuality emerged as a central social threat (Hickey, 2006) The Tuskegee syphilis experiment legitimizes an attempt to harness power over black male bodies. The process of medicalization reinforces oppressive racial and gender ideologies. The experiences of black men as experimental subjects reinforce behaviors of surveillance and social control. Black men are constantly being monitored and sexualized by the dominant, patriarchal race. In *The Sexual Savage: Race Science and the Medicalization of Black Masculinity*, Hickey (2006) illustrates the construction of white masculinity as “the powerful (yet controlled) and impenetrable force, the protector as well as the dominator, black masculinity was seen as an extreme exaggeration of normal masculinity, a masculinity that is both sexually animalistic and deviant” (169). Hickey (2006), hooks (2003), and Collins (2004) address white folks’ obsession with black bodies. The ritualized sexual practice of lynching (i.e. burning flesh, exposing private parts, mutilating black bodies) indicates the intensity of racial hatred towards black bodies. In *Control, Discipline, and Punish: Black Masculinity and (In)visible Whiteness in the NBA*, authors, Griffin and Calafell

(2011) argue that,

“voyeuristic consumption and forced competition, arguably the most devastating and sickening consequence and display of the white custodial gaze upon black bodies was that of lynching for white pleasure. The sport was to hunt for the black man whose body at the climax of spectatorship was tormented as a form of entertainment. After slavery and the illegalization of lynching, the voyeuristic white gaze and white control over black male bodies remained steadfast; hence, the exploitation and appropriation of blacks by whites for pleasure and profit continued. For instance, in spite of their success, legendary black athletes” (199).

Ironically, the controlling narrative of black males is directly correlated to the brute and sexualizing actions of white males. The construction of gender relies on biological genitalia. Therefore, the scripts of masculinity evoke complex interactional, political, and perceptual activities that naturalize gendered behaviors (Lorber 1994; West, Candace and Fenstermaker 1995). Collins (2004) contends that the “ huge penis [King Kong] is depicted as a source of great pride and as a feature that distinguishes Black men from White men. In this sense, the penis becomes the defining feature of Black men that contributes yet another piece to the commodification of Black male bodies” (161).

### *Subjugation of Women*

The historical implications of conquest and dominance reflect ideas of masculinity, property, and violence. Images of conquest, warfare, and land ownership by white men have authorized behaviors of patriarchal violence. In the early nineteenth century, enslaved men were seen as incapable of defending their women and children. Black men were excluded from full manhood. (Kimmel, 1997). Black heterosexual men see themselves as soldiers of war, which authorizes dominating behaviors (Gause, 2008). From an early age, men are rewarded for patriarchal thoughts and behaviors; which is the right to dominate females sexually (hooks 2003). The domination of women reinforces cultural scripts of manhood. The definition of manhood is dependent upon traditional notions of heterosexuality, and sexism (Gause, 2008). In *Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity*, Kimmel (1997) argues that “women become a kind of currency that men use to improve their ranking on the masculine social scale” (214). Collins (2004) and Kimmel (1997) acknowledge the significance of a women’s body. In contrast, Collins contends that masculinity is achieved through attaining the actual booty. Collins (2004) argues that “the actual booty is a valuable prize, award, or gain that cannot be given away—it must be taken. Thus, because this usage applies to goods or property seized by force, an element of violence is part of this very definition of booty” (150). The term booty draws upon images of conquest and property. The lyrical composition of hip-hop songs glorifies behaviors of sexual domination (i.e. obtaining ownership of the booty). The compulsive behavior to engage in sex represents a form of power but hooks (2003) argues that sex becomes a marker of powerlessness. Through the process of patriarchal objection, black male sexuality becomes feminized and seized by the process of commodification. The agency of black sexuality is reconstructed to serve others.

### *Homosexuality*

Marginalization and internal policing perpetuate cultural scripts of masculinity. Homosexuality is directly correlated to the ideas and definition of manhood (Kimmel, 1997). The intersection of homosexuality and black masculinity reveals how black men attempt to interact with dominant norms of masculinity. “To sustain a given pattern of hegemony requires the policing of men as well as the exclusion or discrediting of women. Evidence of such mechanisms



ranges from the discrediting of “soft” options in the “hard” world of international relations, security threats, and war, to homophobic assaults and murders, all the way to the teasing of boys in school for ‘sissiness’” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 837) Collins (2004), Kimmel (1997) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), recognizes that gay men consummate ‘sissiness,’ which is a term that commands femininity. The sexual practices attributed to the Black “sissy” operate as further evidence of emasculation. The representation of black gay sexuality operates to feminize the bodies of black men. The entire script of masculinity is internalized and enacted individually. In *We Are Family: Black Nationalism, Black Masculinity, and the Black Gay Cultural Imagination*, Ongiri (1997) defines black homosexuality as a marker of weakness, femaleness, and racial submission” (291) To heterosexual black men, homosexuality elicits feelings of anxiety and humiliation. It threatens the physical and cultural scripts of masculinity. “Homophobia is the fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men” (Kimmel, 1997, p. 214). Homosexuality threatens the authenticity of maleness. In the eyes of black men, the fear of humiliation is rooted in historic emasculation. In contrast, Collins (2004) argues that the presence of Black gay sexuality is constituted as feminine therefore does not pose a credible threat to black masculinity. Collins’ (2004) argument reinforces the notion that black masculinity was constructed in relation to white masculinity. The fear of being perceived as gay threatens the traditional rules of masculinity. Homosexuality is associated with unmanliness therefore the fear of emasculation propels across racial and ethnic lines (Kimmel, 1997). To sustain patterns of hegemonic masculinity, men feel obligated to police other men. Dominant masculine behaviors become a defense mechanism for the threat of homosexuality.

## HOMOSOCIALITY & SURVEILLANCE

The methodological construction of homophobic, sexist, and violent practices preys on the vulnerability of men. The acceptance of political, social, and economic forces are integral elements of hegemony. The creation of masculine spaces legitimizes collective surveillance, containment, and punishment (Gause, 2008). In these spaces of brotherhood, dominant notions of masculinity are reproduced. Homosociality is a non-sexual bond among men (Oware, 2011). Research indicates that homosociality plays a crucial role in mediating and maintaining patriarchal masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity proliferates because men seek the approval of other men in homosocial relationships (Kimmel, 1997). The patriarchal behaviors of conquest exist in homosocial spaces specifically men share stories about their sexual conquests. Within these spaces, men become armed soldiers of warfare (Gause, 2008). In *Brotherly Love: Homosociality and Black Masculinity in Gangsta Rap Music*, Oware (2011) declares that homosocial male spaces enforce behaviors of homophobia, sexism, and hyper-competitiveness. Fraternal life is associated with patriarchal thinking. The suppression of pain becomes a marker of patriarchal manhood. These experiences socialize men to suppress emotions and pain in the presence of other men. In *Black Fraternal Organizations: Understanding the Development of Hegemonic Masculinity and Sexuality*, Jenkins (2012) masculinity is consistently reinforced in pledging rituals (i.e. hazing and initiation). Students join black Greek-lettered organization to provide a sense of belonging and prove one’s masculinity. Cultural scripts of maleness are attained through relationships with other men. Black men are taught to assert control over others as well as themselves. On an individual and collective level, entrance into the realm of maleness is demonstrated for the approval of other men (Kimmel, 1997). To counter patriarchal behaviors, rappers express deep concern for their close

friends. The intimacy between close friends extends beyond the boundaries of patriarchal masculinity. Through lyrics, rappers establish intimate connections with their friends (Oware, 2011). Therefore, mentioning friends as a family in lyrics demonstrates an alternative view of black masculinity. Many artists exhibit behaviors that undermine masculine doctrines. Dominant masculinity does not adhere to academic performance. To combat racial and gender stereotypes, black Greek-lettered organizations constructed spaces to encourage educational literacy. In *Black Fraternal Organizations: Understanding the Development of Hegemonic Masculinity and Sexuality*, Jenkins (2012) states that “the purpose of the fraternity is to unite like-minded college-age African American men, encourage service to all mankind, and uplift one another in a fraternal bond of brotherhood (229). Hunter & Davis (1992) and Jenkins (2012) agree that education and participation in employment improves the self-esteem and self-efficacy of African American males. Fraternal spaces foster collective intelligence as well as a male community built on efficacy. The brotherhood ideology reinforces the social construction of black masculinity. It provides a space that both redefines and reinforces cultural scripts of patriarchal masculinity.

