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Editor's Introduction

Philip Smith

This year is the second of the renewed *Yale Journal of Sociology*. We have continued our core policy of publishing some of the best recent departmental senior thesis work. In contrast to the earlier run of the YJS, we now have senior thesis authors cut their comprehensive studies down to journal article size, conveying information in a more economical way, improving the professionalism of the academic product, and enabling a wider audience for our former undergraduate students' scholarly work.

This year we highlight Monica Qiu's ('11) fascinating work on the active sense-making of fans as they seek to preserve the reputation of a celebrity. We also present an impressive mixed method study by Benjamin Robbins ('12) that illuminates to an unusual degree the college selection process of rural students, and an innovative and elegant simulation by Jeffrey Hudson ('11) looking at the spread of AIDS through a sexual network. Reflecting the scope of the Yale Sociology community, its varying levels of seniority and its commitment to publishing notes, speeches, extended comments and other items that may fall a little outside of the conventional genre norm of the journal article, we also include work by Senior Research Scholar Immanuel Wallerstein; graduate student Kristin Plys, and affiliated Faculty Fellow Andrea Press. Wallerstein's and Plys' articles are broadly world-systems theoretic; Press' piece deals with the gender dimensions of the contemporary struggle over the University of Virginia presidency.

Our heartfelt thanks are extended to the Adam R. Rose Fund for making this exciting enterprise possible. EBSCO has encouraged the upscaling of the YJS and, via its search engine, brought us a truly global audience. Taly Noam, ably assisted by Dana Asbury, produced an excellent product in her job as production editor. Michael Bailey was responsible for the attractive design and layout, and we also benefited from his expertise in digital publishing. Julia Adams, current department chair, and I worked with some of our authors as reviewers and editors, providing critical feedback on draft material.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of the Yale Journal of Sociology.

Philip Smith
Editor, Yale Journal of Sociology 2012.

The Politics of Religion, the Religion of Politics, and the Good Society[1]

Immanuel Wallerstein, Yale University

Abstract

Religious institutions cannot be neutral in politics. How they are engaged depends on whether political structures favor, tolerate, or disfavor them. In the end there is an exchange and a price to be paid by each side. Modern states pursue Jacobinical policies, seeking the disappearance of intermediate structures between the state and the individual. They seek to get citizens to internalize the priority of nationalism/patriotism. Religious institutions are the most resistant to these efforts. This is an unresolvable conflict. Both kinds of institutions claim they seek a good society. The collapse of the belief in the inevitability of progress opened space for the emergence of "fundamentalisms" which has intensified the struggle between states and religions.

Not so long ago, on April 8, 1966, *Time Magazine* used a cover with a black background, pictureless for the first time, and a text in bold red that read "Is God Dead?" *Time* was then of course the quintessential establishment magazine of the United States. This cover is considered today possibly its most controversial one ever.

The cover text was a reference to the statement by Nietzsche in 1882 that "God is dead." Nietzsche had been expressing the view that the

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1 Culminating plenary presentation at the conference on "The Influence of Religion on International Politics" sponsored by the Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington on Feb. 25, 2012.

growing secular rejection of the primacy of Christian theological assertions of eternal truth and their accompanying mandates for human behavior, had reached a point in the late nineteenth century such that Christianity had become a marginalized social phenomenon, no longer relevant to the social and ethical issues of the world. Nietzsche was arguing that a long process, going over several centuries, had reached its acme in the western world. He was talking of Christianity, but in fact similar processes of downplaying theological verities seemed to be taking place at that time with regard to all the other major religions in the world.

What was occurring in the United States in the 1960s was that some prominent Protestant theologians wished to take this premise of a secularized world one step further. They were proposing to continue to engage in theological discourse, but a discourse in which God was left out. God, in short, might be dead but the theologians as a knowledge category seemed determined to survive her. To be sure, there was an immediate reaction against Time, and against the theologians discussed in the special issue. But the debate was public and active.

God seems to have had a remarkable resurrection since then. I suppose this is one of her indisputable talents. In 2012, it is unimaginable that *Time* would repeat such a cover. And in many parts of the world, the words on the cover would be considered blasphemous and would invite a violent reaction.

What has changed since 1966? For one thing, the strength of feeling of those who are most active in religious practice and religious institutions seems to have become, some claim suddenly, much stronger. We often refer to this upsurge of religious sentiment as "fundamentalism," referring to the argument of some adepts that the world needs to return

to defending and practicing what they assert to be fundamental truths. As is well known, there are such "fundamentalist" versions of religion among all the major faiths today - Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and indeed among the many variants of each of these religions.

To be sure, secularism was never as strong as its proponents proclaimed, and it is probably equally true that the current "fundamentalist" versions of the faith are not quite as strong as their proponents assert or wish. Still, it behooves us to try to discern what underlies the debate and explains the cycles (if indeed there are cycles) of strength of feeling. I propose to discuss this in terms of the relation between religion and politics, in particular as a phenomenon of the modern world-system. Hence the first part of my title, "The Politics of Religion and the Religion of Politics." And then I wish to proceed to the relation of both religion and politics to the "good society" - something that everyone claims to favor, and something that almost everyone claims would be made more possible by taking the correct position on the question of the relation of religion and politics.

The Politics of Religion

While it is a commonplace (albeit not universal) rhetorical stance of religious authorities to insist that they do not engage in partisan politics, it is really not credible. Take, to start with, the most famous Christian version of this rhetorical stance, one ascribed to Jesus - "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew: 22-23). This admonition is extremely ambiguous. Some argue that it was deliberately ambiguous, since the question to which Jesus was responding was intended as a trap. In any case, this statement

leaves open to everyone's interpretation which things are Caesar's and which are God's. There has been, as we know, an enormous range of such interpretations, many of which directly contradict those of others.

It is obvious that all religious institutions operate within the confines of one or more political structures. These political structures can assume one of three basic attitudes to the operations of religious institutions: they can favor, endorse, or at least defend them; they can tolerate them; they can disfavor and/or try to suppress them. Many religious institutions openly prefer the first option of official endorsement. Some of them say they prefer the second option, that of toleration, which implicitly means state neutrality vis-à-vis multiple religious institutions. But do any really favor the third option of repression? Even when religious institutions assume the role of martyr, they seem to hope, even expect, that their politically acceptable behavior will lead to the state's eventually adopting the second option of toleration, even perhaps the first option of endorsement.

If a religious institution seeks what I am calling option one or two on the part of the political institution, it clearly must pay some political price for this. The relation becomes an exchange. Once there is an exchange, we can seek to analyze the terms of the exchange. Once again, both in theory and in practice, there exists a very wide range of alternatives. At one end of this range is one in which the religious institution defends and promotes all the political operations of the state - a lopsided exchange in which the state has succeeded in transforming the religious institution into a subordinate bureaucratic structure of the state. At the other end of the range of known terms of exchange is one in which the religion, having become an official religion of the state, endorses the state fully, but only as long as it is functioning well in terms of widespread political acquiescence,

reserving the right to judge that the emperor has lost the mandate of heaven, to use the classical Chinese concept.

If we turn to the case in which a particular religious institution is disfavored actively by the state, it seems obvious that such a religious institution may respond in two quite different ways. It can turn inward, withdrawing from the public political arena, and suffer in silence, even go underground. Or it can militate openly and actively for a reversal of the state's position. While the first option of withdrawal is more common, given the power of the state to persecute and repress, can we really conceive of a situation in which a persecuted religious institution would not take advantage of a breakdown in state authority to begin to pursue the second more militant option? Just think, in recent years, of the evolution of the position of the Catholic Church in Poland during the Communist regime.

It follows from this analysis that, at the broad level of the relations of political and religious institutions, religious institutions always have a politics, even if they may hide this, or deny this, or postpone pursuing this as a result of taking into account the realities of the political situation that they are facing.

The politics of religion, however, is not exhausted in seeing how religious institutions maneuver vis-à-vis the states. There is also the question of how religious institutions position themselves with regard to the multiple divisions within the social framework - differences of gender, of class, of age-group, of status-group or identity.

Once again, the rhetorical stance may be one of professing inclusiveness - "we are all children of God" - but it is not really credible in practice for the most part. This can be seen in multiple ways - at the level of doctrine, at the level of political lobbying, and at the level of

social organization.

At the level of doctrine, the most obvious issue and the one perhaps most widely discussed today is that of gender. While once again there is a wide range of doctrinal presentations, there is no major religion, today or yesterday, which has shown itself ready (except for small minorities) to assert the doctrinal total equality of men and women. No doubt this has always been an issue. But the emergence of serious feminist identities and movements in the modern world, particularly in the last fifty years or so, has forced much public debate about religious attitudes concerning gender equality, and sharpened, perhaps intensified, the differences of views.

What about class? Have religious institutions argued doctrines that in effect favor one side or another in the class struggle? I don't think they have often done this directly in doctrinal terms in ways that parallel what they have done concerning gender. But they have quite often done this indirectly, by using social status or economic wealth or other facets of upper-class achievement as signs of God's grace, in one form or another. And they have certainly taken poverty, especially extreme poverty, as signs of divine punishment for human misbehavior, or for ancestral misbehavior.

Religious doctrine about age-groups is perhaps more varied. In general, children (but up to what age is one a child?) are treated doctrinally as subordinate creatures. They are considered to be unwise, in need of being tutored and restrained by adults, and not ready to participate in the adult religious community as peers, until they reach a prescribed age of *rite de passage*. The variance among religions is not located with regard to children, but with regard to the aged. In some religious doctrine, the aged are the elders, to whom not merely respect but deference should be offered. But in other doctrines, once humans are past the age of active

contribution to the well-being and practices of the religious community, they must withdraw and yield place to the active adults. Whichever the doctrinal position, it is not one of political neutrality.

Finally, when it comes to status-groups, today usually called identities, doctrinally there is real, if sometimes covert, discrimination. Any concept of an elect group is a choice of preference for one ethnicity (one status-group, one identity) over all the others. This is true even of the proselytizing religions, which claim to be universalistic, but for whom conversion seems always to demand doctrinally an "assimilation" to the practices and doctrinal quirks of the dominant or "original" ethnicity or identity with which the religious community is identified.

So, to resume, it is hard to defend the position that religious doctrines are in practice totally neutral in relation to the multiple group divisions within the social framework. They tend to indicate, in their doctrines, preferences, preferences that are essentially political options.

If doctrines are not neutral, does it follow that they actively seek to influence the political machinery to implement one or another of their preferences - what I am calling lobbying, to use current language? It is concerning lobbying that there is considerable public controversy today. When people speak of "the separation of church and state," they are usually arguing that, among other things, it is inappropriate for religious institutions to lobby. And when others speak of the right and necessity of their being a religious presence in public life, they are usually arguing that lobbying is not only permissible, but even religiously mandatory.

Lobbying of course comes in many guises. It can mean very quiet and obscure whispering in the ear of the politically powerful. It can mean public "education" by religious institutions explicating an

asserted religious point of view on a political issue. Or it can mean very large-scale and strenuous organization of public sentiment, resembling a social movement. Of course, if we limit our definition of lobbying to militant organizing, then it is certainly not universal. But if we enlarge our definition of what one means by lobbying, it is hard to think that there has ever been a complete abstention from religious lobbying. So, in summation, both in the doctrine and in the practice, we find that religious institutions have a politics. Indeed they must have a politics.

Finally, one has to study religious communities as social organizations. All religions have some way in which individuals indicate that they are members of the religious community, however tenuously. They all have some kind of communal rituals, usually including having a common location in which they meet together periodically. I refer here not to the worldwide virtual community of which they are a part, but to the local concrete communities that are so widespread.

Are such local communal structures politically neutral? How could they be? First of all, since local geographies tend to be differentiated by class and/or ethnicity, organizing locally tends to bring together persons of a given social rank. And it is scarcely exceptional that, at the local level, such religious communities are reluctant (if not more than this) to admit persons of other social ranks into their communal structure. In some instances, such separation is formally required - either by the religious institution or by the state - in which case we have what we have come to call apartheid. But the unmandated practice of social organization is usually sufficient to ensure socially segregated local communities. It seldom needs the reinforcement of formal apartheid.

The segregation of different communal structures is often

reinforced by subtle, or not so subtle, differences in religious ritual. And this may be compounded by differences in lobbying techniques, and indeed in the nature of their political demands upon the state. The consequent political battles between different communal religious organizations ostensibly practicing the same religion can come to overshadow all other forms of the politics of religion. In the year 2012, these battles fill the reports of the world media, and the reports impress by the ferocity of these struggles.

All that I have argued about the politics of religion is to a large degree as true of pre-modern historical systems as of modern ones, although there are no doubt differences in one or another aspect of what I have been reviewing. But, in general, I would argue that there has always been, and always will be, a politics of religion. It is the other side of the issue, the religion of politics, that I believe is the big difference between pre-modern historical systems and our modern world-system, and it is to that question that I now turn.

The Religion of Politics

The modern world-system is a capitalist world-economy, which originated in parts of Europe and the Americas in the long sixteenth century. One of the institutional features of this historical social system was the creation of so-called sovereign states linked together in an interstate system.

In the beginning, these states had a difficult time achieving even a small degree of sovereign autonomy in both directions - externally and internally - and even today the degree of sovereign autonomy remains very imperfect. One of the major obstacles was the fact that the legal (or at least claimed) state boundaries have not only been unstable (since they rather

frequently changed) but almost always and almost inevitably encompassed multiple different groups (variously called nations or peoples or ethnicities or clans or tribes).

The consolidation of a power structure at the top of the state machinery - one strong enough to be able to resist somewhat external intrusions in its internal affairs - required the minimization or secondarization of loyalties to these multiple different groups. This turned out to be a difficult task, one that was not achieved even partially for several centuries, and even then only in a relatively small number of the stronger and wealthier states.

It is only in the nineteenth century that we can begin to speak of "nationalism" as a significant social phenomenon and, as I have indicated, only in a few states. What is this thing called nationalism? It is the assertion (or perhaps rather the belief) that all persons who are legally "citizens" (itself an ambiguous concept) of a given state ought to feel a political loyalty to that state, one that supersedes loyalties to any other "groups" - a category that of course includes religious communities.

In social analysis, we have used the language for quite a long time now of "nation-states." Let us be clear: There are no such things as nation-states, even today. There are states with the political aspiration of becoming nation-states. Indeed, all states seem to have had this aspiration. The major technique the states have used in pursuing this objective is one we call Jacobinism.

What is Jacobinism? It is really quite simple as a policy. Jacobinism is the recognition (or is it the contention?) that all citizens have the same rights as individuals. But no rights exist for any intermediate group as a group. The state should have one language, one set of laws, and one

ethnicity (the national ethnicity). Should it also have one religion? Not quite perhaps, but at least one set of rules for all religious institutions, none of which is granted special rights because of its own doctrinal rules.

Of course, this regimen has never been totally implemented anywhere. It is an aspiration, but a very strong one. And of all the so-called intermediate groups, it is the religious communities that have found this dogma hardest to swallow. In point of fact, when all is said and done, Jacobinism is totally unacceptable to religious communities, however willing some of them are ready to compromise or otherwise ready to be at least pliable on the surface.

Jacobinism is a term usually only or primarily used when referring to post-1789 France. But analytically, this is too narrow a usage. Actually, virtually all states in the last two centuries have pursued Jacobin policies. And while Jacobinism as an ideological construct has come under increasing attack in the last 25-50 years, the states still seem to be seeking to be as Jacobin as they are politically able to be.

Seen in a long-term perspective, Jacobinism has been remarkably successful. In the majority of conflicts for the majority of people throughout the world, patriotism tends to trump all other loyalties, even for active and militant members of religious communities.

This seems to have occurred because the proponents of Jacobin nationalism/patriotism have not been content simply to proclaim the objective, nor even because they have used the powers of the state machinery to enforce it. It seems to have occurred because the state authorities have been able to get their citizens to internalize these values. The states have used particularly attendance in the primary school systems and service in the armed forces as modes of transmitting and inculcating

these values. They have in addition promoted public nationalist rituals and exhibited widely nationalist symbolism. And even more perniciously, they have enlisted the parents of the poorest and most oppressed segments of the population as allies by making them feel that getting their children to internalize these values was a *sine qua non* for the survival of their children.

This is what I am calling the religion of politics. Participation in nationalist/patriotic collective behavior has been promoted as a religion, a faith. This has never been found acceptable to religious communities. But they have found that it has not been easy for them to combat the religion of politics. The battle however has not been one-sided on the other hand, since the states have found the religious communities to be formidable opponents, and have struggled to find the best strategy to subdue them.

In the long sixteenth century, when the states were still rather weak, Christianity was consumed by new but intense internal religious struggles. The original opposition was that between Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism, but eventually the breach widened into a more complex arraignment of faiths that included Calvinism and Anabaptism (and of course later on to a still larger array of varieties of Christianity).

The initial compromise between the states and the two most powerful contenders (Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism) was, when we look at it from today's perspective, a curious one. The Peace of Augsburg in 1555, presided over by Ferdinand, the brother of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, proclaimed the doctrine of *cuius regio eius religio*. This seemed to have brought momentary peace to Europe. The idea that the sovereign ruler of a state could choose the religion he preferred (among only two, to be sure) meant that within each state there would be no conflict between loyalty to the state and loyalty to the

religious community.

This solution was ingenious, except that it failed to take account of the fact that religious subdividing was proceeding apace and apparently could not be contained. As time went on, two things occurred. Successive versions of Christianity included many that were less dogmatic and more religiously "liberal" or deistic. By the time we get to the nineteenth century, there were some persons who were ready to espouse a purely secular, free-thinking version of morality. The second thing that happened was that the reality of religious uniformity within each state simply crumbled under the spread of the multiple versions of Christianity.

Following the French Revolution, there began to be widespread acceptance of the concept that sovereignty resided not in the monarch or even the aristocracy and/or legislative bodies, but in the "people." The believers in "progress" - now an ever-larger percentage of the population - began to perceive national development as the best concrete evidence of progress, and therefore nationalism as its *sine qua non*. Voltaire's old slogan - *Écrasez l'infâme* - was taken up as a crusade, not merely against the Roman Catholic Church but against all religions.

The religion of politics, a product of the modern world-system, thus came into deep and continuing struggle with all the religious communities, which in turn responded with the politics of religion. This conflict has been for the last two centuries, and remains today, a severe, continuing, unresolved and probably unresolvable conflict within the framework of the modern world-system. Given the current acutely chaotic condition of the modern world-system, it is likely to occupy a larger and larger proportion of political attention.

The Good Society

We all seek the good society, or at least the better society. Religious institutions offer in their doctrine and practice the optimal path to individual salvation, whatever that is defined as being. But they also all, or almost all, offer prescriptions for realizing the good society (or the best possible society) in this world. It follows that this has become both the objective and the justification for the politics of religion.

In parallel ways, the states in the modern world-system have sought to obtain their legitimation, and therefore their political strength, from their claim that they seek to achieve the good society, or at least the better society. This has been especially true since the concept that sovereignty belonged to the "people" became so widely accepted after the French Revolution. This has been both the objective and the justification for the religion of politics.

The triumph of centrist liberalism in the period 1848-1968 as the only credible geoculture had established the basis for the enormous acceptance across the world of the inevitability of the coming of the good society in our world and in our grandchildren's time. The world-revolution of 1968 reflected the new but very strong disillusionment with this concept of an inevitably progressive future. Suddenly skepticism about the religion of politics became the order of the day. Centrist liberalism was dethroned as the only possible ideology. Both conservatism and radicalism emerged from under its shadow as genuine ideological alternatives.

Into this new reinvigorated ideological rivalry between the three classic ideologies, this breach if you will of the unity of the statist path, the religious communities found the space to reassert, far more vigorously than at any previous moment in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,

their doctrines and their practices. They did this largely in the guise of the many variants of "fundamentalisms." They challenged the role of the states directly. They entered the political realm more openly. And in many countries they even assumed state power, or at least supported groups that were willing to acknowledge the religious basis of their political practice.

The question for us now is where do we go from here. I have been arguing in my recent writings, and I shall not repeat the argumentation here, that the modern world-system is in a terminal crisis. Briefly defined, this means that the system's processes have moved too far from equilibrium and it is no longer possible to bring its operations back even to a moving equilibrium. The result of this is a longish period (60-80 years) of structural crisis, which involves a transition to a new system or systems. I claim this process began circa 1967-1973 and will go on probably until circa 2040/2050.

Such a period of transition is marked by chaos, which simply means all the operations of the system are experiencing wild fluctuations. It is also marked by a bifurcation, which simply means that there exist two possible ways out of the chaos, two alternative kinds of new order to establish. The outcome is intrinsically impossible to predict, the one certainty being that the existing system cannot be salvaged by adjustments, even by major adjustments. What will determine the outcome will be the result of an infinity of nano-actions by an infinity of actors, acting on an infinity of nano-occasions. At some point, the process tilts definitively in one direction or another, and we are into a new historical era. The wild fluctuations lift constraints on the degree of violence, so that life becomes far more dangerous than previously.

What has all this to do with religion, politics, and the good

society? Everything. The battle between the two camps in struggle over the future historical system(s) is a struggle about the good society, which each camp defines in a fundamentally different way. One camp believes the good society is one that is hierarchical with higher rewards for some than for others. And the other camp believes that the good society is one that is relatively democratic and relatively egalitarian.

The chaotic fluctuations and the excessive violence that have become so visible and so much a part of our daily expectations are of course very disconcerting and engender much fear, which is quite understandable. One result is that this chaotic ambiance has both reinforced the public expression of the politics of religion and the public expression of the religion of politics. All the mechanisms that were created over several centuries to keep this struggle within bounds seem to have fallen into disarray - a perfect example of Yeats's line that "the centre cannot hold."

In the process, those in command of the multiple religious institutions and the multiple states push their long-standing policies harder than ever, which seems to have very little to do with the good society. What drives individuals frantic is the sense that their immediate interventions, whether in the political or religious arena, seem to have so little impact on the situation. The sense of helplessness pushes one and all to search for magic formulas of solution and/or to blaming the scapegoats.

It is probable that neither religious "fundamentalism" with an ultra-conservative overtone nor renewed Jacobinism with a social-democratic overtone is likely to accomplish very much - an outcome which intensifies the fears and the insistence on changes that may not resolve anything. Can there be actions that do not derive from the politics of religion or the religion of politics that we might undertake?

Amidst this difficult chaotic turmoil, what can we do in the very short-run and what can we do in the middle-run? In the very short-run, I can see no alternative that is more plausible and more in the spirit of the looking towards the good society than supporting whatever might "minimize the pain." For that we might have to support some things that the proponents of the politics of religion advocate and we might have to support some of the things that the proponents of the religion of politics advocate. But we have to do this, knowing that none of these resolves the dilemmas or transforms the world; it simply minimizes the pain.

In the middle-run, we can do more. We can analyze the real options that are presented in the bifurcation. We can try to understand what is actually happening within our world-system. I think of this as the intellectual task. Then we can, in the light of the alternatives, make our moral choices. This is not a matter of compromise but of choice. And then we can try to elaborate a politics that will help us make the transition tilt in favor of our moral choice.

When we arrive at the new world-system or world-systems at the end of the transition, what will happen to the political institutions and the religious communities? We do not know. First of all, we do not know who will win out in this transition - the forces of hierarchy or the forces of relative democracy and equality. Secondly, we have no idea what kind of institutional order will be established.

Will we have states located within an interstate system and struggling to establish relative autonomy? Quite possibly we shall not. We shall have, doubtless, some mechanism by which we shall be making our political choices and governing our interhuman relations. But it could be one so different from the one we have known for the last half millennium

that all discussion of Jacobin drives for the priority of loyalties would have become quite meaningless.

And will we have religious communities of the kind the world has known for perhaps two thousand years, perhaps longer? Again, quite possibly we shall not. I am sure that there will be belief systems and that some of them will take forms that can be seen as related to what we have up to now called religions. But it could be that they would be quite different. I think myself the biggest change will come in relation to gender. But this would not be the only change.

Finally, I hope that the search for the good society will take precedence over all else, which I cannot say has been at all true of the modern world-system, nor of the many historical systems that preceded it. This is however a hope, not a prediction. But it is a pursuit that I feel I can ask persons of good will, active in the political and religious arenas, to join. History is on no one's side. But that means that creative wisdom is not ruled out. It is possible, if always far from certain. So I end on this note - the merit of hope, the merit of struggling during this transition for the good society, or at least the better society.

Causal Sex: Sexual Ethics and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Jeffrey Hudson, Yale University

Abstract

This paper explores the contemporary debates between gay conservatives and queer radicals about serosorting and promiscuity and their effect on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. An agent-based model is constructed to test the claims of the opposing sides that these two factors could contribute to or end the spread of the virus respectively. The results suggest that serosorting, a decision making practice about whether or not to engage in sexual activity based on HIV +/- status, is an effective strategy at containing the epidemic when practiced consistently but does little to decrease risk at lower levels. Higher rates of promiscuity are found to slightly increase the size of the epidemic for low levels of serosorting. With a high percentage of serosorting, however, promiscuity dramatically reduces the prevalence of HIV in the population.

Almost thirty years have passed since the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and the virus that causes it, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), were identified by the Centers for Disease Control. Though with Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy (HAART) many HIV-positive individuals can live into their 60s (The Anti-Retroviral Therapy Cohort Collaboration 2008) and scientists remain optimistic about developing a vaccine, HIV is still a death sentence for those who are seropositive. It was initially associated with the "four 'H's": homosexuals, Haitians, hemophiliacs, and heroin/IV drug users but HIV quickly spread to other populations. Currently, in the US, African-American women

are at high risk for infection and abroad, sub-Saharan Africa is the most hard-hit region. UNAIDS estimated that in 2009 over 30 million people around the world were living with AIDS, about 2 million died from AIDS-related complications and there were upwards of 3 million new HIV transmissions. (UNAIDS 2009 Global AIDS Report Fact Sheet) Despite widespread knowledge of how the disease is spread and how transmission can be prevented, the number of people living with AIDS continues to rise.

The rate of infection began to drop off among men who have sex with men (MSM)[1] in the US following much AIDS awareness activism and safer sex education programs in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Moving into the fourth decade of the disease, however, HIV is back on the rise in many places in the US. The CDC estimates that close to 20% of MSM in 21 US cities are infected and that about half of those do not yet know it (CDC 2006). Many attribute this change to the coming of age of a cohort of MSM who did not have to deal with the AIDS-related deaths of their friends on the same scale as MSM in the '80s and '90s. Others cite increased optimism about treatments in young urban MSM. Growing up in a world where AIDS drugs have always been available and people with AIDS have not been as visible, they underestimate their risk of infection and the deadliness of the disease. A third theory is that the stigma attached to being HIV-positive is much greater today than during the height of the AIDS crisis. Since this new generation has grown up knowing about AIDS

1 Though "gay" or "homosexual" may seem like simpler descriptors of the population in question, they are terms that pertain to identity. Many men who do not identify as gay or homosexual do have sex with men. As this paper is interested in the effects of certain behaviors among men, the term "men who have sex with men," with its emphasis on behavior over identity, is preferred.

and how to have safe sex, many see new HIV infections as the result of self-destructive behavior. This stigma discourages men from getting tested and from disclosing their status to their sex partners (Kershaw 2008).

In addition to folk theories about the *causes* of the upsurge of new HIV infections in young MSM, there has also been plenty of speculation about how to reverse the trend. One of the most important innovations of negotiated safety in HIV prevention has been the idea of serosorting. During the height of the AIDS crisis and the decade that followed, condoms and safe sex were promoted as the best way to reduce the risk of infection during sex. In a speech as recent as 2004, AIDS activist Larry Kramer warned his audience, "for the rest of your lives, probably for the rest of life on earth, you are never going to be able to have sex with another person without a condom! Never!" (Kramer 2004). After years of awareness, education and condom distribution, however, it was clear that some men simply would not use condoms 100% of the time. Serosorting emerged as a compromise to allow unprotected sex but decrease risk of infection. Tim Dean, author of a recent book on barebacking[2], describes serosorting as "the tendency to pursue unprotected sex only with those who share one's HIV status." (Dean 2009: 12) As the virus can only spread through an unprotected serodiscordant sexual liaison (in which one partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative), eliminating these circumstances would logically end the spread of HIV. Dean notes a few problems with this approach, however: first, it does not prevent infection with other sexually transmitted infections or reinfection with another strain of HIV. Second, it unrealistically relies on accurate information and honest disclosure before

2 Barebacking is a popular euphemism among MSM for unprotected (anal) sex.

every sexual encounter. And third, it exacerbates the stigmatization of HIV-positive men, creating a "viral apartheid." (Dean 2009: 14).

While Dean and other queer radicals are skeptical of serosorting's practicality and ethical dimensions, gay conservatives such as Andrew Sullivan have been quick to laud it. "If every HIV-positive man would do that," he writes, "the epidemic would soon collapse." (Sullivan 2005: 112) Sullivan argues that although fear of death did not enforce strict condom use, the "incentive of intimacy" (unprotected sex) could be enough to encourage serosorting. Barebackhealth.net promotes serosorting for newly HIV-positive men by suggesting that in addition to unprotected sex, their sexual partners can offer them valuable experience and understanding about living with the virus (*Barebackhealth.net* 2005). Although serosorting is widely advocated in the gay community, the stigma surrounding HIV that discourages many men from getting tested and sharing the information with their partners may render the strategy largely ineffective. But for Andrew Sullivan and other gay conservatives, serosorting is just part of a broader project to reform gay norms of sex.

The conservative gay project, pushed by Sullivan as well as Larry Kramer, is nothing less than to "civilize" promiscuous men who have sex with men by enticing them into a long-term relationship with strong normative pressures – marriage. Both blame promiscuity and anonymous sex for the epidemic. In his 2004 speech, Kramer asks, "does it occur to you that we brought this plague of AIDS upon ourselves?" (Kramer 2004) Sullivan, while less provocative, is no less clear: he lists among "the advantages of same-sex marriage… lower rates of promiscuity among gay men [and] lower rates of disease transmission" (Sullivan 1997). The association of casual sex with the HIV epidemic goes unquestioned.

Michael Warner summarizes this argument in *The Trouble with Normal*: "it is time for gay men to promote 'love and meaningful relationships, instead of backroom dalliances'" (Warner 1999: 209). Warner, though, disagrees. As he later asserts, "most risk happens in the bedroom, not the back room" (Ibid: 209).

Michael Warner is not alone in rejecting the moralizing rhetoric of gay conservatives and embracing a promiscuous sexual ethic. These radical queer theorists do not apologize for casual sex, they celebrate it. Tim Dean (2009) argues that having sex with strangers is, in fact, "ethically exemplary (Dean 2009: 180)."[3] While Douglas Crimp, in response to one of Kramer's invectives against promiscuity, affirms, "they insist that our promiscuity will destroy us when in fact *it is our promiscuity that will save us.*" (Crimp1987: 253 Emphasis in original). According to Crimp, promiscuity has allowed MSM to be sexually inventive and develop new strategies for having safe sex. These scholars argue that a community's sexual ethic should be seen as a resource to draw upon rather than as part of the problem.

The debates over serosorting and promiscuity among men who have sex with men are heated and high-stakes – both sides believe that the other is contributing to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In evaluating such claims, *agent-based models* offer sociologists and epidemiologists a unique tool. Epidemiologists have, in the past, used mathematical models to predict how quickly a disease will spread through a new population. Agent-based modeling, pioneered by Thomas Schelling in *Micromotives* and *Macrobehavior* allows researchers to test the effects of changes in human behavior as an emergent result of their interaction. With these

3 Here he refers specifically to a casual sexual encounter that creates intimacy yet does not attempt to eliminate otherness.

models, we can test the effectiveness of different prevention strategies and interventions to determine what behaviors contribute to or help end the HIV epidemic.

Though most sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and diseases spread through a population in the same or similar ways, many factors make the spread of HIV/AIDS unique. Unlike HIV, many other STIs can be cured or vaccinated against or are not as lethal. HIV is transmitted through a more limited range of behaviors than other STIs, suggesting a sparser sexual network. Additionally, the unique stigma attached to HIV changes the dynamics of testing and disclosure between sexual partners. These considerations make HIV/AIDS a unique case for modeling transmission dynamics.

The use of agent-based models to simulate HIV/AIDS transmission is not new. Some have been designed to be context neutral and interrogate the importance of knowing one's serostatus (Wilensky 1997). Others are closely calibrated to a specific population, using sexual network data and a medically accurate model of variable infectivity rates (Alam et al. 2008). To test the claims of queer radicals and gay conservatives, a new model must be made that is specific to the Western MSM population under discussion. Specifically, the sexual mixing scheme will implement partner concurrency – "when one partnership begins before another one terminates" (Doherty et al. 2005; 191 Suppl 1: S42-54). Network experts Morris and Kretzschmar argue that partner concurrency is more realistic for this MSM population and it greatly affects the spread of HIV/AIDS through the network (Morris and Kretzschmar 1995).

Description of Model

The model, code-named Nutmeg, is essentially a simplistic virtual world, populated by hundreds of "agents" – virtual entities that represent men who have sex with men.[4] Each run of the model starts with a new population of agents who interact with and affect each other during the course of the run. Time is measured by ticks: each agent may act exactly once per tick and their actions' effects persist through the run. Each tick gives agents the opportunity to find a new partner, have sex (and potentially acquire HIV), and die. Running the model for fifteen hundred ticks allows us to see the accumulated effects of many thousands of interactions between agents, simulating how the epidemic could play out over generations. By changing the way agents behave in different runs of the model, we can quantify and compare the effects that these behaviors would have on a much larger scale, over a period of time.

As much as possible, parameter values were modeled on real data. The initial seroprevalence and rate of transmission are based on CDC data from sexually active urban MSM communities in the United States. Additionally, Nutmeg uses life expectancy figures that correspond to the most recent estimates of HIV-positive life expectancy on Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy (HAART) (The Anti-Retroviral Therapy Cohort Collaboration 2008). While consistent HAART regimens are not currently affordable or possible for all Western urban MSM, the model assumes ideal

4 The model used in this project was created in and tested through Repast Simphony 2.0 public Beta released December 3rd, 2010. It was written and executed in Groovy, a language for the Java platform.

testing and treatment conditions.[5] Finally, the pool re-entry and average relationship length variables that allow for concurrent partnerships and non-recurring sexual liaisons correspond to a distinctly Western sexual ethic.

For a complete list of the variables employed in the model, consult the following table.

Fig. 1 – Explanation of Variables

Variable	**Explanation**	**Value**
transmissionRate	Chance of infection per MSM sex act	1.43% (Jin et al. 2010)
initSP	Initial seroprevalence	19% (CDC 2008)
repopRate	How often a new agent is created	Avg. every 5 ticks*
negMortality	Average lifetime of seronegative agent	500 ticks
pozMortality	Average lifetime of seropositive agent	300 ticks
avgRelLength	Length of average relationship	50 ticks
poolReentry	Average time between beginning a new relationship and rejoining the "partner pool"	30 ticks
percSerosorting	Percent chance serosorting is practiced	varied
percONS	Percent of sex partners that are non-recurring	varied

*One tick corresponds to one full step of the simulation.

5 Many earlier models, such as Wilensky's NetLogo model, incorporate uncertainty about status. While this is an important factor in real efforts to combat the epidemic, it is beyond the scope of this model. In Nutmeg, all agents have perfect knowledge of their own as well as their partners' HIV statuses and all HIV-positive agents follow behaviors consistent with regular HAART.

Upon initialization of the model, 200 agents are created and randomly positioned across a grid. Each has three properties: his serostatus, the list of his current partners, and a binary marker of whether or not the agent is looking for a new partner (if he is "in the dating pool,"). Serostatus is assigned randomly to each agent based on the initial seroprevalence. The list of partners begins empty but will become populated and depopulated during the course of the model. All agents begin the simulation *not* looking for a new partner.

During each step of the simulation that an agent is not already in the pool, he has a chance to enter the pool. In the pool, the agent will look for one new partner per tick until he finds one who is suitable. Serodiscordant partnerships are rejected according to the serosorting parameter for that run of the model.

Once a partnership has been formed, it is determined to be long-term or non-recurring based on the percONS parameter. In serodiscordant partnerships, there is a chance for the seronegative agent to seroconvert based on the model's transmission rate.