## CONCLUSION

White superiority and masculinity have socialized black men to conform to racial and gender-specific practices and ideologies toward themselves and women. (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The logical and legitimate practices of surveillance, policing, containment, and punishment relies on collective complicity. By virtue of conformity, black males consent to and reproduce dominant scripts of masculinity. Hunter & Davis (1994) argue that “black men are both victims and participants in their own destruction” (23). Through social arenas of entertainment, black bodies are sexualized and become sites of sexual performance. The discourse of race and gender reveals how black men construct their masculinity in relation to whiteness. The black masculine identity is heavily consumed by stereotypes therefore contributes to collective alienation and misrepresentation. The presence of homosexuality challenges the monolithic images of black heterosexual masculinity. The conquest of both land and people reinforces violent, patriarchal behaviors. Historically, black men have been stripped of their humanity, identity, and masculinity therefore black men feel obligated to dominate people and spaces. The internalization of maleness from the macro-level institutions (i.e. sports, entertainment, media, etc.) will continue to represent an amalgam of fears.

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# Camille Grundy

Camille Grundy will be graduating in May 2021 with a degree in Sociology. Over the past year she has developed a research project titled “Older LGBT Adults and Higher Education”. Her current research focuses on the social and psychological implications of community support for black LGBT individuals. During her time at LMU, Camille has served as a resident advisor for first-year students, McNair and A.C.E. scholar, and has worked in the Center for Service and Action as a Community-Based Learning Student Coordinator for 4-years. She has also traveled to Cuba in 2019 through the Alternative Breaks program that focused on Cuban education, arts, and politics. Camille is a curious and excited researcher who is grateful for all of the opportunities she experienced through her exploration of a sociology degree. She thanks her research advisor, Dr. Muraco, the Sociology Department at LMU, and the Sociological Eye for supporting her research.



## The Consequences of Queer Exclusion Within the Black Community

This paper serves as a literature review that examines the discourse surrounding black queer exclusion within both LGBT groups and the black community as a whole. The goal of this paper is to understand how queer exclusion is perpetuated in those communities and what the social and psychological consequences are for black queer people who do not have support networks that fully accept their identities.

### INTRODUCTION

For black people living in the United States community can range from direct family to extended networks, which are vital for providing the financial or emotional support that the state often does not grant to people of color (Battle 2008: 13). The complexities of communal support are brought to light when examining intersectional identities since for them, manifestations of community are a result of their race, class, gender, and sexuality (Carruthers 2018:19). Within dominant feminist narratives, exclusion is seen through the way it homogenizes the experiences of women as a whole to fit the experience of the White western woman (Mohanty 1991). Western feminism places all women into the same category on the basis of a shared sense of oppression and implies that their “sameness” comes from the ways that their gender is marginalized in a patriarchal system (Mohanty 1991). Mohanty’s discussion on third world women demonstrate how exclusive dominant narratives can be, which is a common theme addressed throughout this paper that will be used to give grounds for the need of a black queer feminist lens (Carruthers 2018). A black queer feminist perspective allows for the recognition of black queer identities, which have been excluded from both LGBT and black communities (Carruthers 2018). Thus, I will be reviewing the following question: What are the consequences for excluding black queer people from the black community? A Black queer feminist lens is thereby necessary to deconstruct traditional modes of thinking in order to critically approach the violence that is reinforced upon the Black community (Carruthers 2018). Throughout this analysis, I will be reviewing literature that examines the roles of the black church, HBCUs, familial network, media, and social movements in order to assess the implications of queer exclusion.

This paper will be divided into three sections. Section one will discuss the importance of perspectives that examine race and sexuality together by looking at three different subcategories: dominant identities, antiblackness within LGBT movements, and Black Queer Feminism. Section two will examine communal exclusion of queer identities in the black community by addressing the Black church, familial network, HBCUs (Historical Black Colleges and Universities), and pop cultural references (*The Wiz*, *Orange is the New Black* and *Scandal*), and will be used to uncover deeply rooted beliefs about queer people that result from stigmatizations of LGBT communities. Lastly, section three will look at the impact of social support networks and inclusive social movements, which will ultimately serve as a response to the exclusion black queer people experience.

## RACE AND SEXUALITY: ADDRESSING BLACK QUEER IDENTITIES

### *Dominant Identities*

Carruthers argues that intersectional feminism is an important approach against the ways that America operates in terms of its racist and sexist systems since they “usually support a status quo in which what is normal and acceptable is narrowly defined.” (2018: 21). Mohanty and Carruthers both acknowledge the role that power plays in Western feminism, although Mohanty’s description of power is formulated through a Western hegemonic orientation that looks at relations of ruling and domination (1991: 13), while Carruthers looks at power from a perspective that acknowledges the “prejudiced, racist, homophobic, transphobic, classist, and ableist” structures of American society (Carruthers 2018:21). Intersectionality thus provides the framework for recognizing the experiences of identities that are not traditionally included within the American political context.

Van Sluytman and Mohanty both flesh out arguments of dominant narratives, assessing that whiteness lies at the root of what is considered normal (Van Sluytman 2015). Where Mohanty looks at White western women, Van Sluytman finds that in the United States, the White male is considered a dominant identity, and thus receives the most privilege (Van Sluytman 2015: 98). Van Sluytman observes the psychological implications that dominant narratives have on intersectional identities, which results in “risk and resilience”, especially for black LGBT people who experience discrimination based off of their status (Van Sluytman 2015: 98). Through their analysis, Van Sluytman acknowledges how black queer people have been at the forefront of social movements yet are not recognized for their work because of stigmatization and limitations on what it means to be black or queer, or both (Van Sluytman 2015). The concept of heteronormativity is discussed by Battle, which explains the systems which produce dominant narratives. Not only are systems of patriarchy and heterosexuality harmful, but when considering the complexity of identities that exist in the world, racial and class ‘othering’ further create systems of marginalization specifically targeted towards black queer people (Battle 2008: 5). Dominant narratives or structures such as heteronormativity therefore work by reserving access to power to those who are white, or those who are men, reproducing acts of violence and oppression onto those who do not fit within those categories.

### *Antiblackness within the Queer Community*

In the above discussion about dominant identities, Van Sluytman and Carruthers have found that structures like racism and heteronormativity determine broader social understandings, such as what it means to be queer. Through an

understanding of how black people have been excluded from dominant queer discussions, this section will uncover the inherent antiblackness within LGBT communities to reveal how queerness is socially and systemically maintained through a white lens.