When the partnership formed is longer-term, the agents take themselves out of the pool temporarily and add each other to their partner list. Every step in which an agent's partner list is populated he cycles through each partner. For each serodiscordant partner, there is a chance to seroconvert. Additionally, each partnership has a chance to break up based on the average relationship length variable. Finally, each agent has a chance of dying every tick. The rate of death is determined by serostatus.

The model does not use graphical space in its essential dynamics in order to reflect the contemporary sexual landscape of Western urban MSM. With widespread use of the internet, sites such as Manhunt.com and

Craigslist.com, and smart phone applications such as Grindr and Scruff, MSM encounters can be coordinated across vast geographical expanses rather than restricted to particular cruising regions.

Nutmeg is designed to test the effects of varying population levels of serosorting and promiscuity in containing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Though they are important factors in real-world incidence of HIV/AIDS, this model's scope does not encompass reinfection with different strains of the virus, increased risk while infected with other STIs, variable transmission rates during different stages of the disease, wider population dynamics, varying rates of partner change, unawareness of status or frequency of testing. However, serosorting can be used as a proxy for other strategies of risk mitigation.

The model was run with 17 different parameter sets. Serosorting was tested at 0%, 50%, 90% and 99% adherence while the percentage of one night stands was varied between 10%, 33%, 67% and 90%. Generally, 0% serosorting corresponds to a population that is completely indifferent to serostatus and it does not impact choice of partners at all. 50% serosorting signifies a lax attitude or a high amount of uncertainty in determining serostatus. The last two values indicate attention to serostatus and conscious effort to serosort. The different amounts of promiscuity correspond to, respectively, a conservative extreme, a moderately conservative, a moderately liberal and a liberal extreme sexual ethic among the population.

The control parameter set [percSerosorting = 100] was used to compare experimental runs to an "ideal world" in which the virus cannot be spread. Because the virus is never transmitted when serosorting is practiced strictly 100% of the time, the proportion of non-recurring

encounters could not affect transmission dynamics.

Each set of parameters was assigned a letter and each run under those parameters was labeled with a number. The set of control parameters is identified as 00. The following table summarizes the parameter sets.

Fig. 2 – Parameter Set Codes

percSerosorting percONS	0	50	90	99
10	A	B	C	D
33	E	F	G	H
67	I	J	K	L
90	M	N	O	P

Each parameter set was run 20 times. Each run lasted exactly 1500 ticks. The maximum seroprevalence and ending or equilibrium seroprevalence were recorded for each run and averaged across each parameter set. The statistics were compared using one-tailed two-sample t-tests with $\alpha = .05$.

Summary and Analysis of Data

Under control conditions (parameter set 00) the virus was eradicated from the population in 17 out of the 20 runs. In each of the other 3 runs, seroprevalence was under 1% by the end of the run with only 1 agent seropositive. The mean maximum seroprevalence was equal to the initial seroprevalence: 19% and the mean ending seroprevalence was 0.14%.

For the experimental parameter sets (A-P), the amount of

serosorting was found to have a much more profound impact on the chances of eradication of the virus than the level of promiscuity. To separate the confounding effects of the two variables on seroprevalence, results from each parameter set are only compared with other parameter sets with the same value for one of the two experimental variables.

As expected, serosorting was negatively correlated with the spread of the virus. As the percentage of serosorting increased, the extent of the epidemic (as measured by peak and equilibrium seroprevalence figures) decreased. These findings were consistent across different values of the promiscuity variable, percONS. The percentage of non-recurring encounters significantly affected seroprevalence for some levels of serosorting but not all. Additionally, the direction of influence promiscuity had on seroprevalence changed based on the percentage of serosorting. For lower levels of serosorting it seemed to increase the size of the epidemic, while for higher levels of serosorting it had the opposite effect.

The tables below list the mean maximum seroprevalence and end/equilibrium seroprevalence for each of the 16 experimental parameter sets.

Fig. 3 – Mean Maximum Seroprevalences

percSerosorting **percONS**	**0**	**50**	**90**	**99**
10	91.4	88.0	63.3	22.2
33	91.9	88.4	62.3	19.8
67	91.6	88.0	58.2	19.6
90	92.8	88.8	55.7	19.3

Fig. 4 – Mean Equilibrium Seroprevalences

percSerosorting percONS	**0**	**50**	**90**	**99**
10	79.5	73.4	50.4	2.3
33	81.3	75.7	43.9	2.2
67	78.8	74.4	44.9	0.7
90	81.8	78.0	44.5	0.7

For parameter sets with percentage of serosorting at 0 (sets A, E, I and M), increased promiscuity tends to correspond to higher maximum seroprevalence however it does not have a clear effect on the equilibrium seroprevalence. The difference between mean maximum seroprevalences in parameter sets A and M is statistically significant with a p-value of .001. Although the effect is not very important or strongly pronounced, the direction of the influence is consistently statistically significant which suggests that at 0% serosorting, high levels of non-recurring sexual partnership do increase size of the epidemic.

In parameter sets B, F, J and N, serosorting is set at 50%. The maximum seroprevalence in this group does not vary much. The equilibrium seroprevalences, on the other hand, do increase with the promiscuity variable. Parameter set N (percONS = 90) has a greater equilibrium seroprevalence than parameter sets B (percONS = 10) and J (percONS = 67) with p-values of .005 and .004, respectively.

Parameter sets C, G, K and O all have 90% serosorting. Here the correlation between percONS and seroprevalence is reversed. Increasing proportions of non-partnered sexual encounters decrease the maximum

seroprevalence in the model. This robust finding is statistically significant between C and K with p-value .0005, between C and O with p-value 1.1 x 10-6, between G and K with p-value .005, between G and O with p-value 3.1 x 10-5, and between K and O with p-value .03. The mean equilibrium seroprevalences are not statistically significantly different between G, K, and O but each is significantly lower than C with p-values of .01, .02 and .006, respectively. This evidence suggests that an increased proportion of non-recurring encounters does reduce the size of the epidemic.

For parameter sets D, H, L and P (that were run with 99% serosorting), percONS decreases both maximum and equilibrium seroprevalence figures. The trend is statistically significant with p-value .048 between D and L, and .01 between D and P for the values of mean maximum seroprevalence. The difference between the mean equilibrium seroprevalences is much more striking. The result is statistically significant between D and L with p-value .02, between D and P with p-value .02, between H and L with p-value .049 and between H and P with p-value .049. These parameter sets were also compared to the control to determine if there is any scenario that cannot be significantly distinguished from the control. The mean maximum seroprevalence in parameter set D is significantly greater than the control with a p-value of .02 but for higher values of percONS, there was no statistically significant difference between the control parameter set and the 99% serosorting parameter sets H, L and P for the maximum seroprevalence. For mean equilibrium seroprevalences, however, each parameter set in the group was statistically significantly greater than the control: D with p-value .003, H with p-value .01, L with p-value .01 and P with p-value .02.

The effects of increasing levels of serosorting in each percONS

grouping are extremely statistically significant. In every grouping (ABCD, EFGH, IJKL, and MNOP) each value is statistically significantly different from each other value.

Discussion

Explanation of Findings

The most interesting finding is that the promiscuity variable affects the epidemic in different ways for high and low levels of serosorting. For 0% and 50% serosorting, increased promiscuity led to higher seroprevalences. For the higher two serosorting parameter sets (90% and 99%), however, increased promiscuity caused lower seroprevalences.

The first piece of the finding is that increased levels of promiscuity increased the size of the epidemic for the 0% and 50% serosorting parameter sets. While this trend is not as robust as the other, several comparisons between the figures were statistically significant. The lack of significance between more figures in this parameter set group could indicate that the effect is not very large or that non-recurring partnerships only increase seroprevalence at very high values and otherwise have no effect. The most likely mechanism behind this trend follows traditional safe-sex narratives: the increase in the number of sexual partners increased exposure to HIV/AIDS. Because agents are temporarily taken out of the "dating pool" when they enter a long-term relationship, agents in low promiscuity runs have many fewer sexual partners than those in high-promiscuity runs. This finding corroborates the claims of gay conservatives that promiscuity was partially to blame for the severity of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the effect is minimal and only exists for low levels of serosorting.

The much more striking effect of the proportion of non-recurring partnerships is in high serosorting runs. Under 90% and 99% serosorting conditions, an increase in promiscuity had the opposite effect: it reduced the spread of the disease. This finding was much more pronounced. It was statistically significant for most parameter comparisons in the 90% and 99% groups and with maximum seroprevalence as well as equilibrium seroprevalence. In the 90% serosorting group the difference was between 6 and 8 percentage points for both statistics from 10% non-recurring encounters to 90%. This is much larger than the 2 to 3 percentage point difference in the low-serosorting group. Though the effect is clearer here, the mechanism is not. There are at least three plausible explanations and, most likely, they all contribute in some way to the significance of the finding.

First, it is possible that for high levels of relationship formation (low promiscuity) and high levels of serosorting, seroconcordant partnerships will be formed much more often by seronegative couples. Since these couples are temporarily taken out of the dating pool, seropositive agents who have a harder time finding a seroconcordant partner are overrepresented which means that the seronegative agents looking for a partner will choose serodiscordant partners more often than the seroprevalence figures would suggest. This increases the exposure of seronegative agents to the virus and increases the chances they will become infected. On the other hand, with fewer relationships formed under conditions of high levels of non-recurring partnership, the imbalance is less pronounced and serodiscordant couples occur less frequently, lowering the risk of seroconversion.

Another explanation relies on partnership concurrency. Long-term partnerships can form easily between (HIV negative) seroconcordant

couples. But partnership concurrency allows those partners to have other liaisons during the course of the relationship. If one of those partners becomes infected during the course of the relationship, the couple does not re-serosort, leading to higher incidence of serodiscordant couples over time than the serosorting figure suggests. The uninfected partner in one of these previously seroconcordant relationships can quickly become infected as well, doubling the effects of the first transmission. Thus partnership concurrency can turn long-term relationships into a health hazard when partners do not maintain consistent honest communication about serostatus and risk behaviors.

Finally, the simplest mechanism is just that in longer-term relationships, there is more sexual contact and therefore more opportunity to spread the disease. Even accounting for high levels of serosorting, once a serodiscordant relationship is formed, the length of partnership almost guarantees that the disease will be spread. For higher levels of non-recurring partnership, this factor contributes less to the epidemic because it is more likely that serodiscordant partnerships will be one-night stands and therefore have a single, low chance to transmit the virus.

Regardless of the narrative attached to this finding, the results are stunningly unanticipated. Despite the moralizing rhetoric of gay conservatives seeking to end AIDS through "civilizing" the sexually promiscuous MSM community, this approach would seem to have the opposite effect. When individuals make an effort to serosort, promiscuity and non-recurring sexual partnerships actually decrease the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission compared to having a series of long-term partners. Since this effect is more pronounced than the opposite effect observed in the low-serosorting group and because higher levels of serosorting

are more plausible for the future of the MSM sexual ethic given its focus in contemporary AIDS prevention education, the data suggest that promiscuity in Western MSM communities may be a boon to ending the virus.

We must consider these figures in light of the results of the CDC study of urban MSM which reported that 44% of HIV-positive MSM were unaware of their status or believed they were negative. Many of these men even believed themselves to be at low-risk. With such a high amount of uncertainty or false information, high levels of serosorting are a practical impossibility. Even assuming complete transparency (as Nutmeg does), a plausibly high level of serosorting only maintains the disease at an equilibrium, it does not do enough to eradicate it. While additional factors not considered in the model could push the seroprevalence down further, it is clear that, unless very strictly practiced, serosorting alone is not enough to end the epidemic completely. Ultimately serosorting depends on trust and honest disclosure about serostatus and about one's certainty about that status. Without enough certainty, reliable information and honesty between sexual partners, the levels of serosorting that could end the epidemic will remain out of reach. Although it is an admirable measure to reduce personal risk and lower the overall seroprevalence, it does not seem likely that even high levels of serosorting can stem the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Validity

Our next concern in interpreting the findings produced by the model is establishing their validity and our ability to make broader claims based on these results. Perhaps the most striking feature of the data is the high rate of seroprevalence recorded in most of the parameter sets

compared to the relatively modest 19% that is currently observed among urban MSM in the United States. There are several reasons why we see such high seroprevalences in the model and why Nutmeg's results are still very relevant to the future of AIDS prevention initiatives.

First, the model, by starting at 19% seroprevalence, is aimed at predicting the future course of the disease, not accurately reconstructing its past or current state. Second, while we do not have any reliable estimates of the frequency with which MSM employ serosorting as a strategy in partner choice, anecdotal evidence (Dean 2009) suggests that only a small percent of MSM are actively indifferent to or seek out seroconversion, suggesting that the majority do take serostatus into account (when known) thus the real population figure for percentage of serosorting is likely to be over 50% in ideal conditions. Third, Nutmeg specifically does not include low-risk MSM who are exclusively monogamous, abstain from risk behavior such as anal intercourse or have a very low number of sexual partners. These individuals do not tend to affect the transmission dynamics of the disease, they only serve to decrease the population seroprevalence, thus it is quite expected that the model's seroprevalence figures are higher than numbers observed in the broader population. Lastly, even though the figures for seroprevalence obtained from the model do not currently correspond to observed rates in the population, the effect that the two variables have on lowering seroprevalence are still statistically significant. Regardless of the real world figures, manipulation of the experimental variables in the model should still impact seroprevalence in the ways predicted.

The choice of values for the variables in the model are also subject to question. As previously mentioned, some values, such as the initial seroprevalence and the transmission rate per high-risk sex act, are

based on recent empirical research done on the MSM community in the United States. For other values, the most recent scholarly findings are unclear or irrelevant to the model. The number of agents in the model, for example, was set at 200 to give enough opportunity for random events to be averaged out over the entire set of agents yet it is a small enough number to be manageable with the computer's limited CPU resources. The ticks in the model are not intended to correspond to any specific duration of time but other variables such as mortality rates, pool reentry, average relationship length, and the repopulation rate must be calibrated to the length of the model in ticks. Each of these variables was set in relation to the others such that partnership concurrency was a possibility (but not a necessity for every relationship or every agent), that the average number of partners was not too far outside the realm of plausibility and that the model sustained enough agents to have meaningful action through the course of its run, accounting for agent deaths. Thus the figures for the HIV-positive and HIV-negative mortality rates are not inherently meaningful; they are set in a ratio that approximates observed mortality rates in the most recent CDC study.

Futurity

Nutmeg has several key limitations that narrow the scope of relevance of its findings. First, statistical significance establishes that an effect exists but does not suggest how important that effect is. Some effects were found to be statistically significant but only raised or lowered seroprevalence by a percentage point or two. Other trends had much greater magnitudes but the statistical test does not determine the size of an effect, only that it exists. Although we can make educated guesses

about the importance of the effects from the data we have collected, the *statistical* tests cannot confirm hypotheses about magnitude of effect. For our purposes, this is not much of an issue: the direction of influence (increasing or decreasing the size of the epidemic) is more important than the precise magnitude of its effect in determining future policy and AIDS prevention interventions.

Additionally, this model's findings are limited to a very specific population of high-risk urban MSM in the United States. For example, the decision to exclude strict monogamy from the final version of this model was based in part on research and anecdotal evidence about the population in question. Among other populations, monogamy is more common and individuals have far fewer sexual partners. These are important factors that could seriously change the outcomes of an intervention. Concurrency is an important component of many of the mechanisms behind the findings observed in the data. Thus, if a population has very little partnership concurrency, it is entirely possible that increased promiscuity, for example, could have the opposite effects than observed in Nutmeg.

Despite the limitations of the model there are some policy recommendations that can be made. HIV/AIDS prevention education should definitely stress serosorting as a risk-mitigation strategy but emphasize that its effectiveness is limited unless followed consistently. While it is important for MSM to understand the positive effects of serosorting, it is equally important that they grasp the extent of its efficacy as well. If they do not, they could be lulled into a false sense of security believing that serosorting most of the time, even 90% of the time is enough to mitigate their risk of infection. The truth is that even for these high levels of serosorting, the virus can still be spread and maintained

over generations. Its limited effectiveness must be considered alongside the real harms serosorting can cause. As Tim Dean argues, it can increase the stigma attached to HIV infection. This stigma damages individuals psychologically but also leads to greater risk throughout their sexual network. As stigma can decrease a willingness to get tested and disclose HIV status, high levels of serosorting may in fact be counterproductive by increasing the amount of uncertainty and dishonesty between partners.

The implications of the findings regarding promiscuity are even less certain. Although promiscuous sexual behavior does reduce risk for HIV infection when coupled with high levels of serosorting, it puts an individual at greater risk for other, more easily transmissible, sexually transmitted infections. While these other STIs are not life-threatening and many are curable, they are a real health hazard that makes the value of promiscuity more ambiguous. Even if I were to recommend that promiscuity be promoted as a risk mitigation strategy, it is unlikely to be actively promoted by more mainstream AIDS activists. At the very least, then, these findings suggest that promiscuity in the MSM community not be treated as a malady that must be cured or misbehavior that needs correction. A sexual ethic in which more partners are casual or one-time encounters than long-term relationships should not be treated as morally degenerate if for no other reason than that it contributes to ending the epidemic of HIV/AIDS.

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"It's Not Her Fault!": Miley Cyrus, Fan Culture and the Neutralization of Deviance

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Abstract

The American television show *Hannah Montana* premiered on March 26, 2006, and quickly became a cultural phenomenon in the celebrity sphere. Over the course of the show's five-year run, Miley Cyrus appeared in the media multiple times for acting in a manner counter to her on-screen character, creating outrage and scandal among *Hannah Montana* fans. However, in spite of these events, Cyrus's popularity and fan base did not decrease but rather increased. Reactions to three selected events posted in threads on the fan forum *Miley Cyrus – My Most Wanted* and in articles written by the media were analyzed using the social deviance frameworks of neutralization and background expectancies. These frameworks effectively neutralized Cyrus's actions in the events; interpreted Cyrus's very public transition, and helped reconcile the tension between Cyrus's disparate on-screen and off-screen images.

On March 26, 2006, *Hannah Montana* premiered to 5.5 million viewers, of which 2.3 million were of the female 9- to 14-year old age group known as "tweens" (Becker 2007). It became one of Disney Channel's fastest-growing television shows, and its quick popularity led

the celebrity sphere[1] to dub *Hannah Montana* a cultural phenomenon and its lead actress 13-year old Miley Cyrus a star. Millions of fans worldwide watched the show and their parents found *Hannah Montana* acceptable entertainment; in a society where former-Disney-stars-gone-wrong like Lindsay Lohan and Britney Spears were rampant, Cyrus was "wholesome" and untainted by the sex and drugs of Hollywood (Ebenkamp 2008, Barnes 2008).

As the show progressed, however, Cyrus was featured increasingly in the media for acting less like her character on *Hannah Montana* and more like her former Disney counterparts. In 2008, she appeared in a *Vanity Fair* photo shoot, which for the first time, displayed her emerging womanhood in a professional setting. In 2010, she released her album *Can't Be Tamed,* which showcased a vastly different image from *Hannah Montana*. Finally, in December 2010, she smoked salvia from a bong, the first time the celebrity sphere had seen Cyrus using drugs. Though many individuals, including tween fans and Disney executives, were outraged at these events, *Hannah Montana*'s fan base increased, and the fourth and final season was the most-watched of the entire series[2] at an average of 5.7 million total

1 The term "celebrity sphere" as used in this paper first encompasses the lives of celebrities as portrayed by the media in dominant society. The increasing ubiquitous nature of newspapers, magazines, television, and the Internet has made celebrities' lives ever more present and trackable. Consequently, celebrities' actions have greater meaning and impact because individuals look to them as role models and sites of social behavior. Therefore, "celebrity sphere" will refer to a) the lives of celebrities as covered by the media, and b) those individuals who are affected by the news of these celebrities.

2 Average total viewers of *Hannah Montana*: Season 1 – 3.8 million, Season 2 – 4.8 million, Season 3 – 5.0 million ("Hannah Montana" Finale)

viewers and 2.1 million tween viewers ("Hannah Montana" Finale). This paradoxical observation led to the following research questions: Why was the fan base of *Hannah Montana* and Miley Cyrus not affected negatively by these three events, and how do fans continue to support their objects of affection despite their deviant actions? By examining Cyrus and her fans through literature on fan culture and deviance, I hope to answer this question, and in doing so contribute to a greater and more unique understanding of the discourse on fan culture.

Miley Cyrus: A Case Study

Leon Festinger opens *When Prophecy Fails*, with these statements:

> A man with a conviction is a hard man to change. Tell him you disagree and he turns away. Show him facts or figures and he questions your sources. Appeal to logic and he fails to see your point (Festinger 2011: 3).

Festinger studied this phenomenon of unwavering, unmoving beliefs in light of contradictory evidence, focusing on the "millennial or messianic movements" that centered on the prediction of future events (2011: 5). As each of these predictions failed, Festinger asserted that even in the face of this most glaring evidence, the groups maintained belief because of social support. This existence, Festinger found, was an "indispensable requirement for recovery from disconfirmation" because it served to reinforce the group's beliefs in spite of contradictory evidence and to develop a rationalization of the failed event (2011: 268). Participation in the group further allowed the individual to prepare and invest for the event together with others, thereby making dismissal of the failed event very difficult (2011: 5).

Research of this kind has often used cults and religious groups for case study comparisons and has not significantly been applied to celebrity studies. However, the characteristics of Cyrus's fan base reflect those of the religious and cult groups on a less extreme scale: devotion to and investment in Cyrus's celebrity, social support among believers or in this case fans, etc. Therefore Festinger's findings can be used as a guide to understand this paper's case study and the reactions of Cyrus's fan base.

Hannah Montana as a Disney Product

To wholly understand Cyrus in the celebrity sphere one must be familiar with Disney, the corporation behind her. In *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy*, Janet Wasko examined the cultural meanings the Disney brand had "deliberately manufactured" and spread to the entire world (2001: 1). Since the company's inception, Disney has created "family entertainment that is safe, wholesome, and entertaining." Their programming met "kids' expectations," and was "less problematic" than other television offerings that featured higher instances of violence and sexual content (2001: 2, 206). Through the production of these values through "recurring characters and familiar, repetitive themes," Disney, according to co-founder Walt Disney, and its real-life stars embodied an "image in the public mind" that "you don't have to explain" (2001: 221).

The responses that the celebrity sphere gave towards *Hannah Montana* mirrored almost exactly those used to describe Disney. *Hannah Montana*, too, was a safe and "wholesome" show with recurring characters and themes (Barnes 2008). Each episode featured a central cast—Miley Stewart/Hannah Montana, her father Robby Ray and brother Jackson, and her best friends Lilly and Oliver. A problem was introduced at the

beginning of every episode, and the characters worked together to solve the problem by the end. Episode one of the first season began with the character Miley Stewart performing as *Hannah Montana* at a concert. The problem arises when Lilly, hanging out at Miley's home the next day, excitedly asks Miley to go with her to the next Hannah Montana concert. This puts Miley in the quandary of having to reveal the secret she's kept even from her best friend—that Miley is in fact *Hannah Montana* (Poryes et al. 2006). After talking with her dad about the problem and almost revealing her alter ego to Lilly by accident, Miley decides to be honest and explains that she keeps *Hannah Montana* a secret because she wants to live a normal life where people love her for who she is and not her fame. The two then agree to keep the secret between them.

The viewers come away from the show learning that honesty with friends and loving people's true selves are important morals of life (Summers 2009: 15). These themes underlie virtually every episode in the show and reinforce the idea that Miley can navigate the difficulties of celebrity life because she tells the truth and has a supportive group of family and friends. The repetition of form—problem, consultation with a friend, and resolution with morals—along with "wholesome" values, allowed the Disney brand to be thoroughly instilled into the show.

What distinguished *Hannah Montana* from other shows was that Disney, according to Cyrus in her autobiography *Miles to Go*, deliberately named on-screen Miley after off-screen Cyrus to fuse the two personas (Cyrus and Liftin 2009: 168). Off-screen, Cyrus would give performances as *Hannah Montana*, and it was not until the release of her *Meet Miley Cyrus* CD in 2007 and her "Best of Both Worlds" tour a year after the premiere of the show that Cyrus performed as herself. This ambiguity

made Cyrus into a complex icon that intertwined the Disney values and morals from *Hannah Montana* with the self that existed outside of the show (2009: 168). This seemingly unified entity is the starting point of understanding the relationship between Cyrus and her fans in this paper.

Literature Review

Fan behavior such as that following *Hannah Montana* has been studied, dissected, and theorized for some time. In this paper, I focus on the interactions that lead to fans' ardent following of their objects of desire, which in turn provides the context for using deviant and justification theory to analyze the relationship between Cyrus and her fans.

Parasocial Interactions

In *Mass Communication and Para-social Interaction*, Donald Horton and Richard Wohl (2006) pointed to parasocial interactions, "a type of intimate, friend-like relationship that occurs between a mediated persona and a viewer," as the connection between fan and persona (Rubin and McHugh 1987: 280). Fans identify with certain characters and often equate those to the actors who portray them. As the fans continue to follow the personas, their ability to predict the persona's actions increases, and the fans understand the persona as a friend (Perse and Rubin 1989: 60). Sitcoms lend themselves especially to parasocial interactions because personas appear regularly and often have quirks that imitate face-to-face relationships (Auter and Palmgreen 2000: 81).

To maintain fan attention, personas must behave consistently. If the persona acts out of character, the fan may question his relation to the persona and possibly break the relationship. Martha Einerson, in

the essay *Fame, Fortune, and Failure*, (1998) studied the language of 19 girls between 8 and 12 years of age to describe the actions of the music group The New Kids on the Block (1998: 241). Similar to Cyrus, the New Kids constantly appeared in the media for "immoral behavior" such as "drinkin'" and "burning up a rug in a hotel" (1998: 250, 251). The girls did not want to engage with or support this behavior, and they discontinued their support for The New Kids because these actions were not in line with the group's "cool" image. The group did little to justify that this "immoral behavior" was in line with their image (1998: 248).

With the Internet prominently becoming the premier means of communication, actors have used social media to update their fans about their personal lives. Cyrus had a Twitter account where she chatted with fans, and posted episodes of The Miley & Mandy Show on YouTube, showcasing herself as a normal girl off-screen (Dyball 2009, Tan 2008). Since fans have to seek out these outlets on their own time, it is assumed that individuals using these outlets have strong parasocial relationships with their personas. This paper will focus on one particular parasocial outlet: the online fan forum.

Social Deviance

The term 'deviance' in a sociological context refers to a "collection of conditions, persons, or acts that society disvalues, finds offensive, or condemns" (Clinard and Meier 2008: 4). The deviance discourse revolves around criminality, but it will be used here to frame Cyrus's events and the comments fans and the media made in response to them.

Techniques of Neutralization

In the 1957 article *Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency*, Gresham Sykes and David Matza studied juvenile delinquents to comprehend the thought processes that led to delinquent behavior. The juveniles did not hold a set of "deviant values," but used five techniques that 'neutralized' their guilt in committing crimes: (1) the denial of responsibility—the crime was an accident "due to forces outside of the individual beyond his control," (2) the denial of injury—the crime did not hurt anyone, (3) the denial of the victim—the victim's injury was a "rightful retaliation or punishment," (4) the condemnation of the condemners—the condemners were "deviants in disguise," and finally (5) the appeal to higher loyalties—the crime was done to preserve the "demands of the smaller social" (1957: 667-669). These techniques provided juveniles with "definitions of the situation" that served as ready excuses in which to defend their actions (1957: 669). With Cyrus, her fans employed a similar process of neutralization in order to explain her deviant actions.

Accounts and Background Expectancies

Marvin Scott and Stanford Lyman, in their article *Accounts*, (1968) extended the techniques of the neutralization argument made by Sykes and Matza (1957) to that of accounts, which they defined as "a linguistic device employed whenever an action is subjected to valuative inquiry" in order to "explain unanticipated or untoward behavior" (1968: 46). Accounts were composed of Skyes' and Matza's justifications and excuses, "socially approved vocabularies for mitigation or relieving responsibility when conduct is questioned" (1968: 47, 51). Excuses denied responsibility of the actor, and Scott and Lyman named four forms: (1) the appeal to

accidents—the actor points to an "inefficiency of the body…to control all motor responses," (2) the appeal to defeasibility—the actor claimed that "certain information was not available to him, which, if it had been, would have altered his behavior," (3) the appeal to biological drives—the actor was driven by "the efficacy of the body and biological factors" to act, and (4) scapegoating—actors "slough off the burden of responsibility for their actions and shift it on to another" (1968: 47-50).

The vocabulary, or "background expenctancy," for these excuses developed uniquely within "cultures, subcultures, and groups" (1968: 52-53). Background expectancies allowed a group to similarly "interpret remarks as accounts," and the ability of accounts to be recognized depended on the individual's ability to align the account with the background expectancy (1968: 53). An example from Scott and Lyman:

> A wife may respond sympathetically to her depressed husband because his favorite football team lost a championship game, but such an account for depression will appear bizarre when offered to one's inquiring boss (1968: 53).

When accounts are honored, the "equilibrium is thereby restored in a relationship" and individuals are able to move forward (1968; 52). The concept of background expectancy suggests that Cyrus's actions were forgiven because they were made within recognized contexts—the process of growing up and the difficulty of child-star transitions—that made the deviant acts seem viable.

The inclusion of this literature was not to insinuate that Cyrus's actions were deviant; rather, Cyrus's off-screen actions are interpreted as deviant to her on-screen image. The writings of Sykes and Matza (1957), and Scott and Lyman (1968) provide mechanisms that not only deviants but also dominant society utilize to justify deviance, while the literature

on parasocial interactions explain how and why fans maintained admiration of Cyrus. Both will give a framework to analyze the words and actions of Cyrus's fans.

Methods

To study fans' reaction to Cyrus's actions in the celebrity sphere, a content analysis was conducted on conversations in an online fan forum – a virtual Miley Cyrus community. A number of researchers have used online forums in their studies (Baker and Watson 2003, Brem 2002, Dentrice and Williams 2010, Sanderson 2010). Online forums are digital communities where individuals of all demographics, and geography, can meet and interact with threads. To participate, one registers with a username and agrees to a Terms of Conditions enforced by moderators. Users' identities are protected by the username so they can post thoughts that they may otherwise feel uncomfortable expressing in public communities (Sanderson 2010, Brem 2002).

Miley Cyrus – My Most Wanted Forums was chosen for this paper because of its high frequency of new posts, free membership, number of active members, and evidence of community and social support, as referred to by Festinger[3]. My role was as an observer; I used the search function to locate relevant threads and read others' posts but did not contribute to the discussions. The threads chosen for the *Vanity Fair* photo shoot and the video of Cyrus smoking salvia were of the events specifically; the thread for the release of *Can't Be Tamed* was not about the release itself but on the opinions surrounding Cyrus's transition as

3 See the above section "Miley Cyrus: A Case Study"

manifested in the release of the album and the "Can't Be Tamed" music video. Table (1) is a description of each of these threads.

Table 1: Description of Threads Chosen for Analysis

Event	Name of Thread	Date Created	Date Ended	Total Number of Posts
The *Vanity Fair* Photo Shoot	Official Vanity Fair Photoshoot Thread	April 27, 2008, 07:33 PM	May 19, 2008, 10:13 PM	1,721
The Release of Can't Be Tamed	Your Opinions/ Thoughts on Miley's transitioning	June 25, 2010, 09:10 PM	June 28, 2010 06:27 PM	243
Video Release of Cyrus Smoking Salvia from a Bong	woops	December 10, 2010, 02:39 PM	December 22, 2010, 06:39 PM	439

The threads were analyzed through a content analysis as supported by grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). To form the preliminary categories, detailed notes were taken on the first 100 posts of each thread, and from these notes, nine broader categories emerged and are shown in Table (2)[4]. Each post was then reread carefully, and if the post had one or more mentions of any of the categories, a '1' was placed in that category[5]. The purpose of coding was to mark posts by theme, to track the number of times they arose in the thread, and to show which categories were most important to the thread posters.

4 The notes did not include "woops" because the thread was created after the categories were made.

5 Any posts that were irrelevant to the thread or referenced topics such as forum behavior and orderly conduct were given a '1' in the "N/A" category and excluded from the content analysis.

"Your Opinions/Thoughts on Miley's transitioning" was coded to completion while "Official Vanity Fair Photoshoot Thread" and "woops" threads were not due to their large size. For the two latter threads, the first 250 posts were coded to completion[6]. Every post past #250 was read, but only every 10th post was coded. Brief notes were taken on these posts after #250 in order to track the flow of the conversation. Standout statements were quoted and marked in a spreadsheet.

In addition to the content analysis of the forums, articles written by ten media sources covering the three events were coded with the same nine categories. These were included as a point of comparison to fans' responses to serve as dominant society's attitude towards Cyrus and because they were expected to report with more objectivity than the fans. The ten sources are listed in Table (3) (see Appendix A for descriptions).

These sources covered celebrity news with a range of opinions and bias. The 'high tier' news sources were chosen for their top circulation in 2010 ("US NEWSPAPERS"). All entertainment and celebrity magazines were included in the analysis given that back issues were accessible online. For the online gossip sites, two gossip sites were chosen: *PerezHilton.com* because it was referenced multiple times in the forum threads and often

6 This number was chosen since the shortest thread "Your Opinions/Thoughts on Miley's transitioning" was 243 posts, and the coding of the other threads should encompass the number of posts in this thread. In addition, at this post number in every thread, there was a clear indication of which themes were dominant.

presented Cyrus in a negative light[7], and *TMZ.com* because it was often cited as the first source of exclusive footage on Cyrus and had released the video of Cyrus smoking from a bong *(TMZ* 2010b).

Table 2: Categories of Fans' and Media's Responses

Category	Pattern Responses
Responsibility of other parties	• Cyrus was pushed into participating in these events by an outside party and used as a scapegoat • Responsible parties named included Disney, *Vanity Fair*, and Cyrus's assistants
Responsibility of Cyrus's parents	• Cyrus's parents ought to have protected her from these situations and supported her in hard times • Fans commented on and critiqued parents' parenting skills
Media has created and/or propelled a scandal	• The media blew the incidents out of proportion and did this to ruin Cyrus's image • The media compared Cyrus's narrative to other celebrities
Responsibility of Cyrus	• Others may have influenced Cyrus to make these decisions but the decision was her own • Cyrus acted on purpose to get attention
Cyrus is immature and naïve	• Cyrus was too young, naïve, and trusting of other parties to have made these serious decisions • Cyrus did not learn from her mistakes nor understood what it meant to be mature

7 On September 27. 2007, Perez Hilton called Cyrus "Britney 2.0" and compared Cyrus's belief in celibacy before marriage to Britney Spears' same words "back in the late '90s" (Hilton 2007a "We've Heard"). He then wrote, "We all know how she turned out!" insinuating that Cyrus would also break her celibacy promise in the near future as Spears' had done. Hilton then called Cyrus a "slut" in response to the photo of Cyrus sharing a piece of licorice with a girl friend on December 27, 2007 (Hilton 2007b "What Would Disney Say???). He continues to refer to her as a slut throughout his coverage of her.

Cyrus does not deserve the consequences	• Fans believed that Cyrus did not deserve the consequences for these events • Other terrible things were happening to Cyrus that were affecting her actions
More focus should be placed on Cyrus's music and acting	• Everyone should have focused more on Cyrus's music and acting • Cyrus should build her reputation by creating good music and movies
Effect of Cyrus's actions on fan support	• True fans support Cyrus through thick and thin, though some fans lost interest in Cyrus • Cyrus could not satisfy her older and younger fans at once
The transition of Cyrus's image	• Cyrus's physical dress and actions were incongruous to her character on *Hannah Montana* • Cyrus's transition was inevitable as a result of her increasing age and should be accepted

Table 3: Limited Description of Media Sources Chosen for Analysis

Name of Media Source	**Description**
The New York Times	High tier news source
The Wall Street Journal	High tier news source
People Magazine	Entertainment/Celebrity News Magazine
Entertainment Weekly	Entertainment/Celebrity News Magazine
Us Weekly	Celebrity Gossip Magazine
OK! Magazine	Gossip magazine
Star Magazine	Gossip tabloid
The National Enquirer	Gossip tabloid; not strict about sources
PerezHilton.com	Online Gossip Blog
TMZ.com	Online Gossip Blog

Data and Findings

The bearer of responsibility, a major component of the social deviance literature, was present in the discussions of each of the three events. This concept was used, along with the concepts outlined by Sykes and Matza (1957) and by Scott and Lyman (1968), as the framework in which to analyze the discourses and to identify the techniques, excuses, and expectancies that the fans and the media used to explain Cyrus's actions. The patterns and reappearances of certain techniques provided a guide to track and see the evolution of the conversation over time.