Since marginalization does not apply to a single identity, it is important to acknowledge how oppression can be perpetuated even within marginalized communities. Greey mentions the queer theorist Martin Manalansan and Gary Kinsman, who argue that queer politics is still centered around whiteness, which “simultaneously [appropriates] and [erases] the political struggles of queer and transgender individuals of colour.” (Greey 2018:672). Despite living in a system of heteronormativity, white LGBT individuals still have access to power that Black queer folks do not have. This privilege is shown within Greey’s analysis of media discourse about a Toronto Black Lives Matter sit-in that occurred at the same time as a Toronto Pride event in 2016. The sit-in was done by Black Lives Matter activists in order to demonstrate the exclusion they felt from LGBT movements (Greey 2018). Williams, an attendee of the sit-in, said, “Even though we are celebrating Pride, and giving folks the opportunity to live their life, there’s still a group – black folks and people of color – who are still very much criminalized for their queerness and are not safe.” (Greey 2018:664). Greey uses the term “Honored Group” to refer to the Toronto Pride attendees, which accurately accounts for the level of privilege granted to white LGBT people that the media actively perpetuated (2018). Media accounts of the sit-in referred to BLM activists as being “disruptive” to the Pride event, even going so far as to label their actions as “terrorizing” (Greey 2008:667). While Greey’s study was not based on events happening in America, it did examine the literature from different Canadian and American media outlets, including the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times. In a comment made by the Toronto Police Association, the president said the following about the BLM sit-in: “Not only did it hijack the parade, it hijacked the purpose” (Greey 2018:667). Greey therefore uncovered the ways that antiblackness is perpetuated within the white queer community and by media, and how dominant queer identities gain their power in terms of their relation to whiteness, showing a greater need for intersectional perspectives that recognize the multiple and overlapping forms of marginalization perpetuated through systems of inequality.

Another author who discusses antiblackness in queer communities is Ferguson, although their analysis views sociology as a field and how its study of gender constructions is exclusive to black people (Ferguson 2005: 53). According to Ferguson, “sociology inscribed race in theories of culture rather than situating it within theories of fixed biological differences.” (Ferguson 2015: 56). Not only do media and structures within America create a divide between race and sexuality, but so does scholarship that is supposed to provide critical approaches to social concepts. “Neutral constructions of gender and sexuality compromise people of color and poor people by refusing to acknowledge the interlocking forces of subordination at work in their lives,” such as racism or class-based discrimination (Ferguson 2005: 62). Such constructions of gender and sexuality that Ferguson refers to lead to antiblack versions of queerness that structure the dominant discourse that labels Black Lives Matter as being a “hate crime” or “acts of terrorism” (Greey 2018) because of the way that Blackness is Otherized and excluded from queer scholarship, movements, and communities.

Moore’s article “Intersectionality and the Study of Black, Sexual Minority Women” continues the conversation surrounding the significance of dominant discourse that Greey addresses by discussing how whiteness is at the center of conversations about sexuality and gender. Moore states that the dominant discourse with LGBT communities and queer

study theorists emphasize white, middle class LGBT members (Moore 2011: 35). Both Greey and Moore address an important aspect of societal understandings of queer identities, that is the exclusion of Black people from such narratives. Dominant discourse around queerness is important because it shapes our understanding of queer identities, frames our perceptions, education, and leads to political and social action. The dominant perspectives that society accepts must be critically analyzed, because its consequences deal with the life outcomes for queer Black people. As Greey examined, dominant queer discourse creates a dichotomy between Blackness and queerness, but for what reason? When society advocates for gay marriage, the right for lesbian and gay individuals to adopt children, or the right to openly serve in the U.S. military, it is crucial to be cognizant of the antiblack underpinnings of gay rights (Moore 2012: 35).

### *Black Queer Feminism*

Patricia Hill Collins' incorporation of Black queer women through Black Feminist Thought counters the dominant discourse within queer understandings in order to provide a perspective that recognizes the intersection of race, sexuality, and gender. According to Moore, Collins is one of the few heterosexual sociologists to "integrate lesbian feminist theory into larger conceptualizations of Black women's sexuality" (Moore 2018: 35) The Black feminist perspective is integrated as a way to combat the lack of intersectional identities recognized within Black and queer communities. Carruthers defines Black queer feminism as "a political praxis (practice and theory) based in Black feminist and LGBTQ traditions and knowledge, through which people and groups see to bring their full selves into the process of dismantling all systems of oppression." (2018: 22). "Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships, and Motherhood among Black Women" by Moore takes on a Black feminist perspective that examines the ways that Black queer women navigate their lives with the pressure of heteronormativity and racism placed on them. Carruthers similarly understands Black feminism as "[u]nderstanding and expressing what it means when one's race, class, gender, and sexuality simultaneously shape one's political values," which is a "part of a long tradition of being a Black woman who is queer or transgender or both." (2018: 19). Black lesbian women who choose to be open do so from a sense of personal autonomy that allows them to feel safe in expressing their "true selves". (Moore 2011: 35). Not all participants in Moore's study felt comfortable or safe expressing their sexual identity, which Moore concludes is due to the intersectional marginalization Black queer women experience that causes various structures of oppression to operate in a Black queer woman's life, meaning not all forms of oppression will look the same (2011: 62). Cohen also speaks to the need for lesbian and gay liberation to come from an intersectional perspective that is connected to class oppression, racism, and sexism (2005: 442). Cohen and Carruthers both interpret Black queer feminism as being a form of feminism that opposes the dominant discourse that Greey refers to; feminist or queer ideology that is rooted in individualistic, white supremacist politics (Carruthers 2018: 23). While there is a growing need for literature explaining the experiences of Black queer people, Moore's study contributes to the inclusion of black lesbian perspectives in academia.

## **HOMOPHOBIA WITHIN THE BLACK COMMUNITY: THE OUTCOME OF A QUEERED BLACK FEMINISM**

Intersectional perspectives have shown that systems of oppression do not exist independently but are always interacting with each other. Black queer people who lie within the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality have sets of experience that traditional notions of feminism or even racism often times do not account for. In the same way that queer



or gay movements can exclude Black identities, the black community can exclude queer identities. Moore explains that from an intragroup analysis, “Black heterosexuality becomes normative while Black homosexuality remains deviant.” (2012:36). Battles argues that heteronormative ideology perpetuates a monolithic form of family, gender, and sexuality that conforms to “normative” structures (2008:10). Perhaps due to already being a racialized minority, Collins adds that “African Americans are counseled to accept traditional gender ideology’s prescription of complementary gender roles for men and women.” (Battle 2008:10). Such gender roles that Black people subscribe to conform to Puritan values that interpret sex as being for procreation, and only occurring between men and women (Battle 2008:10). Black people’s homophobia can be attributed to Ferguson’s conceptualizations of white, dominant narratives, which could make black people want to seem more “normal” in a society that constantly Others them.

Carruthers would argue that the reason behind Black people conforming to heteronormative ideology is because Black people inflict the same violence against their community and themselves that the state perpetuates against them (2018). Harris also claims that the homophobia within the Black community is a response against the sexuality-based oppression that Black people have experienced (2013: 197). Examples of the sexuality-based oppression experienced by Black people includes the forced medical experimentation on Sarah Bartmann during gynecology’s early years, and the Tuskegee syphilis experiments that “illustrate how Western sciences constructed racial difference by searching the physiology of Black people’s bodies for sexual deviance.” (Hill Collins 2005: 120). Hill Collins also writes of the controlling images, or stereotypes, perpetuated onto Black people that they then reclaim and take as their own.