The Vanity Fair Photo Shoot: April 27, 2008

Prior to the *Vanity Fair* photo shoot, season 2 of *Hannah Montana* premiered in April 2007 to 2.9 million viewers and Cyrus released two CDs—*Hannah Montana* in October 2006 and *Hannah Montana 2/ Meet Miley Cyrus* in June 2007. Both albums debuted at number one (Associated Press 2007, Reynolds 2008, Greenblatt 2006, Sisario 2007). Tickets to Cyrus's "The Best of Both Worlds" tour sold out in minutes, and Disney released a 3-D version of the concert in theatres on February 1, 2008, which was number one for the weekend making over $29 million (*The New York Times* 2008).

Cyrus's fame did not pass without a few bumps. She was the subject of an online pregnancy hoax in July 2007[8] and two suggestive photos[9]

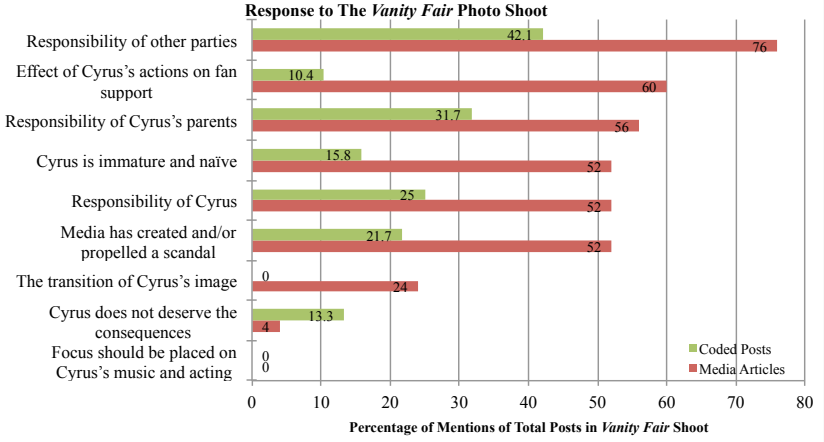
8 An article called *"Miley's Gross Habits"* published by the teen magazine *J-14* in July 2007 was doctored with information about the false pregnancy. It was then posted online in September of 2007. The article spread to blogs and chat boards, causing a controversy, but was quickly proven false by *J-14* (Olson 2007).

9 Photos not appearing in the text appear in Appendix C.

(Olson 2007, Hilton 2007b, *TMZ* 2008). The largest mishap occurred on April 27, 2008, when *Entertainment Tonight* leaked photographs[10] of a semi-nude Cyrus taken by photographer Annie Leibovitz for the June issue of *Vanity Fair* (*The Wall Street Journal* 2008).

Three themes highlighted the concerns of the media and the fans (See Figure 1 for category frequencies): (a) responsibility of other parties (media: 19 mentions (*n*) out of 25 articles (76.0%); fan: *n* = 101, 42.1% of 240 coded posts[11]), (b) responsibility of Cyrus's parents (media: *n* = 14, 56%; fan: *n* = 76, 31.7%), and (c) the effect of Cyrus's actions on fan support (media: *n* = 15, 60.0%; fan: *n* = 25, 10.4%)[12].

Figure 1: Percentage of Nine Categories in the Media Articles and Thread Posts in Response to The *Vanity Fair* Photo Shoot



NOTE: Percentages add up to greater than 100 because some items contain multiple category mentions

10 The images discussed by the data can be found easily through an internet search.

11 Posts coded with the category 'N/A,' coded such because their text was irrelevant to any categories, were removed from the coded posts number.

12 Although this category was not in the top three most coded, its responses not only showed the depth of posters' relationships with Cyrus but also served as a counter to the fans' responses covered in the media.

Responsibility of Other Parties

The Disney Channel, apparently unaware of the details of the photo shoot, accused *Vanity Fair*, arguing "Unfortunately, as the article suggests, a situation was created to deliberately manipulate a 15-year-old in order to sell magazines"[13] (mentioned in 47.4% of media articles coded as this category). Leibovitz asserted it was not her fault:

> Miley and I looked at the fashion photographs together and we discussed the picture in that context before we shot it…I'm sorry that my portrait of Miley has been misinterpreted[14] (26.3%).

Each party exhibited "denials of responsibility" and placed blame onto other parties.

The fans on the fan forum, here on referred to as "posters," were bewildered by Disney's involvement, or lack thereof, in the photo shoot (mentioned in 24.8% of fan posts coded as this category). Disney was known to meticulously manage its professional image, and posters were suspicious to see "the biggest star" of the most watched show in the channel's 23-year lifespan participate in a shoot of which Disney claimed it had no knowledge (*Miley Cyrus* 2008 post number 38, Summers 2009: 17). Posters further believed that *Vanity Fair* deceived Cyrus to do the shoot (45.5%); Cyrus herself said "you can't say no to Annie."[15] Posters were quick to defend Cyrus's actions by subscribing to the background

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13 Quotation is printed in: *The New York Times, People Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, Us Weekly, OK! Magazine, Star Magazine, PerezHilton.com, TMZ.com. See Appendix B for details on articles cited.*

14 *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, People Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, Star Magazine, PerezHilton.com, TMZ.com*

15 *The New York Times, Entertainment Weekly, OK! Magazine, The National Enquirer, Star Magazine*

expectancy that the adult parties victimized Cyrus. The event was a "denial of responsibility:" Cyrus may have participated in the shoot but she was not at fault because *Vanity Fair* and Disney forced her to do the shoot.

Responsibility of Cyrus's Parents

Vanity Fair then turned to the parents, affirming they "were on set all day…and thought [the semi-nude shot] was a beautiful and natural portrait of Miley"[16] (mentioned in 78.6% of media articles coded as this category). Cyrus's parents, who left prior to the semi-nude shoot, stated they "would never have sanctioned" [17] it had they known it was to happen (14.3%). *Vanity Fair* continued their "denial of responsibility" while Cyrus's parents "appealed to defeasibility," for they were unaware of the details of the event.

Some posters mitigated Cyrus's parents' responsibility. The parents left the shoot because they saw the "photo shoot was doing ok" and assumed the rest of the photo shoot would be similarly appropriate (mentioned in 18.4% of fan posts coded as this category) (*Miley Cyrus* 2008 post number 82). Leibovitz, therefore, must have taken advantage of the parents' absence to do the semi-nude shoot. However, others were incredulous the parents left Cyrus "alone with a photographer known for convincing stars to take their clothes off" and believed the event was "partially their fault" (28.9%, 25.0%) (post numbers 188, 783). These posters held Cyrus's parents liable while the former gave the parents an "appeal to

16 *The New York Times, People Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, Us Weekly, OK! Magazine, The National Enquirer, Star Magazine, PerezHilton.com, TMZ.com*

17 *People Magazine, OK! Magazine*

defeasibility" because they were not aware of the semi-nude shoot.

Effect of Cyrus's Actions on Fan Support

The media turned their attention to the celebrity sphere. *Hannah Montana* had been "championed as one of the few entertainment sanctuaries for children" such that parents " invested in [Cyrus] a godliness," but the event made Cyrus's fans and their parents "lose that faith"[18] (mentioned in 40.0% of media articles coded as this category) (Barnes 2008, Armstrong 2008). Michele Combs of the Christian Coalition said,

> Disney should reprimand her. Miley should say it was a mistake… Kids look up to her…She was the one person out there who everyone seemed to trust…If she's gonna go out there and represent wholesome values, she needs to be more accountable for her actions (Hilton 2008).

Cyrus's participation in the shoot affected her status as a role model and these individuals saw her responsible and urged her to think about the effect of her actions on her fans.

Some individuals were not as offended by Cyrus's actions (13.3%). One fan said the semi-nude photo was "supposed to be arty. And *Vanity Fair*'s not supposed to be aimed in children's direction" (Dominus 2008). In *The Wall Street Journal*, Marisa Meltzer wrote girls "learn more from flawed idols than…squeaky-clean ones. Ms. Cyrus's fumbles…are universal to the teen experience" (Melzer 2009). Cyrus's actions were a "denial of injury;" she was responsible for her actions but their consequences did not harm others.

In the end, Cyrus apologized for the semi-nude shoot: "I never intended for any of this to happen and I apologize to my fans who I care

18 Michele Combs, spokesperson of the Christian Coalition

so deeply about."[19] A portion of posters were assuaged by her apology (mentioned in 17% of fan posts coded as "Responsibility of Cyrus"[20]). They "knew Miley would apologize" and would come out "with grace and dignity" (*Miley Cyrus* 2008 post numbers 59, 868). Others were greatly affected by the actions and wondered if they "like her the way I used to like her" (mentioned in 28.0% of fan posts coded as this category), (post numbers 200, 603). Despite their disagreement, in light of the apology, posters rallied each other to "stick with [Cyrus]" because the only way for Cyrus to recover was for her fans to be "behind her" (64.0%), whereas the media overall was more accusatory of Cyrus and her actions' negative effect on her audience (post numbers 51, 48).

The Release of Can't Be Tamed: May 10, 2010, through October 10, 2010

*Hannah Montana v*iewership decreased 24% after the *Vanity Fair* event but rose to pre-shoot numbers of 4.6 million by August 8 (*NationalEnquirer.com* 2008, Reynolds 2008). Cyrus went on to release three CDs—*Breakout* in July 2008, *Hannah Montana 3* in June 2009, and *The Time of Our Lives* in August 2009. She also starred in three movies—*Bolt* in November 2008, *Hannah Montana: The Movie* in April

19 *Entertainment Weekly, Us Weekly, OK! Magazine, The National Enquirer, Star Magazine, PerezHilton.com*

20 Once again, this comment originally coded in "Responsibility of Cyrus" overlapped with those coded in "Effect of Cyrus's actions on fan support" and is analyzed here because it showcases posters' support and affirmation of Cyrus's personality that got fans to become fans of hers in the first place. "Responsibility of Cyrus" was mentioned in 25% of total fan posts.

2009, which garnered $17.3 million on opening day[21], and *The Last Song* in March 2010. Finally, she also released her autobiography *Miles to Go* in March 2009 (Sisario 2008, Caulfield 2009, Sisario 2009, Smith 2009, Barnes 2009, Zeitchik 2010, Tan 2009). Season 3 of *Hannah Montana* premiered in November 2008 to 5.5 million viewers and featured a new opening sequence with an older Cyrus (*Multichannel News* 2008).

Cyrus's off-screen image aggressively changed in the years since the photo shoot, and the release of her third studio album *Can't Be Tamed* solidified her new, more sexual image (Stack 2009). The media and fans were concerned about (a) the transition of Cyrus's image (media: n = 21, 75.0% of 28 articles; fan: n = 38, 45.2% of 84 coded posts), (b) the responsibility of Cyrus (media: n = 19, 67.9%) and that (c) more focus should be placed on Cyrus's music and acting (fan: n = 40, 47.6%). Figure (2) lists the frequency of categories.

The Transition of Cyrus's Image

No longer the "sweet, innocent *Hannah Montana*" (Little 2010), Cyrus donned "fetish gear" in her "racy" music video "Can't Be Tamed" (mentioned in 85.7% of media articles coded as this category)[22]. A majority of mothers and their daughters interviewed in *The New York Times* on July 9, 2010, disliked her new image (19.0%). Cyrus "is too old for herself" (Holson 2010). The Parents Television Council took to an extreme level:

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21 *Hannah Montana: The Movie* was the best showed film in April of Disney's history and its $17.3 million in ticket sales on opening day broke the record for the first day sales for a G-rated movie (Barnes 2009).

22 *The New York Times, People Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, Us Weekly, OK! Magazine,*

> It is unfortunate that she would participate in such a sexualized video like this one. It sends messages to her fan base that are diametrically opposed to everything she has done up to (Hilton 2010, *TMZ* 2010a).

Cyrus's image was a conscious choice, and parents and tweens felt alienated by it.

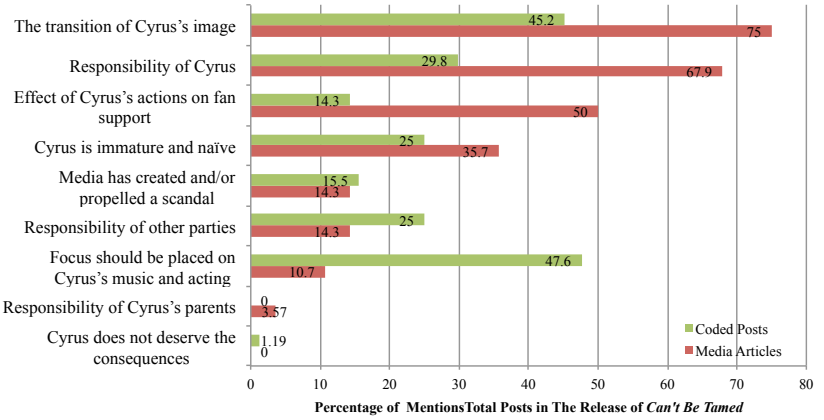
Other mothers quoted in *The New York Times* offered the background expectancy that the image was a result of Cyrus's increasing age and "the raging hormones. She is testing the limits of the box and what is appropriate" (38.1%) (Holson 2010). Still, Cyrus appeared "stumped as to the best way" to navigate her new image (Caramanica 2010).

Cyrus's album included four "vocal strategies" and was filled with a mishmash of "phenomenal dance-pop songs but also stilted ballads and high-energy screamers" (Caramanica 2010). Despite her lack of clarity, Cyrus's actions made an "appeal to biological drives" to express her newfound sexuality.

Posters were outwardly vocal about Cyrus's new image: "I don't mind shorts or leotards, but only if it covers everything" (mentioned in 39.5% of fan posts coded as this category) (*Miley Cyrus* 2010b post number 8). Some theorized the image was in response to Disney (mentioned in 66.7% of fan posts coded as "Responsibility of other parties"[23]). "People already have the idea of the Disney star in their mind" and Cyrus "needed to shock" so they would "see the difference between reality and fiction"

23 This connection to Disney was coded originally in "Responsibility of other parties" and overlapped with posts in "The transition of Cyrus's image." Its analysis was included because it unveiled an interesting motive to explain Cyrus's drastic image change in response to an image into which Disney had molded her. "Responsibility of other parties" is 25% of fan posts.

Figure 2: Percentage of Nine Categories in the Media Articles and Thread Posts in Response to The Release of *Can't Be Tamed*



NOTE: Percentages add up to greater than 100 because some items contain multiple category mentions

(post numbers 29, 36). Cyrus was "appealing to her higher loyalties" to reach a larger audience and to break from Disney.

Still, some posters were unsure of her image's effectiveness. Rather than putting her entire efforts in gaining an older audience, Cyrus was "turning [them] off" because she was simultaneously trying to maintain her younger *Hannah Montana* fans, who were already alienated by her new image (23.7%) (post number 43). Cyrus was attempting to satisfy too diverse of an audience, which in the end was "never going to work" (post number 202).

Responsibility of Cyrus

Although this transition was surprising to the media and her audience, Cyrus had stated in interviews that she had wanted the new image for some time. In *Parade Magazine* on March 21, 2010, she said, "I can't breathe looking like [Hannah Montana] anymore…I'm claustrophobic" (*US Weekly* 2010a). If she continued to stay with *Hannah Montana* she

would forever be catering to a tween audience replenished every few years rather than "gracefully" growing with her original now-teenage Disney audience (Hamm 2009)[24].

Cyrus saw her new image as "a new chapter of my life." Achieving this goal meant making an "album where it's completely me" and dressing as she wished (mentioned in 47.4% of media articles coded as this category) (Holson 2010, Schlow 2010):

> I'm not trying to be 'slutty'…what I'm trying to do is to make a point with my record and look consistent, in the way my record sounds and the way I dress… It's me now, presently.[25]

She expressed an "appeal to biological drives" and an "appeal to higher loyalties": she changed her image because her body was changing and she wanted to gain an older, sustainable audience that would help her establish an entertainment career as an adult.

More Focus Should Be Placed on Cyrus's Music and Acting

Posters believed Cyrus's new image and scandals in the media overshadowed Cyrus's music and acting (mentioned in 67.5% of fan posts coded as this category). Posters saw music and acting as a way to gain respect from older audiences, and if she focused her energy on this, Cyrus would have a better chance of being judged on the quality of her work instead of her appearances in tabloids. (music: 12.5%, acting: 20%).

The media and posters were both initially stunned by Cyrus's new appearance in the "Can't Be Tamed" music video. The media questioned the effect of Cyrus's appearance as appropriate for a role model, while the

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24 *People Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, Us Weekly, OK! Magazine*
25 *Us Weekly, OK! Magazine, The National Enquirer, PerezHilton.com*

posters were less quick to jump to conclusions. Both justified this break by "appealing to higher loyalties;" she transitioned to break from the Disney brand, and to create music and films that were true to her new self. Cyrus was now fully in charge of creating her new self.

Video Release of Cyrus Smoking Salvia from a Bong: December 10, 2010

While the fourth and final season of *Hannah Montana* premiered in July 2010 to 5.7 million viewers, Cyrus continued to embody her new image by appearing and performing in cut-up and titillating outfits (Hammel 2010, Gorman 2010). On December 10, 2010, a video was released of Cyrus smoking the hallucinogenic drug salvia. The media and fans were concerned with (a) the responsibility of Cyrus (media: n = 18, 75.0% of 24 articles; fans: n = 58, 34.9% of 166 coded posts), (b) Cyrus is immature and naïve (media: n = 14, 58.3%), and (c) the responsibility of other parties (fans: n = 78, 47.0%). Figure (3) provides the category frequencies.