Homophobia within the black community can also stem from the negative media images projected onto black people, such as projections of black women being “loud, unattractive, and hypersexual” (Hill Collins 2005:125). Although Hill Collins explains controlling images and how Black women choose to reclaim them, her stance does not explain cases where Black people choose to deviate away from such stereotypes or imaging, which is why Carruthers’ and Harris’ analysis better accounts for oppositional stereotypes. In other words, both authors interpret heteronormativity and conservatism as a counter action against hypersexual stereotypes placed on black people, whereas Hill Collins only explains how those stereotypes are further perpetuated. What is ironic about this approach is how it implies that a Black person could experience marginalization based off both race and gender/sexuality, yet within the Black community, sexual marginalization is not critiqued but instead accepted and taught to be avoided (by not identifying as queer). Carruthers’ Black queer feminist approach would advocate for a restructuring in the understanding of queerness within the Black community that advocates for queer Black people instead of teaching them to suppress their identity. Nonetheless, homophobia within the Black community is recognized as a form of protection against further marginalization despite its violent implications.

### *The Black Church*

The Black church plays an important role in the establishment of community for Black people. Historically, religious groups have served to liberate Black people, especially during the civil rights movement when the church played a significant role in providing leadership for the movement (Chaney 2012: 202). Despite the support that the Black church has provided for the Black community, the church has also stood as a source of oppression for queer Black people (Chaney 2012). Bishop of The Potter’s House Church in Dallas, Texas, Bishop Jakes referred to homosexual people as

“broken” and “hurting people” (Chaney 2012: 208). Bishop Jakes has even explicitly stated that he “is not supportive of gay marriage” (Chaney 2012: 210). A representative from The Potter’s House Church claimed that they follow the teachings of the bible that state that marriage is supposed to be between a man and a woman, highlighting the ways that religion is used to justify homophobia within the Black community (Chaney 2012). Chaney’s study does have limitations; the study only looks at a single church and interviews a single pastor, which does not accurately account for the perception of LGBT people within all Black churches across the country (Chaney 2012). Even though such limitations exist in Chaney’s study, religious conservatism that uses biblical references to condemn homosexuality are not uncommon within the Black church (Van Sluytman 2015: 100).

Van Sluytman concludes that the attitudes towards Black queer people stem from the importance of the Black church within the Black community, contributing to “familial strain and rejection” (2015:106). The Black church and religion are therefore a source of dominant discourse for the Black community that shapes their opinions around homosexuality. Drawing from the concept of dominant discourse, religion within the Black community is a relevant example of how those who are in control of the literature around a topic contribute to the overall consensus of a group’s understanding of that topic. While Moore’s writing contributes to the discourse around lesbian Black woman, Van Sluytman’s analysis draws upon the larger role that religious discourse plays. Chaney would argue here that a Black queer feminist lens would critically analyze who produces such discourse, whereby Battle might add that religious discourse is embedded in ethnocentric assumptions of what a “traditional” family is- a “two-person, patriarchal family” which is “both normative and natural.” (Battle 2008: 6). According to an analysis mentioned by Battle, the church is “an institution that took on the role of policing black sexuality as a discursive space where the sexual values of white society were both rejected and absorbed.” (2008: 10). Religious doctrine is consequently a result of ethnocentric, patriarchal values that Black people then impose on themselves.

### *Black Familial Networks*

Another explanation for homophobia within the black community that fleshes out our understanding of homophobia as conformity to dominant discourse is the concept of respectability. Respectability is the concession of mainstream values in order to prevent being seen as deviant (Battle 2008). For Black people, respectability could mean survival in a racist system that otherizes, criminalizes, and hypersexualizes the Black body (Battle 2008). Respectability as a survival mechanism should be understood in terms of proximity to normative structures created by whiteness. The further away Black people are from being “respectable” (normative), the higher their chances of not being stereotyped, stopped by police, denied access to opportunities (although no matter the status, Black people will continue to be classified as the Other). Moore mentions an argument claiming that the “vulnerability of Blackness makes the vulnerability of sexual intimacy more burdensome for Blacks, creating a double jeopardy.” (2012: 37). Whether sexual intimacy or sexual deviance (via homosexual actions), the consequences of nonconformity are much greater for Black people because of how Black queer identities are oppressed racially, sexually, and by gender.

An additional system within the Black community that perpetuates homophobia and violence against queer people is the familial network. Building a respectable, “normal” family unit is necessary for Black people to endure in a racist system (Battle 2018). For Black people, respectability can mean intentionally straying away from marginalizing

or belittling labels (such as being LGBT) (Battle 2010). One impact of the push towards respectability in Black families is the rejection of queer youth by their family members, which causes queer youth to “contemplate and attempt suicide at rates much higher than their heterosexual counterparts (Russell & Joyner, 2001)”. (Van Sluytman 2015: 98). For the Black women that Moore analyzes, respectability extends beyond whiteness, as it is also important for Black women to be seen by members of their community as “people of good character” (Moore 2012: 37). The experience of Black lesbian women is unique in that they carry the burden of being respectable to their community while also finding ways to express personal autonomy and have the freedom to express their sexual identity (Moore 2012: 37).

Meyers adds to this notion of communal respectability, explaining the pressures that Black people face to represent their community in a positive way. Homophobia in communities of color is an important mechanism in combating institutional racism: “to challenge racism, Black communities sometimes encourage Black people to “put their best foot forward.” These ideas become problematic to the extent that they reproduce homophobia, encouraging LGBT people of color to keep their sexualities hidden.” (Meyers 2015: 53). Through this sentiment, Black exclusion is also apparent within queerness because Black people associate queerness with whiteness, further perpetuating the silencing of queer Black identities that white queer communities also perpetuate (Meyers 2015: 53). The response from the family of Andre, a Black gay man who openly expressed his sexuality through his physical appearance, demonstrates how queerness is not an “authentic” representation of what it means to be Black (Meyers 2015:53). Andre’s uncle referred to his makeup and feminine attire as “white” and called him various homophobic slurs (Meyers 2015: 53). Lakeisha, a Black transgender woman who was physically attacked by two men, was told that she was responsible for “[brining] HIV into Black communities.” (Meyers 2015: 53).

### *HBCUs*

For many people, college provides a community of support where one can freely express themselves without experiencing the burden of family, religion, or other societal pressures they would usually face at home. Historical Black Colleges and Universities provide a community for Black people to feel supported throughout their academic endeavors (Lenning 2017). For Black queer people, developing a sense of community becomes complicated because of heteronormative standards that exclude Black LGBT members from dominant narratives. “Black Studies/ African American Studies has traditionally been rooted in a heterosexist framework, resulting in some Afrocentric thinkers asserting that homosexuality is a vehicle for white supremacy, claiming that homosexuality was ‘unknown to Africans until it was imposed on by them Europeans’” (Literte 2012: 680). Queerness is once again associated with whiteness in Literte’s analysis of Afrocentric thinking. Lenning also mentions the role of religion in the HBCU community, which shaped homophobic attitudes in the Black community on campus. Literte uses the term “essentialism” to describe respectability in the Black community, arguing that the repression of queer identities is a part of a larger attempt to construct positive images of Blackness (2012: 681). The findings represented in Literte’s article suggest that Black queer people who are a part of communities that accept their identity are happier (Literte 2012).

### *Popular Culture: The Wiz*

Moore explains the role that dominant narratives have in shaping public opinions, while Greey and Hill Collins provide examples of how the messaging produced by the media can promote further marginalization for Black or queer

identities. Greey examined how Toronto's Black Lives Matter sit-in resulted in the formation of BLM groups as "terrorist" or criminals," while Hill Collins examined controlling images that were used to deem black women as hypersexual. To further our analysis of media messaging, Forgsren critically analyzes the film *The Wiz*, which is a remake of *The Wizard of Oz* featuring Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, and other Black actors. According to Forgsren, messaging in *The Wiz* is very relevant to the experiences of Black queer people. Forgsren reclaims *The Wiz* as a "black lesbian fantasy", arguing that a queer analysis of the movie is not only necessary, but crucial to understanding the racial and sexual underpinnings within the film. According to Forgsren, popular culture silences queer black feminist spectatorship, or perspectives of queer black individuals. *The Wiz* is unique because it tells the experience of a black woman, however it does not explicitly label Diana Ross' Dorothy as queer (although many of the songs sung in the film tell the story of someone "coming out") (Forgsren 2019). Black feminist spectatorship therefore allows for queer people to liken the experiences of Dorothy to the experiences of black queer individuals, despite the ways that dominant discourse would label Dorothy as a heterosexual woman (Forgsren 2019). Forgsren's reclaiming of *The Wiz* from a Black queer perspective highlights the need for Black queer stories to be told.

#### *Popular Culture: Orange Is the New Black and Scandal*

Representations of the Black Lives Matter movement and activism also play a role in shaping the dominant discourse around blackness and queerness (Petermon 2019). Petermon analyzes the television shows *Orange Is the New Black* and *Scandal* to highlight the ways that Black queer voices are erased from the Black Lives Matter movement. Petermon starts by explaining how the Black Lives Matter movement was started by queer women of color, and the dominant discourse and controlled images in media only perpetuate the silencing of those people at the forefront of the movement. First, Petermon claims that since those shows are geared towards primarily white audiences, whenever the Black Lives Matter movement is represented in those shows, it downplays its significance for Black queer people. In an episode of *Scandal* where the character Marcus was set to represent the Black Lives Matter movement (inexplicitly), Marcus' character's gender and sexuality were unmarked, which allowed viewers to assume that Marcus was cisgender and heterosexual (Petermon 2019: 344). According to Kiesling, the dominant identities that are shown in mass media as victims of police violence are almost always male, which excludes the Black queer women who have lost their lives due to police brutality. If the lens that we use to frame queerness is always white or male, then the black queer women who are at the forefront of social movements are also marginalized within that fight (Kiesling 2017: 11). For *Orange Is the New Black*, Petermon argues that the death of the Black lesbian character Poussey plays upon the vulnerable, murdered gay trope, arguing that it was a way for the show to write off queer characters. Petermon concludes that the erasure of queer identities in *Orange Is the New Black* and *Scandal* write off the importance the Black queer movements, as well as silencing those who are at the forefront of social movements.

## IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS AND INCLUSIVE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

### *Social Support Networks*

Carruthers' studies the importance of communal activism, which is the opposite of activism that is "solely about what the individual wants to do, who the individual is, and what the individual believes should be done." Carruthers also

exaggerates the need for radical, inclusive movements that encompass Black LGBT folks. For Black queer people, community becomes an important protective factor against impacts oppression they experience. In HBCUs, social support networks help foster a sense of belonging, and can lead to greater academic and financial success (Lenning 2017). For Black queer people on campus, having access to support networks or mentors can lead to greater levels of confidence and feelings of acceptance, and overall higher levels of happiness (Literate 2012). The positive experiences of Black queer people provide a counter experience that diverges away from the negative implications of the racial, gender, and sexualized marginalization they experience. Such negative experiences can lead to stress-induced morbidity associated with repeated experiences of oppression (Van Sluytman 2015).

Additionally, “discrimination and stigma associated with sexual orientation from both their communities of origin and the society at large may result in victimization; microaggressions in education, employment, and housing; and verbal and physical abuse for Black gays and lesbians.” (Van Sluytman 2015: 101). “[E]xclusion is highly detrimental because gay men, the largest group among persons infected with HIV, have been found to be more distressed than the general population partly due to changes in their physical conditions and other HIV/AIDS-related worries, but social support has shown to buffer this type of distress.” (Chaney 2012). Social support networks are therefore extremely important in the lives of Black queer individuals because it affirms their identity in a world that perpetually marginalizes them, preventing poor mental and physical health and providing them with the access to proper care that they need to survive (Van Sluytman 2015: 101).

### *Social Movements*

Kiesling states that the framework for queer belonging within the Black Lives Matter movement is framed by the privileging of whiteness, situating queerness as “everything but black”. Both Kiesling and Carruthers argue for a form of queerness that recognizes the intersections of race and sexuality while also centering blackness. Social movements like Black Lives Matter are important, but if they are not coming from an intersectional perspective that recognizes Black queer struggles, then the movement is another form of silencing marginalized identities (Kiesling 2020: 6). Riggs adds that it is important to question our modes of thinking within movements to understand why we think the way we do and what are the consequences of doing so. Riggs also claims that through questioning and having a more open mind, we can reframe our thoughts, moving towards a more enlightened world that values Black feminism. Mumford also speaks of a reimagined movement for Black lesbian and gay identities, one of a recreated vision of Black pride and solidarity. Movements for Black queer individuals need to diverge away from previous queer and black social movements in that they must recognize the importance of reconstructing dominant queerness or dominant Black, heterosexual narratives (White 2016).

## CONCLUSION

Experiences are excluded for both black people in LGBT communities and queer people from the black community. This paper starts with an understanding of Western feminist limitations by Mohanty, which help frame further conversations of exclusion. Within the queer community, antiblack racism is perpetuated that excludes Black queer people from being incorporated into new frameworks for queer and LGBT liberation (Greedy 2016). Within the Black

community, media, family, HBCU culture, social movements, and religion are structures that perpetuate heteronormative standards that might aim at the preservation of Blackness, but actually cause more complex, intersectional forms of oppression for Black queer people (Moore 2012). The impacts of heteronormativity within the Black community are detrimental for queer people, causing a host of mental and physical health problems, even leading to death (Van Sluytman 2015). The purpose of this literature review is to understand what the implications are for excluding Black queer people from the Black community. This paper first starts by defining intersectional feminism and expands on the reasoning behind a more inclusive feminism. By looking at both the domestic and international implications of Western feminism, the literature suggest that there are inherent limitations within Western feminism that does not account for the experiences of third world women or Black queer people. To deepen the understanding of Black queer exclusion, the literature focuses on the implications of homophobia in the Black community, ultimately suggesting that a practical approach against the oppression that Black queer people face is a critical Black queer lens.

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## **Education of Low-Income Girls in African Developing Nations: Factors Influencing Disparities in Access to Education, and Possible Solutions**

### INTRODUCTION

While many African children face adversity in the ability to go to school, girls face more barriers than their male counterparts. While both class and gender contribute to the ability of education attainment, the interaction of these factors in one's life raises many problems for individuals (Biramiah, 1987). The intersection of class and gender exaggerates and creates more obstacles to gaining an education. Intersectionality centres on an exploration of the creation, action and reality of experiences and addresses the implications it may have in social policies (Ultenhalter 2012). According to West and Fenstermaker (1995), gender is an accomplishment of the member in society and ascribes meaning to the interaction accomplishment of individuals and institutions. On the other hand, the realities of class difference were a result of their actions and interactional relations under capital (West and Fenstermaker, 1995). Problems of intersectionality include the effect that gender relations have on subtracting from the experience of an individual's class categorisation (West and Fenstermaker, 1995). In developing nations in Africa, the effects of being a girl further subtract from the challenges they face as being of low socioeconomic status and produce more significant barriers to completing a primary education. Specifically, the intersectionality of class and gender places girls in a unique place of being seen as second to and less favoured than their male counterpart to attend school.