Responsibility of Cyrus

Members of the celebrity sphere saw this event as a cry for attention (mentioned in 16.7% of media articles coded as this category). *Celebrity Rehab* host Dr. Drew told *Access Hollywood* that Cyrus was "acting out" because her father was filing for divorce (Eggenberger 2010). Child star Melissa Gilbert declared that Cyrus "wanted to get caught" because Cyrus "talks and looks directly at the camera" in the video[26] (*NationalEnquirer.com* 2010). Cyrus's friends responded that Cyrus "doesn't think it was a big deal…She says that she's young and having fun"[27] (20.8%). The media

26 *The Wall Street Journal, The National Enquirer, Star Magazine*
27 *OK! Magazine, PerezHilton.com, TMZ.com*

held Cyrus firmly responsible, and Cyrus "denied injury" to anyone but herself. On February 9, 2011, in a *Marie Claire* interview Cyrus admitted she "made a mistake" in smoking salvia.[28] Although "other people her age smoke a lot more than salvia," those people were "not Miley Cyrus…So for me it was a bad decision"[29] (Nudd 2011). Cyrus took full responsibility after realizing her actions were not as injury-free as she had thought.

Posters lamented the loss of something seemingly sacred (mentioned in 47.8% of fan posts coded as "Cyrus is immature and naïve"[30]). Some posters called her "dumb" and insisted she needed to "check herself into rehab" because it would be "the only way to save her life" (*Miley Cyrus* 2010a post numbers 40, 236, 10). These posters knew Cyrus chose to smoke salvia (mentioned in 53.4% of fan posts coded as this category). One poster said:

> I just hate how everywhere I look people are trying to point the finger and blame other people…Rather than acting in a dignified way, she's just being completely irresponsible. (post number 139).

Posters wanted Cyrus to learn from this experience, hoping that she felt "embarrassment" and "shame" (19.0%) (post number 184). They were

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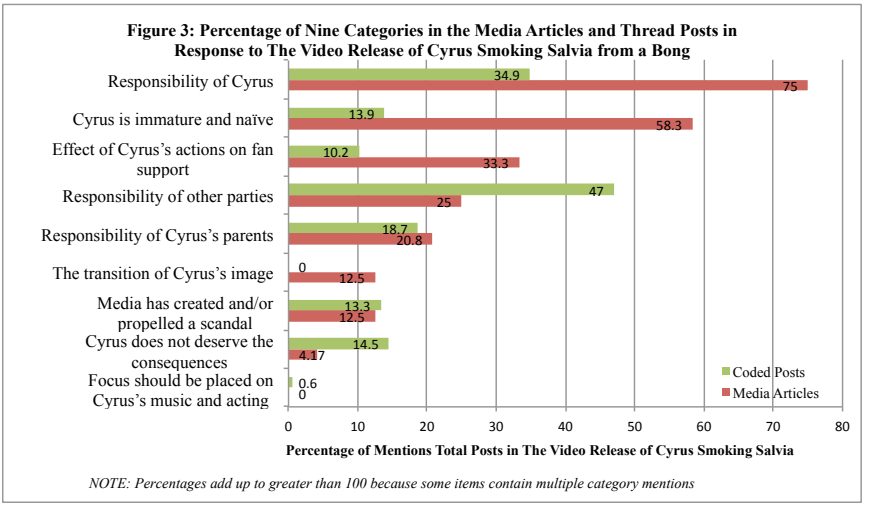
28 *PerezHilton.com, TMZ.com*

29 *People Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, Us Weekly, Star Magazine, OK! Magazine, PerezHilton.com, TMZ.com*

30 The category "Cyrus is immature and naïve" can be seen as a subset of the category "Responsibility of Cyrus," but it is different because it explains or excuses Cyrus's actions as a result of features of her personality rather than her individual free will. This comment was included in the analysis despite its separate category because it represents an anxiety that posters have had of Cyrus since the *Vanity Fair* photo shoot that can no longer be exonerated by her young age, which was what happened in the *Vanity Fair* photo shoot event, but now works against her because of her older age of 18. "Cyrus is immature and naïve" was 13.9% of fan posts.



significantly more critical of her smoking salvia than of her previous deviant acts, but still urged her to learn from her mistakes.

Cyrus is Immature and Naïve

The media read the event in the context of other celebrities' lives. *The National Enquirer* and *TMZ.com* compared Cyrus to Lindsay Lohan, a former Disney star who was notorious for her appearances at drug rehabilitation facilities, calling Cyrus a "Lindsay-in-training" (*TMZ* 2010b). Billy Ray, Cyrus's father, conceded over Twitter: "Im so sad [sic]. There is much beyond my control right now"[31] (mentioned in 42.9% of media articles coded as this category). The media and Billy Ray saw Cyrus "not acting like an adult" nor being responsible for her actions (71.4%) (*US Weekly* 2010b). They chose to read her actions against the background

31 *People Magazine, Entertainment Weekly, Us Weekly, OK! Magazine, Star Magazine, PerezHilton.com, TMZ.com*

expectancy of 'child-star-gone-wrong' and growing up in the public light.

Responsibility of Other Parties

In spite of most posters holding Cyrus responsible for smoking salvia, a portion held steadfast to her innocence, blaming Anna Oliver, a friend and assistant of Cyrus, for filming the video and forcing Cyrus to smoke salvia (mentioned in 44.9% of fan posts coded as this category). This act was not something that "Miley would do if she wasn't friends with Anna" and, these posters urged Cyrus to "get better friends" because she was currently hanging out "with people who sell her out" (39.7%) (*Miley Cyrus* 2010a post numbers 3, 50, 11). Posters deflected blame from Cyrus by stating a "denial of responsibility" and asserted that if Cyrus had 'better' friends and a proper support system in her life, she would less likely be seen in the celebrity sphere doing drugs or other hurtful actions of that nature.

The media used this event as an opportunity to ridicule Cyrus and compare her to other celebrities who also suffered difficulties during the transition between youth and adult celebrity. The posters collectively agreed that the majority of the blame was Cyrus's, but they were more compassionate toward her situation and urged her to reform while she had the opportunity.

Discussion and Conclusion

In order to continue their fandom of Cyrus, posters collectively drew within their online community a narrative of deviance and justification to reconcile the consequences of Cyrus's actions, similar to how Festinger had outlined in his studies of messianic movements. Posters' reactions to each of the three events were distinct with different

themes arising per event, but two anxieties permeated across events. First, posters continued to discuss Cyrus's link to Disney as a backdrop to the three events. The celebrity sphere at each respective event criticized Cyrus for actions that teenagers at Cyrus's age were potentially already doing. Some teenagers at 15 and 17 express their sexuality through clothes and photos, and some at 18 experiment with drugs. Cyrus appeared in tabloids for these actions because they conflicted with her Disney and *Hannah Montana* image.

The media then further propagated the posters' anxiety by comparing Cyrus's actions to the shortcomings of Lohan and Spears in order to warn audiences of a similar fate for Cyrus. Some posters strongly disliked these comparisons because they believed that Cyrus's personality, her family, and her friends would never allow her down that road (4.58% *Miley Cyrus* 2008). This perceived misrepresentation of Cyrus by the media frustrated posters, made them skeptical of the media, and fueled their defense of Cyrus. To make sense of the events then, posters used deviance justification techniques to evaluate Cyrus by their own conceptions of her.

The second anxiety was posters' hesitation to assign responsibility to Cyrus. Few saw Cyrus as responsible for the *Vanity Fair* event, but regarding her new image in *Can't Be Tamed*, posters were divided. By the salvia event, posters were exhausted and used fewer deviance techniques to neutralize Cyrus's responsibility. A group of posters however found peace between assigning blame to Cyrus and remaining fans. These posters were themselves older and saw Cyrus's actions as those they themselves might have done in her situation. They had lived life, made mistakes, and had been blamed for them as Cyrus had been. Perhaps their life experience had given them perspective and sympathy to Cyrus's actions: yes, she

was responsible for changing her image and smoking salvia, but the acts should not be seen as deviant because Cyrus was clearly growing older and faster than her character on *Hannah Montana*. This identification with her older image by older fans could explain why Cyrus continued to succeed in the entertainment industry in spite of the overwhelming media coverage of her deviant actions. These older fans saw Cyrus as a contemporary going through similar trials and tribulations as themselves, making Cyrus relatable to them. Most importantly, her actions separated Cyrus from Disney and *Hannah Montana*, which older fans saw as a show completely irrelevant and juvenile for them.

The research objective of this project was to understand why despite these deviating events—the *Vanity Fair* photo shoot, the release of *Can't Be Tamed*, and Cyrus smoking salvia—Cyrus's fan base remained strong. The paper applied deviance theories by Sykes and Matza (1957), and Scott and Lyman (1968) to the written reactions of the *Miley Cyrus – My Most Wanted Forums* fans and of the media, and found that fans and the media use justification techniques to reconcile their support of Cyrus and neutralize her responsibility in these three events.

The appliance of social deviance literature on the analysis of celebrity actions has not been deeply developed, and these following topics could be explored to expand this area. A comparison of Cyrus to other child-to-adult celebrity transitions, such as Shirley Temple, Elizabeth Taylor, and Molly Ringwald, could offer perspectives on Cyrus's transition and possibly provide prognoses of Cyrus's career. Cyrus could be compared to other Disney Channel stars, such as the aforementioned Spears and Lohan; Raven Simone and Hilary Duff, immediate predecessors of Cyrus; and Selena Gomez and Demi Lovato, contemporaries following

Cyrus, to examine parallels in career and personalities from the stance of Disney values.

The use of deviance analysis could additionally be applied to other individuals in society. One of the few other professions that arguably receives as much public exposure as celebrities is the politician. Politicians are evaluated on their work and appearances, and some appear in tabloids as subjects of spoken gaffes or scandals. Like Cyrus, despite these seemingly career-crushing events, some politicians continue to be ardently supported by their fans. Examples include Tea Party champion Sarah Palin, who was mercilessly ridiculed most notably on *Saturday Night Live* during the 2008 presidential campaign, and former Democrat President Bill Clinton, who faced the possibility of impeachment for his sexual involvement with Monica Lewinsky.

In conjunction with the findings of Festinger, Chris Mooney (2011), in his essay titled *Made-up Minds*, suggested this occurs as a result of emotional rationalization. When individuals hear evidence that aligns with their constructed narrative of the politician, they experience what psychologist Jonathan Haidt called a "'confirmation bias,' in which we give greater heed to evidence and arguments that bolster our beliefs." Meanwhile, counter evidence leads to a "'disconfirmation bias,' in which we expend disproportionate energy trying to refute views and arguments that we find uncongenial." Emotion changes rationalization and "skews our thoughts and color what we consider our most dispassionate and logical conclusions" (Mooney 2011).

However, with the greater number of celebrities and politicians that appear to have no more means for salvation, such as John Edwards—who is on trial for accepting illegal contributions during his 2004 vice-

presidential bid (Severson 2012), and Charlie Sheen, whose derogatory remarks about the sitcom *Two and a Half Men* in which he starred led to his firing from the show and a public media breakdown (Carter 2011)—more research could be conducted to identify if there is a tipping point of the number or severity of deviant actions after which fans will no longer support these individuals. These facets could be explored with deviance theories to further explain fans' beliefs towards Cyrus but also to apply it to areas of society outside of criminality, such as celebrities and politicians.

Finally, a deeper textual analysis of *Hannah Montana* could be examined to understand fans' relationship with Cyrus. Throughout *Hannah Montana*, there were several episodes that echoed and foreshadowed the events and themes discussed in this paper.[32] Disney framed these 'mirror' episodes such that each of the events was presented as the episode's problem. By the end of each episode, Miley overcame this problem by acting true to herself and according to the show's morals. The writers may have intentionally created these mirror episodes to give audiences an innocuous view of the events that they believed Cyrus's off-screen persona would inevitably experience. As a result, when Cyrus went through each

32 The *Vanity Fair* photo shoot: Season 1, Episode 13 "You're So Vain, You Probably Think This Zit Is About You" (Greenwald 2006)
Can't Be Tamed release: Season 2, Episode 26 "Yet Another Side of Me" (Green et al. 2008), Season 4 Episode 8 "Hannah's Gonna Get This" (Meyer and Jatho 2010)
The video of Cyrus smoking salvia: Season 3, Episode 1 "He Ain't a Hottie, He's My Brother" (Meyer 2008)
About being an influential role model: Season 3, Episode 8 "Welcome to the Bungle" (Peterman 2009)
About reacting to media criticism: Season 4, Episode 11 "Kiss It All Goodbye" (Demopoulos and Evans 2010)

of these events in the celebrity sphere, the fans knew how to react because *Hannah Montana* had preemptively taught them how to respond. Fans, subsequently, were more supportive and defensive of Cyrus's actions as a result of *Hannah Montana*'s deviant event anticipation.

Had Cyrus's character on *Hannah Montana* transitioned simultaneously with Cyrus's off-screen, it is possible that the tension between her on- and off-screen personae would not have manifested in the same way. Instead, Cyrus's transition into adulthood was fraught with scandal and instances of fan mutiny. Such is often the inevitable fate of a young star building a career beyond the child-geared productions that catapulted her into fame. What one can take away from studying Cyrus's five years of transition is that fans want to hold onto their ideals of their personas and will justify acts of deviance against those ideals for as long as they can. The findings of this paper have shown that the neutralization of deviance is not restricted to criminality but can be applied to fan culture and possibly to the celebrity sphere and the ordinary realm of dominant society. In the end, the fans and the media understood that Cyrus broke out of the Disney story arc in order to become the person she desired to be, not something others were molding her to be. This was a narrative of blame, responsibility, and neutralization that revealed the surprising ways fans continue to remain fans and showed that their actions are anchored in the social processes of dominant society.

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"People Like Us Don't Go There": Local Culture and College Aspirations in Rural Nebraska

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Abstract

The best students from America's rural high schools are underrepresented at the nation's elite colleges. The latest studies have shown that rural students are as much as 2.5 times less likely to enroll in one of the *U.S. News and World Report's* top-ranked institutions versus non-ranked universities. Some point to a selection effect in this underrepresentation, others to the existing literature on college-going behavior among underrepresented groups, but the perspectives of rural students themselves have remained unexamined. Using in-depth interviews, this project shows the unique perspective of these students on elite education and suggests how social networks, habitus, and local culture in rural areas may be affecting top rural student college applications to the most selective universities in America.

Keywords: rural; selective, elite colleges; high school; Bourdieu; habitus; vocationalism

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The best students from America's rural high schools are underrepresented at the nation's elite colleges. In their 2010 conference paper that is now pending publication, Matthew Holsapple and Julie Posselt have shown that "holding constant academic achievement and expectations, socioeconomic traits, and financial aid factors, rural students are as much as 2.5 times *less likely* to enroll in one of the *U.S. News and World Report's* top-ranked institutions compared to non-ranked four-year

institutions" (Holsapple and Posselt 2010:2). These findings reveal perhaps why rural students seem to be underrepresented at more selective schools, but is the real problem that these students chose to not enroll, or is there something keeping them from even applying?

With great inequality manifest in so many parts of American education, why is the rural-urban disparity in applications to elite universities important to understand and address? The answer is partly a question of the equality of opportunity for the best and the brightest. The economic return that students see on their investment in college education varies greatly and is much higher for students from top-ranked universities. It has been found that students who attend more selective institutions for college are usually able to earn back their investment (tuition costs, etc.) multiple times over during their lifetimes (Hoxby 2001: 17). It has even been found that some students who are offered a full scholarship to a lower ranked college could maximize their return on investment by turning down such scholarships and attending a more highly ranked college (2001:17), a dilemma which rural students face particularly because of the great number of lower-ranked local state universities which can provide such scholarships. These inequalities of educational opportunity are most intense for students who come from less selective educational backgrounds and who might benefit most from economic and social mobility (Trow in Brint 2002). Applying to a selective college is the first step towards attempting to claim an undeniable economic advantage given to those who attend more selective institutions – yet this is precisely the step that many bright rural students forego. While critics would attribute differences in economic returns to a selection effect (Dale and Krueger 1999:30), the fact remains that some students apply to

more selective institutions and some do not. There is inequality in access to higher education.

This inequality is not simply a problem for specific individuals. It also casts suspicion on the claims of top-ranked universities to represent the greatest diversity in perspectives. If there is a lack of representation of the not insubstantial portion of the population that is rural America, how could such universities possibly claim to be adequately preparing the future leaders of the world? The goal of diversity is to expose students to others who are very different from themselves to develop awareness and sensitivity to cultures different from their own. In the era of 'culture wars' and 'red states and blue states' this is surely an important task of leading educational institutions. Finally there is also the question of the most efficient matching of talent to opportunity. This issue connects to the economic growth of the country, the efficient delivery of services and the generation of a culture of innovation.

Literature Review

The literature points to many reasons why students from rural locations don't apply to the nation's elite colleges. Research suggests that the economic barriers rural students face are one of the predominant concerns when looking at colleges. Roscigno and Crowley (2001) find that the returns on educational investment can be affected by a student's background, specifically that, "some of the educational returns to family and school investments are themselves depressed in rural places… specifically the lower return to human capital attributes (including educational credentials) in rural areas" (2001:289). These depressed educational returns offer less incentive for rural students to attend a

selective institution because the cost seems much greater than the possible returns on such an education. There is also misperception of the economic benefits of attending a more highly ranked college. If the costs of and returns to a selective education are not understood, as is the case for some economically disadvantaged parents through lack of the social networks that access such information, then rational choices are not made due to imperfect information (Grodsky and Jones 2007). This may be due to geographical isolation or lack of social networks to selective colleges.

Family background could also affect students' educational aspirations as it has been shown that students internalize the educational aspirations that are held by those around them, mainly parents, teachers and peers (Morgan 1998:1529). Another important factor is parents' educational achievement. It has been shown that students were 3.6 times more likely to participate in some post-secondary education if their parents had a bachelor's degree or more compared with students whose parents had some college or less (Byun et al. 2010:18). Effects of family background are also seen in the bond between youth and parents; it has been seen that rural youth who have a stronger bond with their parents experience conflict in the college decision because it often means leaving behind their home community (Demi et al. 2010:16). While family background explanations may be part the question at hand, they point to an over-arching cultural common denominator that may itself be affecting college application as a greater phenomenon.