The value of education for girls rests at the nexus of this intersectionality. Education is an institutional expression of the intersection of gender relations and poverty (Chege and Arnot, 2012). There is a low quality of school available in many African developing nations and contributing to a lower demand. More children were out of school than in communities with high-quality schools (Colcough et al. 2000). A purpose of studying the intersection of gender and class and its institutional expression of education was to show a shift in education policy is needed to allow for anti-poverty strategies to account for gender as well (Chege and Arnot, 2012). The research question guiding this review of existing literature

is, In developing African nations, are low-income girls faced with unique barriers in their access to education? If so, what are they and what affects it? In reviewing the current state of the field, three key themes emerge in the literature. The first theme is the intersection of socio-cultural and socio-economic factors. More specifically, this theme into subcategories: direct costs, opportunity cost and the gendered division of labour. The second theme is the individual, non-intersecting factors, more specifically, economic factors, and cultural factors. The third theme is the solutions to barriers to education, which can benefit low-income girls. The literature highlights an emphasis on the intersectionality of class and gender, significantly posing a threat to the accessibility low-income girls have to an education.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### THEME 1: INTERSECTING SOCIO-CULTURAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

While there were socio-cultural factors and socioeconomic factors which contributed to decreased attendance in schooling for girls in West Africa, the majority of the scholars I reviewed agreed that it was the intersection of these factors that hindered school attendance most. Girls in the developing nations of Africa are continually affected by interwoven socio-cultural and socioeconomic factors hindering their access to education (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Moreover, socioeconomic factors lead to the amplification of socio-cultural practices; where the more significant negative impact socioeconomic factors have, the greater the amplification of adverse cultural practices feels (Colclough et al. 2000). The intersection of these factors created incentives for parents to withdraw their children, primarily their daughters from school, as young as primary level education. While both boys and girls experience under-enrollment, girls were subject to more discrimination in education as the adverse cultural practices cause gendered outcomes. At the levels of the society, labour market, school and household, and comprises a robust set of forces which impede the enrolment, persistence and performance, in school, of girls relative to boys (Colclough et al. 2000). As a result, while both males and females face obstacles, boys have preferential treatment in the constrained opportunities that families have to send the children to school due to parental perceived opportunity cost and the gendered division of labour in families of low socioeconomic status. Girls of higher-socioeconomic status were more likely to attend school because parents do not face the same decisions as those of low-socioeconomic status.

As a result, I found that while many scholars attribute the intersecting factors of socio-cultural and socioeconomic factors to adverse educational attainment, there was contention and disagreements on what those factors are. Through my review of the literature, the sub-themes emerge interwoven due to the socio-cultural and socioeconomic beliefs held by parents in regards to their daughters' education. School fees for girls were not something worth utilising scarce resources for, because parents believed they would not see a return on investment. Moreover, their time spent in school can be put to better use helping the parents at home and helping contribute to the family income before being married off. The major socioeconomic and socio-cultural factors which emerged influencing parental decisions to send daughters to school include, the direct cost of attendance, the gendered division of labour, direct costs of attendance, and perceived opportunity costs.

#### *Direct Costs*

Direct costs of schooling included tuition fees in addition to uniforms, textbooks and supplies, which were more

than they can usually afford (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang 2004). Colclough et al. (2000), Elba (2011) Glick and Sahn (2000), Logan and Beoku-Betts (1996) and Tuwor and Souss (2008) agreed with Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) that the direct cost of schooling contributed to low attendance. However, when low-income families could afford to pay fees preference is given to males over females. Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) highlighted poverty encouraging parents to pull the girls out of school to become breadwinners, forcing them into early marriages to earn bride price, or pulling them out to help raise their younger siblings...” (2004:419). Parents when making these decisions on whether to allow their daughters to go to school viewed the perceived direct cost weighed against cultural norms based on gender roles.

Elba (2011) observed that girls are the first to be pulled out of school when school fees are an issue, and noted in an interview of a thirteen-year-old Sudanese girl, the severity of the lack of desire of parents to pay for their daughters' education. The student said that when her father could not pay the school fees, she was not allowed essential and missed important lessons in the meantime. Not only are the girls' education impacted but their outlook on their future as they too hope they can receive an education (Elba, 2011). Similarly, Munene and Wambiya (2019) recorded in an interview with a Sudanese female respondent that because her father had five wives and thirty children, she was not a priority as a girl to receive a secondary education. Leading to problems of not only school fees and uniform, but the basic girl needs. Munene and Wambiya (2019) built on Elba (2011) by showing the benefits to and girls increasingly completing secondary school even when parents do not want to invest in their learning by programs like the USAID-funded scholarship Gender Equity through Education program. On the other hand, direct costs may not have as big of an impact on girls specifically as the literature suggested. Menasche and Lloyd (1998) concluded in their study that while direct fees may have an impact, in their analysis, they found no relationship between textbook fees and gender.

Girls are often expected by low-income parents to contribute to the direct costs associated with attending school. Logan and Beouku-Betts (1996) emphasised the household allocation of resources directly and indirectly adversely affects girls who are discriminated against by societal values playing out not only in the family sphere but the governmental sphere as well. Also, these girls have to find supplementary employment to pay for these direct costs that their parents cannot afford to cover school fees and textbook fees (Logan and Beouku-Betts, 1996). Logan and Beouku-Betts (1996) found that even when the government subsidised direct costs such as textbook fees, they did not carry over to secondary level education for girls, even though it was the most crucial learning stage. This was a result of cultural norms in society that when girls reach secondary school age, they were also of marriageable age, and it was more economically beneficial for families to save their already scarce resources. Poor girls in Africa were only worthy of being educated until they could get married. Wanack (2008) highlighted that when these costs were too high, parents prefer to have their daughters stay at home until they can marry them off, as young as thirteen years old. Stromquist (1989) built off of Wanack (2008) in arguing that parents prefer not to spend the fees educating their daughters, because when she gets married another direct cost is her dowry. Therefore, uneducated girls were typically more likely to marry poorer men who will not demand a large dowry from the bride's parents at marriage (Stromquist 1989).

When girls could receive an education, the quality of their retention had negative impacts as they suffer from exhaustion. Girls were exhausted at school because, in order for them to be able to attend school and for low-income

parents to afford the fees, girls often have to do labour outside of school hours to contribute to being able to afford their school fees. Only after this labour could they begin to study and do homework. Tuwor and Sossu (2008) emphasised this issue in their study. Their study contributed to the existing literature as Tuwor, and Sossu (2008) found that poor girls were working as hawkers and selling in markets. Also, child trafficking and child fostering were standard practices for females to contribute to their parents' income to support school costs. While Colclough et al. (2000) similarly found in their study that children undertake paid work, they argued that it was primarily boys who do so because of the type of work they undertake, and therefore more able to support their education. Unlike Tuwor and Sossu (2008), Colclough et al. (2000) argued that the paid work poor girls take on do not help their families much regarding contributing to their own education because the household work they take on did not pay sufficiently to have any significant impact. Furthermore, these girls were not able to direct where their earned money goes; they were more likely to have to give it directly to their parents rather than be able to use it to pay for school fees like their male counterparts (Colclough et al. 2000).

### *Opportunity Cost*

The direct cost of a low-income girl's education often was weighed against what the benefits were, and placed a significant role for low-income parents in deciding whether to send girls to school or not. Opportunity costs are indirect costs that account for the loss of the potential gain from other alternatives. In regards to my research question, opportunity costs were the loss of income and labour while girls go to school. In an alternative, if they were not in school, they could contribute more to the overall household income. Elba (2011), Colclough et al. (2000), Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemand (2004), Glick and Sahn (2000), and Wanak (2008) all stressed the lost opportunities as the loss of labour to contribute to the household income. On the other hand, Biramiah (1987), Logan and Beouku-Betts (1996), Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemand (2004) argued that these opportunity costs emphasised gender expectations held not only within the family but in society.

Opportunity costs were one of the most significant factors in determining if poor girls can go to school. In addition, opportunity costs played a larger role, especially when girls were from low-income families, as opportunity cost grows as wealth declines. In my review, a common theme emerged from the parents' perspective that their daughter's time is of better value, helping them in the labour market than spending eight hours at school. For many low-income families, paying fees for tuition, textbooks, exams and uniforms were not as important as the loss of children's labour at home which was the main reason for taking them out of school (Wanak, 2008). In African countries, girls were able to contribute to the household income both directly through getting a job. However, also indirectly by performing tasks in the household that allowed their mother to earn an income. Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemand (2004) found that girls quit school to sell in the market, hawk, cook, tend to siblings. Families regarded these tasks or 'informal education' as having greater value than actually attending school. Therefore poor parents saw a more significant opportunity cost wasting income paying for formal education and for their time away from the household. The time spent away from home is a high cost for pulling girls out of school, as Glick and Shan (2000) found that families of high socioeconomic status could afford to pay for child care to do the tasks low-income girls must do. Time spent away from home, the labour loss of the tasks girls fulfill in the household, and the loss of income are all opportunity costs that are greater for girls over the male counterparts who came from low-income families. Therefore girls' education was not seen as of value, and they were

increasingly not in school.

Girls' contribution in helping their parents in the labour market or to their household chores were of more value to parents as higher achievable household income is possible, and parents made use of their daughters while before she married early. They attended school based on what their parents valued more, and in the case of more impoverished families, household wealth and income were the main priorities for parents. These parental beliefs held in African societies were continual overtime. Biramiah (1987) found women who came from high socioeconomic families were more frequently in school because of parental acquired economic values which are more willing to forgo the economic reward of their daughter's entry into the job market. The values held by parents of different socioeconomic status places different weight on the economic return in educating their daughters. More impoverished families had fewer resources than high-SES families, so they believed they could not afford on top of meagre incomes to forgo any economic reward. Logan and Beouku-Betts (1996) built off this study. Parents did not see educating their daughters as something worthy of investment. If they did not see any return, the profits and benefits of her education and subsequent entry into the job market would go to the man she married and his family. As this was the case, parents preferred to use the scarce resources to educate their sons who could stay in the family and eventually provide social security for the parents, whereas daughters eventually left the family. (Logan and Beouku-Betts, 1996) Elba (2011) contributed to her findings of when school fees became an issue; parents tended to choose to take their daughters out of school. Eventually, the returned investment in her education would ultimately go to the man she would marry and not back to her own family. Biramiah (1987), Logan and Beouku-Betts (1996) and Elba (2011) highlighted the intersectionality of class and gender in regards to perceived opportunity cost, as the norms created around gender expectations and the constraint of class forced parents to look at long term investment of their daughters' education. Frequently it left parents with the belief that it was not worth educating their daughters and pulled them out of school to fulfil expectations of domestic responsibilities.

#### *Gendered Division of Labour and Responsibilities*

The gendered division of labour and responsibilities in African countries significantly influenced poor girls being able to attend school because parents expected girls to help out at home. At the same time, the mother and father earned an income. West and Zimmerman (1987) stressed the performative nature of gender through designating female work as doing household work that reproduced the same gender roles and conducts as expected. These ingrained expectations in African society, and it has become a cultural norm. Poverty subsequently amplified these expected roles as parents pulled girls out of school to force them into early marriages earning bride price, or help raise and take care of younger siblings, do household chores, or become breadwinners (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004).

In my review, a similarity in current literature hones in on the significance of the household work. There was an expectation for poor girls to perform in addition to their schooling, which ultimately led to them unable to attend a school or reduced the quality of their learning. Elba (2011), Colclough et al. (2000), Glick (2000), Makiba (2012), Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004), Stromquist (1990), Tuwor and Sossu (2008) and Wanak (2008) similarly attributed educational adversities of being poor and female to the required extra work and labour expectations at home that boys did not experience to the same degree (Stromquist 1990). Poor boys had more success in finding paid work in the labour market over their female counterparts. They, therefore, could attend school because they could support themselves (Col-

clough et al. 2000). This difference was significant as the expectations of poor girls to fulfil domestic responsibilities could contribute to sharing school associated costs.

Domestic responsibilities and household work was done instead of going to school but also in addition to going to school. Stromquist (1990) and Elba (2011) emphasised the domestic duties poor girls have was often tiresome and grueling work and could impact their daily attendance in school as well as the quality of schooling they can benefit from. Colclough et al. (2000) and Makiba and Shapiro (2012) both concurred through their respective findings that girls had better attendance in school when the size of the household was greater, as the work distribution amongst more daughters meant less work per child.

While there was consistency in the literature surrounding domestic responsibilities, there were notable differences worth noting to more accurately assess the state of the field of its effect on poor girls. Tuwor and Soussu (2008) presented a significant departure from the similarities in literature, as they found it was not solely within their own families that these gendered household duties existed but outside the immediate family. Girls often were sold or sent away from the homes to middle and higher-income families to work as domestic and housemaids in exchange for clothing or educational support (Tuwor and Soussu, 2008). Child fostering was a way for low-income families to make use of their daughters' gendered role to shed some of the economic stress. Subsequently sending them away means they were not attending school (Tuwor and Soussu, 2008).

Possibilities of girls' school attainment were also tightly tied to their expected role in society, and their close affinity to motherhood and other cultural expectations (Chege and Arnot, 2004). In addition, Stromquist (1989) added to this existing literature by articulating how girls were not more than mothers or their gendered role. Low-income families found incentives in cultural practices such as bridewealth to profit off their daughters by marrying them off when they are young. By being forced to marry, girls assumed the role of the mother and the responsibilities associated with it early in their lives and could not pay attention to their studies. (Stromquist, 1989) Munene and Wambiya (2019) found that when girls were of low socioeconomic status, the role of motherhood held more significant value than education or career and saw more significant numbers of women subsequently drop out of college. This finding was a continuation of the other literature as it exemplifies the impact of gendered roles goes beyond primary and secondary education.

## THEME 2: NON-INTERSECTING ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS

In the review of this body of current literature, some scholars diverted from the literature arguing intersecting socio-cultural and socio-economic factors and argued there were non-intersecting factors which play significant roles in barrier to poor girls' education. These factors were either solely economic-based or solely cultural based, and the diverse cultural-based emphasises the breadth of factors. The findings of Eloundou-Enygue (2009), Lloyd and Hewett (2009), Kazeen et al. (2010), and Ultenhalter (2012b) attributed solely economic factors as hindering poor girls' ability to go to school. However, on the other hand, the studies of Biramiah (1987), Menasch and Lloyd (1998), Shabaya and Konda-Agyemand (2004) and Wanak (2008) diverged from the trends in the literature as they agreed on certain cultural occurrences. These are cultural values such as early pregnancy and school facilities, among other factors, constrained poor girls into situations that had a more significant influence on their educational attainment.

### *Economic Factors*

In much of my review of the literature, the discussion of the education of low-income girls highlighted the domino effect of economic-based factors as influential in a girl's right to education. Eloundou-Enygue (2009), Lloyd and Hewett (2009), Kazeen et al. (2010), and Unterhalter (2012b). These studies highlighted that economic factors play more of a significant role on their own than do gender or culture. Moreover, to alleviate the inequities in education in Africa, policies must concentrate first on fixing the issues of poverty (Eloundou-Enygue, 2009). Eloundou-Enygue (2009) argued that poverty is the primary cause of poor girls not being able to go to school as gender was a precondition to poverty. Furthermore, as poverty increases, it induced gender convergence to amplify the barriers that girls faced to education. (Eloundou-Enygue 2009) Kazeen et al. (2010) built on these findings as they argued a solely economic factor is the restriction of the labour market and low wages. Moreover, Kazeen et al. (2010) concurred with the literature that socioeconomic status was a more significant determinant of school attendance, even though gender does affect. Impacting economic factors also were indirectly influencing education; for example, hunger as a result of poverty had an impact on performance in school (Unterhalter 2012b).