The role of proximity in college-application decisions also cannot be underestimated. Some studies have found that students from rural areas, as opposed to their urban counterparts, are more likely to be conflicted about moving away from their home because of the perceived importance

of remaining close to family (Garasky 2002:413). Evidence of this conflict can be seen in local media in small towns as well. An example from Walton Central School in the rural town of Walton, New York suggests, "[a student] finds that the majority of students want to stay within three to five hours of home…[those] who deviate and go to school farther away are usually committed to choosing schools based on their major" (Breakey 2005). It has also been seen that college proximity may affect students' dispositions towards going to college in general, though it should be noted that there is a "convenience mechanism," according to Ruth Lopez Turley (2009) in her study on the effect that proximity has on local high schools students. There is a wide range of college proximity depending on where students live in the United States, not to mention different kinds of universities. She finds that "colleges in proximity seem to increase the odds of applying to college because they make the transition to college logistically, financially, and emotionally easier" (Turley 2009:141). Students seem more likely to apply to universities that are closer just because they are closer, to some extent. While these findings offer no perspective on selective versus nonselective applications, Turley has found that the proximity of colleges does shape the culture of an area, normalizing the idea of college. Might the proximity of selective institutions have a similar effect on local culture? An indication of possible effects may be seen in the aspirations of local students.

A central question in this dilemma of college choice and educational inequality is whether or not the educational aspirations of students from rural and urban backgrounds are the same. Rural high school students have been found to have the same sort of educational aspirations as their urban counterparts (Apostal and Bilden 1991:159), and they also place a similar value on formal education (Lowe and Pinhey 1980:330). In fact,

when controlling for background factors such as socioeconomic and demographic differences, no disparity is found in rural versus non-rural postsecondary enrollment and attainment (Byunet al. 2010:20). Though there is not a marked difference in the aspirations of rural and urban students as far as going to college, the literature thus far does not offer perspective on the observable differences in *where* they aspire to ago.

One explanation on the difference of these students' aspirations is a more general attitude toward higher education that has become prevalent in the late 20th century, the idea of vocationalism (Karabell 1998; see Grubb and Lazerson 2005; Williams 1985). This idea posits that one's degree or line of study should be directly related to or in specific preparation for a particular career or post-college occupation, and it has transformed the philosophy of higher education for American culture as well as many colleges and universities. Susan Heath (1997) defines vocationalism as a viewpoint that education should be about preparing young people for their "post-school lives," though she acknowledges that this is really talking about occupational preparation (Heath 1997:6). In his article, "Rise of the Practical Arts," Steven Brint observes that, "over the last three decades, the fast-growing fields have been occupational in virtually every case…only four liberal arts fields grew relative to other fields" (Brint 2002:4).

All this literature looks promising. It offers many clues, but in fact gaps are present in our understanding of how rural students choose where to apply to college. Economic barriers and proximity both play a role in this decision, but these may be understood as smaller parts of other factors. Family background plays a significant role, but are family background factors the reason for continued educational inequality?

There is no evidence of lower educational aspirations in rural students, but these students are applying to lower-ranked universities than their urban counterparts, motivated by the central concern of what kind of job they will be able to get after college. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (1990), which is the unique set of ideas about what is considered possible or reasonable particular to a place, helps to answer the questions that are not addressed by previous explanations. The *habitus* of a rural student may be shaped by the college experiences of those to whom students are socially connected and whom they identify as significant in their own application process. The application behaviors of these students can perhaps be understood to be the result of the interaction of their social capital (specifically their ability to access other social networks) and the information accessed as a result of that social capital.

Methods and Sampling

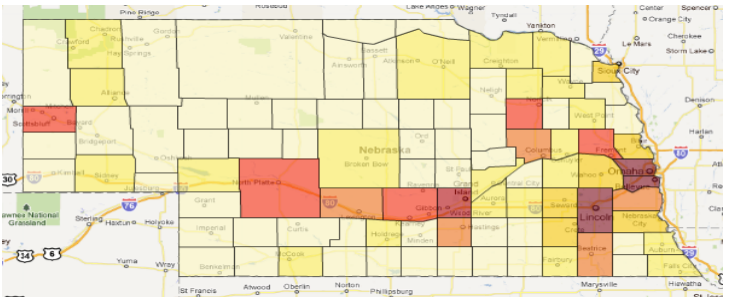
The data presented here are drawn from 42 interviews with rising high school seniors and one of their parents/guardians. The interviews used mixed methods including formal ranking exercises and network data collection as well as in-depth probes into systems of meaning. The students attend four different high schools in four different nonurban towns in Nebraska, each differing in population, distance from the nearest urban center, size of high school, and the kind of secondary or higher education offered.

Table 1: School characteristics of four schools accessed.

Town	Population	County Population	School Size	Distance from nearest city (miles)	Highest level of education offered in town	Percent of Class going on to 2 or 4-Year Colleges
Grand Island	48,520	58,607	2,000+	96	Community College	82%
Kearney	30,787	46,102	1,470+	132	State University	90%
North Platte	24,733	36,288	1,200	226	Community College	60%
Gothenburg	3,574	24,326	400	191	High School	85%

The definition of rural used corresponds to that used by the Census Bureau in 2010. Rural counties are outside the boundaries of an urban area and have no cities of 50,000 residents within them. A non-rural county (urbanized area) is defined as one containing one or more cities with at least 50,000 residents and a total metro area population of 100,000 residents (Gibbs 2003). It is by this definition that Grand Island is considered the closest to urban, followed by Kearney, North Platte, and lastly Gothenburg, which is considered most rural. Some background information on each town gives some perspective on the particular characteristics that play into local residents' perceptions of higher education.

Grand Island, being over ninety miles from the nearest urban center and state capitol Lincoln, NE, is a center of commerce and production for a great portion of the state of Nebraska. There are three institutions of higher education in Grand Island, including the public



2-year Central Community College, enrolling over 7,000 students, the private 2-year Grand Island College, enrolling 87 students, and the private 2-year Joseph's College of Beauty-Grand Island, enrolling 32 students.[1] It is one of the largest cities on the North American continent without a four-year institution of higher learning, though it was home to Grand Island College from 1893-1931. Until the Central Community opened its current campus in 1976 as part of state legislation that opened six community colleges across the state, there was no opportunity for higher education in the Grand Island (*Central Community College* 2010). Eight of seventeen of the largest employers in the town are industrial companies, employing 40-45% of the labor force (Grand Island Economic Development 2010). Only 14% of the work force is employed in industries of professional and business services, education and health services, financial activities, or information, or what can be considered non-industrial jobs.

Kearney is situated 42 miles west of Grand Island, over 130 miles from Lincoln, is home to the University of Nebraska – Kearney, one of Nebraska's three state universities and the furthest west. UNK existed as Kearney State College, a teacher's college, until 1991 when it joined the

1 (*AreaConnect* 2004)

state university system.[2] Over 43% of the work force is employed in the industries of natural resources and mining, construction, manufacturing and trade, and transportation and utilities. Twenty-six percent of the work force is employed in industries of professional and business services, education and health services, financial activities, information, or what can be considered non-industrial jobs (Nebraska Department of Labor 2008).

Gothenburg is about 60 miles west of Kearney, nearly 200 miles from Lincoln and is one of Frito Lay Corporation's two collection stations for food-grade corn in the United States. The surrounding area is home to large family-owned farming operations that annually produce "600 million pounds of Nebraska corn [that]…will be used to produce some of America's leading snacks – Doritos, Fritos, and Tostitos."[3] The three largest employers are two manufacturing companies and the Public School District, with 28.6% of the work force employed in industries of professional and business services, education and health services, financial activities, information, or what can be considered non-industrial jobs (*Fizber.com* 2000). Thirty-six percent of the labor force is employed in the industries of natural resources and mining, construction, manufacturing and trade, and transportation and utilities.[4] The nearest institution of higher education is another campus of Central Community College in Lexington, NE, 25 miles away.

North Platte, 37 miles west of Gothenburg and 225 miles west of Lincoln, is the largest city in the Western half of Nebraska. It is roughly half way between the major urban centers of Omaha, NE, and Denver,

2 (University of Nebraska at Kearney 2011)
3 (*Gothenburg Delivers!* 2012)
4 (*Fizber.com* 2000)

CO. It is home to Bailey Yard, the largest train yard in the world, owned and operated by the Union Pacific Railroad and handling over 10,000 train cars daily. Mid-Plains Community College offers 2-year Associates degree and certificate programs and enrolls about 2,700 students.[5] The largest employers in North Platte are the Union Pacific Railroad, Great Plains Regional Medical Center, North Platte Public Schools, and Wal-Mart.[6] Forty-two percent of the labor force is employed in the industries of natural resources and mining, construction, manufacturing and trade, and transportation and utilities. Twenty-three percent of the labor force is employed in the professional and business services, education and health services, financial activities, information, or what can be considered non-industrial jobs.[7]

Permission to conduct research in each district was obtained from either the superintendent or high school principal and contact information for student, parent, and counselor participants was obtained from the administration of each school.

Selection of interviewees was done by referral from guidance counselors or administrators at the four high schools, from four different towns, each representing a different degree of urbanicity. I requested referrals for students in the top 10% of their class, adding the criteria of a high ACT test score later in the process. This was done to control for the fact that many students, regardless of location of origin, may not be best served by a more selective college experience. This sample includes some socioeconomic diversity so as to explore the connection between

5 (*Education Database Online* 2012)

6 (Nebraska Fast Facts – Community Profile 2012)

7 See "Labor Force and Workers in North Platte, NE, (*Moving Ideas* 2012)

students' perceived educational opportunities and socioeconomic status, a connection that research presented in this field suggests.

How Students Think About College Selection

In a semi-formal component of the interviews students were presented with a list of factors that may or may not have been important in their college choice. They were asked to rank these. Regardless of degree of urbanicity, socioeconomic background, or parental education the ranking fell out in more of less the same way for all students. This suggests a more unified outlook on college than initially anticipated. Four factors appeared in the top of the rankings for each school's cohort:

- Having to take out student loans
- Considering what one wants to do after college: go to graduate school, get a job, join the military or other (indicate one)
- Having lots of options of what to study
- Going to a school that people will recognize

The lower-ranked factors across the cohorts were:

- Being close to friends
- Doing what my parents want me to do
- Wanting to go to a public/private college

In what follows I illustrate the thinking of the students on the four more salient themes using material from the interview transcripts.

Having to take out student loans

Students were often worried about loans and whether they would

get a good return on the costs of attending an elite college.

> "They're good schools, but I'm not sure they're worth the money you pay for them." (Parent from Grand Island, referring to top-ranked universities)

> "I don't want to have loans…because you have to pay them back – I'm not that big on paying back…I don't even make my friends pay me back." (Student from Grand Island)

> "The fact that I have three children that could potentially all want to go to a school that's going to put them $100,000 in debt and if they don't find a job that can pay it off, me being stuck helping them for the rest of my life [laughing]… that's it! You know, a $20 per hour job isn't going to cut those loans very fast." (Parent from Grand Island)

Many understood the benefits of a more highly ranked education and yet could not immediately justify to themselves taking on the burden of debt that such a school would require.

> "Do I go and get a really expensive but really beneficial education or do I stay and go somewhere that I can go for free? I guess it's just going to come down to if I think that the education and the experience that I have there is going to be worth all the money it costs to go there." (Student from Grand Island)

There is an unknown quantity in this picture, that of scholarships which students can expect to receive. For some, a certain amount is nearly guaranteed to them by their local education foundation based on their

class rank and GPA. For others, area-specific scholarships may or may not be available to them based on their chosen field of study.

> "A lot depends on scholarship, but I have lots of – especially the local scholarship since I'm not doing anything agriculture related, there's not a whole lot around here, especially because there are a lot of people in my class who are going into something agricultural… but I'm pretty confident that if I get student loans I'll be able to pay it off, it will be fine…I'm independent, I like not to be tied to anything, so I'm hoping that I'll get kind of on my feet right away and be able to get those [paid] off soon." (Student from Gothenburg)

These students understand that some scholarships will be available both from local sources and colleges, but the quantities of these scholarships are almost always unknown until after students have decided where they will apply to college. They have a Catch .22 on their hands. They may get the scholarships and be able to afford the more highly ranked school they have been accepted to or they may not and then that possibility is gone. Still, there are others for whom money is not the issue at hand.

Some students from the more affluent end of the sample understand the costs of college, but their families have the means to be able to send them to any local school easily. They are also aware of local and school-sponsored scholarship opportunities, but their decisions do not hinge on those opportunities in the way that those of their middle-class counterparts do.

> "I'm not terribly worried about having to pay a lot, I guess, since I've worked really hard for my grades and everything. So – and I'll apply for a lot of scholarships this year so I hope to receive a fair number

> of those that will help a lot with that. And I'm sure…that will help me in finding a school, I guess." (Student from Gothenburg)
>
> "'Is it affordable?' – everybody is looking for that, of course. I'm really hoping for some scholarships this year to help out, but otherwise it shouldn't be too bad." (Student from Gothenburg)

It is clear why taking out student loans is prominent in the discussion of college options and behaviors today. With increasingly rising costs of higher education, student loans are becoming much more common; in fact, the *New York Times* reported in April of 2011 that in the year 2010, "student loan debt outpaced credit card debt for the first time…and is likely to top a trillion dollars [in 2011] as more students go to college and a growing share borrow money to do so" (Lewin 2011:20). For some the problem is more immediate than others, but for all students surveyed, the importance of having to take out student loans was in the top half of their ranking of given factors.

Thinking about what I want to do after college

Though at each school post-college considerations were ranked as highly important, the specific post-college route of focus differed among schools. In Grand Island and North Platte, most students were thinking about graduate school, with one planning to join the military after attending the Naval Academy. In Kearney and Gothenburg, the trends were not as indicative since "getting a job" and "going to graduate school" were both chosen equally. This overall focus, however, on post-college plans, rather than being close to friends, going to a public or private school, or going to a school that people would recognize, suggests a strong vocational focus

as discussed in the literature on vocationalism. A very strong theme that emerged from the interviews was the idea of going to college solely to receive the training that one would need for the specific occupation the student has in mind. The students feel strongly about already having specific occupations in mind when selecting a school. Knowing what one will study was a very important first step in the college selection process for these students; if they did not know what they wanted to study, then how could they choose the school that would be the best to offer them that training?

> "Knowing what you want to do is very important – it hugely affects where you go to college. That's what we've told our kids." (Parent from North Platte)

The fact that his undergraduate and medical school education would be completed separately, and that Creighton University in Nebraska is moderately known for its medical school, did not enter the mindset for this student. His association with Creighton was medicine, and he wanted to go into medicine, so he ranked Creighton highly. Similarly, the attitude towards acquiring a specific degree as means of qualification for a specific occupation in itself inherently values the degree more than the institution from which it is received:

> "…frankly, I'm just not sure if I want to put out the effort [to go for a more selective school or program] if I can find something the same quality but closer by." (Student from Gothenburg)

The perception of local options being closer to home, and the added perception that they would then be more affordable, caused this student

to value equally the information securities programs offered by the University of Nebraska at Omaha and those at MIT. Even when removing the perceived financial disparity from the picture, however, this student's focus did not shift:

> "The one that could give me the best education *in the program that I'm looking for* [is the one I would choose], and I wouldn't think about anything else." (Ibid. emphasis added)

A parent in a more urban area also expressed a de-valuation of the institution from which a degree came:

> "You know, I think you can get a good education anywhere, and if nothing else, go for your masters or something through [top-ranked schools] like a lot of people do and then – because 20 years from now, they really don't care where you went to college other than, 'Hey, I got my Master's degree from Princeton or Yale or Harvard.'" (Parent from Grand Island)

This clearly illustrates how the perception of the great importance of the degree acquired *in and of itself*, regardless of the institution from which it came, is very salient for these rural students and their parents. This leads to a highly vocational mindset in regards to college education, which makes the question of what students would like to study very important – if they do not know, how can they pick a good school for that program? And yet there is a paradox as we consider the next factor. It would seem that students would like to have their cake and eat it, too – that is, to have highly specialized programs and also a wealth of options of what to study.

Having lots of options of what to study

An interesting counterpart to the previous factor is the similarly high-ranking desire to have lots of options of what to study. Despite the fact that these students claim to be making their college application decisions based on wanting to pursue a particular course of study, and applying to colleges with known academic programs in that area, most students were averse to the idea of going to a more specialized institution, desiring instead a wealth of options from which to select their course of study.

> "…if you don't know what you want to study [as you look at colleges] and the college doesn't offer it and you go to that college, you're screwed. You have to transfer." (Student from Grand Island)

> "That's a deterrent from [the University of Nebraska – Kearney] is that their majors are more – not as broad as what [the University of Nebraska – Lincoln] has to offer. And so if I can't find anything that I want to study at UNK, I really can't study there…I definitely don't want to go to such a small college that they don't offer a lot…I'd consider a Christian college, too, but often times their majors are pretty select also." (Student from Gothenburg)

These students desire both a lot of options and also very developed and advanced programs, perhaps in different areas of study, rather than pursuing a more focused course of study at a more technically focused school.

Going to a school that people will recognize

An interesting issue of the interpretation of "school that people will recognize" arose during the interviews, which has revealed another dimension to the variation in student perspectives on college going even

among predominantly rural communities of varying size. For more urban students, the idea of a school's "recognition" was based predominantly on the idea of national recognition, whereas in the more rural students, the idea of "recognition" was based on a much more locally, state-focused idea of recognition. For more urban students, schools were thought about in a national context, but there was not necessarily a stronger preference for these universities because of the name. Again, the factor of areas of study came in, re-introducing the vocationalist focus into name recognition:

> "I mean, it's great – those colleges are recognized for a reason – but if they don't have your major or they don't have anything like that, it just seems silly to go to a college just because of the name…I think you should go to a school for the education, not the name." (Student from Grand Island)

It is perhaps more interesting to note that even when name recognition of universities was reported as *unimportant* for students, this perception of some as more recognized affected the way that students ranked them nationally, in comparison to one another:

> "Well I think a lot of the schools are really great schools, they're going to have – I haven't really looked into what majors they are, but I kind of thought about, ok, how much do people talk about them? How much name recognition do they bring? And I thought about that and then UNK is at the bottom." (Student from Grand Island)

For most urban students, however, there were mixed perceptions of top-ranked universities and the meaning of recognition as elite. Some students did not report feeling that attending local schools would put

them at a disadvantage post-college in comparison to nationally ranked universities, but others reported that in some fields, the school you go to matters. Still others had a hard time parsing out what perceptions they had were shaped by their local culture and how sometimes colleges were valued just for being outside of Nebraska.