Lloyd and Hewett (2009) made a unique contribution to the literature. While it did concur with socioeconomic factors having a more massive effect on girls' education over boys, inferring poverty on its own magnifies the gender gap. However, using a country's gross national income on school completion and enrollment, Lloyd and Hewett (2009) diverged from the literature. In comparing African countries with a gross national income below \$1000, Lloyd and Hewett (2009) found there was considerable variation in the patterns of education completion amongst low-income girls. Poor girls' primary school completion rates in Ghana, for example, were at sixty-four per cent whereas in Nigeria only eight per cent. Though there was variation, there was still a large number of girls living in poverty who were unable to complete their education due to countries not being able to invest sufficiently in schools to allow girls to attend.

Makiba and Shapiro (2012) provided a limitation to this set of literature as their findings suggested there was no significant difference between girls from low and medium-income families; the only significant difference was between high and medium-low SES. Kazeen et al. (2010) presented limitations to the analysis of the state of the field as their findings were inconclusive on the exact degree of penalties socioeconomic status has on gender differences in school attendance.

### *Cultural Factors*

Biramiah (1987), Menasch and Lloyd (1998), Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) and Wanak (2008) highlighted the importance of cultural factors, rather than socioeconomic factors that widen the education gender gap for poor girls. Not only were gender-based cultural factors influencing and limiting the possibilities of education, but it was affecting education expectations (Biramiah, 1987). These expectations involved one's society constructs for poor girls rooted in gender, however it also had implications on poor girls' own expectations of themselves (Biramiah, 1987). Moreover this was amplified by societies' continual shaming of poor girls and their desire to get an education coupled with the low education expectations prominent in society. (Menasch and Lloyd, 1998) The persisting cultural ideas that the extent of a girl's ambition should not go beyond marriage and producing children reinforced gender roles and that their right to an education is insignificant (Wananak, 2008). The significant consequences of these cultural ideas had more of a signif-

icant impact on poor girls and their incentive to continue their education instead of marrying early and starting families (Menasch and Lloyd, 1998).

African cultural values, coupled with gender roles, portray girls to be seen as submissive and less dominant than males (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Gender roles and the traits defining masculinity or femininity was due to emerge in social interactions due to one's performance (West and Zimmerman, 1995). Assumption of vulnerability and submissive traits associated with young, poor girls influenced the increase of taking advantage of them for sexual relations. Society and cultural values conditioned girls to see their only place in society as a wife and child-bearer. These girls knew no different and allowed men, so-called "Sugar Daddies", to pursue sexual relations with them with empty promises of marriage (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) found that poor primary school girls were more likely to be incentivised to have relations with these men. In doing so often, men took advantage of them, impregnated them, and ended their educational careers.

### THEME 3: SOLUTIONS TO THE BARRIERS OF EDUCATION

It was essential to recognise the factors that inhibit low-income girls from accessing their rights to an education because they indicated vital areas where change is possible. The plethora of factors brought forth in the literature implied that finding a single solution to solve this issue is complicated. It is not easy due to how interwoven these factors were with each other and their deep roots within society and traditions (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Something, however, had to be done, as these barriers were not issues that will disappear over time or go away when history runs its course. The severity of the consequences would continue to grow if there was no intervention of specific policies to achieve greater equality (Colclough et al. 2000). Moreover, governments could not be the sole voice in the solution to overcoming the obstacles poor girls were facing to go to school; the voices of the poor need to be heard and taken into account (Unterhalter, 2012a). Policymaking is typically a top-down process. Therefore, Unterhalter (2012a) suggested the policymakers at the top should have an understanding of the adversities of poverty and its constraints on people's lives when creating policies regarding educational attainment. Logan and Beoku-Betts (2006), Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004), and Stromquist (1990) emphasised the specific areas for policy to change. Building off these areas, Tuwor and Sossu (2008), Coleman (2007), Glick and Sahn (2000), and Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004), Wanak (2008) presented specific potential feasible solutions to take steps forward in lowering barriers to education for low-income girls.

Programs and policies must address and attempt to reverse colonial traditions that have set the foundation for such deeply rooted cultural practices, and economic and gender inequities to seep into society. These types of programs are crucial as colonial traditions denied education to minorities at the crux of the intersection of race, class, and gender; specifically rural, poor women (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Logan and Beoku-Betts (2006) proposed four categories to facilitate discussion about how to address steps forward in educational programs, explicitly taking into consideration the issues Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) highlighted. These categories included school requirements, teacher training, career guidance, and participation of parents and communities (Logan and Beoku-Betts, 2006). There needed to be a restructuring of power relations to be able to provide alternatives and support for poor women (Stromquist 1990). Moreover, policies needed to account for, be adjustable and balance both of the duties of women but also



changed cultural perceptions to break the existing traditional roles of low-income women (Stromquist 1990). A solution proposed by both Stromquist (1990) and Glick and Sahn (2000) to address this balance could be changing class time, to allow poor girls to both do the labour required of them but still get an education. Glick and Sahn (2000) added, however, that policies should address increasing household incomes as it would have a ripple effect on gender equity.

To address the complexity and interconnectedness of the areas which need attention, a cyclical and multifaceted approach could be the most sustainable way to target the breadth of the issue (Coleman, 2007). More importantly, there was much call on the governments of developing nations in Western Africa and their responsibilities to break down the barriers that exist (Tuwor and Sossu, 2008). More specifically, to ensure low-income girls' education taking into account parents' preferences to educate sons, Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) urged the need for the government to consider laws and policies with minimum requirements to ensure girls get an education. However, a limitation of increasing reliance on governments can impact the degree of change. Primarily due to a lack of understanding of the issues at hand. Moreover, each country in Africa had its own government and mechanisms for communication and resources, and the breadth of the complexity of this issue can pose significant challenges in progress (Ultenhalter 2012b). While getting governments to comply can be difficult, more immediate solutions such as non-governmental organisations, funding scholarship programs can start chipping away at this massive problem. (Coleman 2007) Wanak (2008) highlighted the success of scholarships and funds to provide for some of the direct costs, to break down some of the barriers for low-income girls.

## CONCLUSION

At the intersection of class and gender, girls of low socioeconomic status faced innumerable challenges to their education. Further challenges concerning the access to education, maintaining enrollment, and quality of their education, were evident through intersecting socio-cultural and socio-economic factors, as well as those factors individually. The intersecting factors of socio-cultural and socio-economic issues created a multifaceted problem at hand and increased the complexity of the issue. Many of these factors were so interwoven into the very fabric of society, that these issues lost clarity. Moreover, it impacted one's understanding of the reality of the severity of these problems, especially to outsiders who did not experience the adversities of being poor and a girl. These factors were often out of the hands of low-income girls themselves. The fate of their education is in their parents' hands. Parents were the ones deciding on if these girls could go to school, through direct costs, the opportunity cost, and upholding gendered divisions of labour. While scholarships were a possible avenue to mitigating some of these cost-related factors, they could only help a few. Governments must implement some form of policies or programs which understand the depth and complexity of the issue at hand to help this issue that keeps on growing.

Future literature should further explore these factors affecting the lack of education of poor girls in Africa, as this problem runs deep in society, through economic and cultural practices. Moreover, future literature should expand on concrete and direct solutions to attempt to curb this growing problem. Also, explore how other developed nations may assist financially or in policy reform and provide long term solutions for this issue intersected in one of the many folds of society.

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