> "As long as I get a good education, it doesn't matter where I go." (Student from Kearney)

> "Now I think in certain fields, like law – fields where who you know is very high, very important, like law; I think it makes a big difference if you go to the other universities that have the Ivy League universities. But as far as engineering, I'm not sure if it makes as big a difference." (Parent from Grand Island)
>
> "I know the schools that are…the top five on my [preferences] list are ones that I know are highly-recommended, big name type schools…but I've heard UNL is actually a pretty decent school…a lot of people that I've talked to have said that it's actually a pretty good school. So I don't know…I guess part of me was thinking, as I was doing the list, 'most people would think just because it's out of Nebraska means it's a better school.' But somehow I do have a little bit of that perception. Like that's why with University of Chicago – I think I've heard that it's a good school, but it's also out of Nebraska so I guess I was sort of like, 'Oh, I think it might be a little better than just going to UNL.'" (Student from Kearney)

For more rural students, there was much more of a focus on the local reputation of colleges and universities, learned from those around the student and their experiences. This could be the mechanism by which local vocationalist ideas about higher education are transferred to new generations of rising college students. One respondent summarized the

need for local recognition of your school in a story about his brother's experience on the East Coast at a school people in his hometown had never heard of.

> "…when I say where I graduate from, they'll know and that…like my older brother, for example: nobody really knows about Olin [College of Engineering in Boston], so they don't know what kind of a degree he has…the quality of his education, I guess. But being around him I know that he had an excellent education, but, 'Yeah, I went to Olin College.' 'What's that? Where's that? I don't know anything about that.' Say you went [to] UNL – people know that, well around here, not so much maybe around the other states…it kind of goes along with the public university thing. People know public universities better, you know, especially if they have sports teams, you know. That could be a draw." (Student from Gothenburg)

> "The school you go to has to be recognizable, otherwise people won't think anything of it – round these parts, UNL is pretty recognizable." (Student from North Platte)

Overall, there is an interesting variation in student perceptions of elite schools as more beneficial than non-ranked local universities.While some urban students are more nationally focused in their understanding of recognition, they still do not believe that the school one attends always makes a difference as much as the degree received. Rural students, on the other hand, seem to perceive recognition to be a more locally focused term and see well-known local universities as recognizable, and therefore more beneficial. For these students, going to a school that people will "recognize" is not as important, even though their conception of what is required for

recognition is different from that of the more urban counterparts.

Discussion

One dominant theme emerged in talking with interviewees - vocationalism is one of the primary ideas on which rural students base their college application decisions. The focus on post-college outcomes when selecting a college appeared in all interviews, and this may in part help to explain how students perceived local versus nationally ranked universities. Students from more rural areas tended to rank local and top-ranked colleges correctly, but when indicating where they would like to attend, they still show a distinct preference for Nebraska schools. This is indicative of the *habitus* and vocationalist ideas about higher education that are part of their local culture, which may be part of the reason that they do not apply to elite universities.

This is all very well and good, but also a little fatalistic. From a policy perspective the question that must be asked is: What will it take to break the barriers formed by *habitus?* Looking to those students in the project who did apply to top ranked colleges offers some clues. In fact, only three of the twenty-one students interviewed ended up actually applying to a top-ranked school, even though most students understood them to be superior to local universities. These three students all had multiple social connections to such universities. This finding leads to a question about the interaction of local *habitus* and rural social networks (see also Lamont 1992): Are networks to elite colleges a silver bullet?

As understood in network theory since Granovetter's (1973) *The Strength of Weak Ties*, social ties act as conduits of information, patronage and influence. Damon Centola and Michael Macy build onto this idea

that social ties can be the pathways along which social contagion spreads through a population (Centola and Macy 2007). This theory proposes that the idea of applying to an elite school for rural students in central Nebraska behaves according to the theory of complex social contagion. Consider Table Two below.

Table 2: Social Network Data from Nebraska Sample

This table shows the social connections of each student to elite schools. If a social connection to a top-ranked school exists, via a friend, family member, other social connection, or through the student's high school, this is indicated as binary point value of 1. The far right column is a total number of the connections that each student has to top-ranked universities or a measure of the width of the bridge that these ties indicate. Students for whom this total is equal to 0 did not apply to a top-ranked school, while those for whom this total is equal to 1 did apply to a top-ranked school (in bold). [n=17]

Connections to Top-Ranked School				0 = no connection 1 = connection	0 = no contagion 1 = contagion
Town	Friend	Family	Other	High School	Number of Connections = Contagion (Binary)
Gothenburg	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2 wide = 1**
Gothenburg	0	0	0	1	1 wide = 0
Gothenburg	*0*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*3 wide = 0*
Gothenburg	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*2 wide = 0*
North Platte	0	0	0	1	1 wide = 0
North Platte	0	0	0	1	1 wide = 0
North Platte	0	0	0	1	1 wide = 0
North Platte	0	0	0	1	1 wide = 0
North Platte	0	0	0	1	1 wide = 0
North Platte	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*2 wide = 0*

Kearney	*1*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*3 wide = 0*
Kearney	*1*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*3 wide = 0*
Grand Island	0	0	0	1	1 wide = 0
Grand Island	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**4 wide = 1**
Grand Island	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**3 wide = 1**
Grand Island	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*2 wide = 0*
Grand Island	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*	*2 wide = 0*

The table shows that most of the students had two or more social connections to elite universities, be they via friends, family, other people, or their high schools. Students are listed from most rural high school at the top to least rural high school at the bottom, and those in bold are the students of interest who ended up applying to top-ranked schools. The far right column is a total number of the connections that each student has to top-ranked universities, or a measure of the width of the bridge that these ties indicate, as discussed above. Students for whom this total is equal to 0 did not apply to a top-ranked school, while those for whom this total is equal to 1 did apply to a top-ranked school. Of these ten for whom conditions were right for a complex social contagion (italicized in the table), only three ended up applying to such a school.

At first this appears as a negative result. Note however that no student interviewed applied to an elite school without having at least two ties to other networks from which the idea of applying to a top-ranked school would come (i.e. ties to top-ranked universities). Put another way, network contagion might be a necessary but not sufficient factor shaping elite college applications.

Conclusion

From the survey data collected, and the interviews conducted with these students and their parents, an important common denominator was a vocationalist mindset, appearing across the sample. This focus on post-college opportunities and direction was of high importance for nearly all students interviewed, and the implications of this view were discussed above. It was found that the idea of applying to a top-ranked school, even for students with high test scores at the top of their class, was not common or even present in some social networks. It was suggested that social connections to elite universities could play a role in students' aspirations to apply to such schools, but that this condition alone could not predict such applications in any individual case.

These findings have implications for universities who are committed to diversifying their student bodies by recruiting the best and the brightest from *all* backgrounds, rural and urban alike. Current methods mentioned by students in their interviews include sending postcards or letters, calling students' homes, or even having current student ambassadors from certain rural areas go to area high schools to talk to students about the prospect of applying to their elite institutions. These methods, though, proved ineffective for the majority of students in this study. It would seem that the successful recruitment of rural high schools students to top-ranked universities is not something that can be institutionally engineered by colleges by traditional means. Universities would be wise to utilize alumni from all rural areas, historically few as they may be, in recruiting these top students. Rural high school students do not appear to be convinced by current more impersonal methods to encourage application to far-off places that hold little to no cultural

currency for them in their culture dominated by vocationalism.

It should also be noted that elite universities contend with local state universities that are committed to keeping local young people, "the lifeblood of these small towns," (Parent from Gothenburg) closer to home. Moreover for rural students from towns like Gothenburg and North Platte, going to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln may already seem like a pretty high aspiration, and at a significant distance from home. For them going to UNL instead of the closer and smaller University of Nebraska-Kearney, with slightly fewer options of study yet offering similar merit-based financial aid, is a big step. In nearly every way, UNK more closely fits most rural students' desires.

Overall, this study shows the previously undocumented role of vocationalism in the shaping of local *habitus* in rural Nebraska. It also suggests that the social networks of students may play a yet unexplained role in college application decisions. While this *habitus* may currently act to contract rather than expand the horizons of top rural students, the social connections that rural students have to elite universities may enable some of them to dream big and consider such schools possible and reasonable in their consideration of college opportunities.

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World Systemic and Kondratieff Cycles[1]

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Abstract

Kondratieff cycles have recently regained popularity in the social sciences as a methodological tool deployed in examining war and financial crisis. Kondratieff cycles were developed by Nikolai Kondratieff between 1922-1928 and further popularized by Joseph Schumpeter. Within the social sciences, the major debates regarding Kondratieff cycles have occurred within world-systems circles. This article details the ways in which Immanuel Wallerstein has employed the Kondratieff cycle; discusses its theoretical strengths and weaknesses in world-systems analysis, and then reflects on other theoretical possibilities. I argue that the complex relationship among economic, political, military, ideological and cultural forms of power is better captured by the concept of systemic cycles of accumulation, and provide examples of recent work in political science, history, sociology and economics that could benefit from making this conceptual switch.

In the early 1920s, on the heels of the First World War, Europeans found themselves in a state of disorganization, even destruction, with some national economies in shambles and Europe pervaded by trauma. This was the fraught social context in which Soviet economist Nikolai

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Dmitrievich Kondratieff developed the concept of the Kondratieff cycle – a 60 year cycle of expansion and contraction of the world economy. By 1939, as Europe was once again enveloped in war and economic crisis, the German economist Joseph Schumpeter popularized the Kondratieff cycle as a way to understand long-term fluctuations in the global economy. The Kondratieff cycle regained popularity in the 1970s, during the war in Vietnam and the crisis of stagflation (Kleinknecht 1981; Mandel 1976; Mandel 1978; Rostow 1978a; Rostow 1978b; Thomspson 1982; van Duijn 1983; Wallerstein 1979). Now some say that we occupy another period of world history with similarities to the 1920s and 30s. The post 9/11 War on Terror, along with the economic downturn and attendant crises of 2008 and following, are obviously events of global significance, calling for concepts and theories capable of capturing large-scale movements. In that context, it is not surprising that social scientists are once again looking to the Kondratieff and other cycles to provide explanations of these events.

Kondratieff cycles may sound esoteric, but they have a long history in the social sciences. Long after the concept was developed in Kondratieff's 1922-28 books and papers (Garvy 1943: 203), the idea of the cycles became an important part of world-systems analysis, as developed by Immanuel Wallerstein and his collaborators. It has been a guiding star of the Cycles and Trends Research Working Group at the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations at SUNY-Binghamton. The idea of the cycles is currently popular among European economists, and has been used to explain everything from the political economy of growth, structural economic development, the relationship between the recession of 2009 and global economic development, the rise of China in the world-economy, economic growth in advanced capitalist

countries, the trajectory of United States hegemony, business cycles in the Indian economy, the role of scientific institutions and entrepreneurial activity as prerequisites for the Kondratieff cycle, to predicting a second great depression or the end of the current economic crisis (Coccia 2010; de Groot and Franses 2008; Gore 2010; Li 2005; Maddison 2007; Martins 2007; Rao 2003; Sanders 2007; Goulielmos 2009; Goulielmos 2010).

In political science, Kondratieff cycles are currently a source of explanations of the causes of war and the relationship between economic growth and world war (Kouhout 2003; Patomäki 2005). In sociology, the Kondratieff approach has recently been employed to explain economic crisis and the trajectory of United States hegemony (Bello 2006; Chase-Dunn et. al. 2005). Historians see potential in the use of the Kondratieff cycles to propel economic history beyond cliometry and toward a long-run historical approach with an emphasis on institutions (Verley 2005). In the business literature, Chris Papenhausen (2005) has used Kondratieff to explain the causes of economic development. While some anthropologists are critical of the current trend of using Kondratieff cycles in research on capitalism (Marcus and Menzies 2005: 24-5), others have recently relied on the cycles to help explain whether capitalism is adaptive or fated to run aground (Escobar 2004: 213). And finally, Ukrainian computer scientist Michael Zgyrovsky deploys Kondratieff cycles to explain the link between the development of the global economy and global systemic conflict and the interaction of global systemic conflict, the development of the world economy and its implications for the speed up of time (Zgyrovsky 2009; Zgyrovsky 2010).

In spite of this wealth of attention, I am going to argue that the concept of Kondratieff Cycles is a non-starter: it obscures more than it

elucidates. Kondratieff cycles should not play a leading role in the world-systems framework, or any analysis of patterns of economic crisis. Instead, I argue that the complex relationship between economic, political and ideological forms of power is better captured by the less sexy, but more accurate, concept of "systemic cycles of accumulation."

Kondratieff first began developing his theory of long cycles in a 1922 book on the economic conditions of the world economy after the First World War (Garvy 1943: 203). The section of the book in which he sketched out his theory of long cycles ignited a great deal of controversy and criticism among economists in the Soviet Union. In 1924, in part to clear the air, he wrote a paper on long cycles – a paper that nevertheless provoked even greater criticism, in part because people had expected a unified theory, which was not forthcoming (1943: 204). At the time, the four major criticisms of Kondratieff's long cycles revolved around: (1) his use of time series analysis; (2) the fact that the statistical significance of some results did not stand up in replications, (3) some critics' (e.g. Leon Trotsky's) denial of the existence of general and periodic cycles, as opposed to the evolution of capitalism, (4) the lack of causal argumentation in his theory.

To counter critiques that the work was fundamentally non-causal, Kondratieff began by pointing out the shortcomings of macroeconomic methods (Louçã 1999: 189). He did not want to provide a theory for the long cycles he had unearthed, however, because he derived his results from time series analysis in spite of having cautioned against the use of time series in inductive research. At least at first! In response to criticism, Kondratieff looked for theoretical causes and modified Marx's idea that cycles are caused by a periodic reinvestment of fixed capital every decade or so, introducing the idea of a graduation in the production period and

the amount of investment in different kinds of goods over time (Garvy 1943: 208). Kondratieff believed that future research on long cycles should center on their relationship to technological progress and social and political history.

Kondratieff also sought to counter critics who denied the existence of cycles altogether, claiming that his cycles were a result of endogenous forces, and that the cycles could not be adequately shown to be exogenous (Rostow 1975: 720). But the fact of the matter is that Kondratieff leaned much more towards endogenous explanations than exogenous explanations for the structure of the global economy. This proved to be problematic for him and not simply theoretically: this stance contributed to his eventual arrest and execution. Kondratieff claimed that cycles were driven by endogenous contradictions in the capitalist system and determined by capital accumulation over time, but one of Kondratieff's staunchest critics, Leon Trotsky, countered that such dynamics could be changed by political events (Louçã 1999: 183). For Trotsky, there were high political stakes in the debate between partisans of exogenous and endogenous causes of capitalist development. If Kondratieff were right that the capitalist system was comprised of an endogenous underlying logic, then anti-systemic ruptures such as the Russian revolution would be ineffective in bringing about the end of capitalism (Louçã 1999: 183). That was not an analytical result that Trotsky wanted to admit.

To this, Kondratieff responded that the political variables that Trotsky was concerned about were present in Kondratieff's own analysis, but that they were endogenous to the system in question. While Kondratieff maintained that he was not a Marxist, he prudently noted that he was simply following Marx's understanding of the genetic process

of capitalism (Louçã 1999: 183). In subsequent debates between Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin, Kondratieff's view of capitalism seemed to endorse Bukharin's concept of capitalism as a 'moving equilibrium'. As a result of his politically unsatisfactory response to Trotsky's criticism, and therefore, in the view of Soviet officials, his alleged similarities to Mikhail Bakunin, Kondratieff was seen as an anarchist and therefore a heretic (Louçã 1999: 184). By 1926, after Kondratieff had become aware of the implications of his involvement in this debate, he "preferred not to develop the matter any further" (Louçã 1999: 185). That was not to save him, however.

In the autumn of 1930, at age 38, Nikolai Kondratieff was arrested and deported to Siberia for allegedly heading the 'Peasant's Labor Party' (most likely a fantasy anarchist political organization), committing "agricultural sabotage," introducing bourgeois ideas into his research, and having an erroneous conceptualization of the socialist vision (Garvy 1943: 204; Kondratieff 1992: xiii; Louçã 1999: 171). In September of 1938, after having spent six of his eight years in prison in solitary confinement, he was convicted of being a 'kulak-professor'[2] and was executed by firing squad (Kondratieff 1992: xiii; Louçã 1999: 171). Although his work was ignored in the Soviet Union, particularly after his arrest and execution, it was translated into other languages where it was popular amongst some of the most reputable economists at the time, including Joseph Schumpeter, Ragnar Frisch, Wesley Mitchell and Simon Kuznets (one of the few economists who read Kondratieff's work in the original Russian) (Louçã 1999: 172). Kondratieff's paper, "On the Notion of Economic Statics, Dynamics and Fluctuations" was first published in German in

2 'Kulak' is a Leninist term for a landowning farmer.

1926, followed by other books and articles. His books and papers began to be published in English in November 1935.

In 1939, the year after Nikolai Kondratieff was executed by the Soviet government, Joseph Schumpeter popularized the use of Kondratieff cycles (and actually coined the term) in *Business Cycles: A Theoretical, Historical and Statistical Analysis of the Capitalist Process*. In this text he relies on Kondratieff's method of time series analysis but also historicizes the Kondratieff cycle. While Schumpeter merges theory and statistics to elucidate his argument, over 1,000 pages of the massive book are devoted to the analysis of historical materials. Schumpeter claims that, "only detailed historic knowledge can definitively answer most of the questions of individual causation and mechanism and that without it the study of time series must remain inconclusive, and theoretical analysis empty" (Schumpeter 1939: 220). Schumpeter furthermore claimed that historical detail is inadequate unless one takes into account at least the past 250 years (1939: 220). For these 'historical details' he looks to general economic histories to find out "how an industry arises, how it is absorbed into the economic organism, how it affects that organism and how it is reacted upon, and what its cyclical behavior is" (1939: 222). In this task, Schumpeter takes up Kondratieff's suggestion that future research look to the role of innovation and history in structuring sixty-year patterns.

It is not surprising that Schumpeter latched onto Kondratieff's work with such enthusiasm. Schumpeter was a figure who engaged with serious analysts, regardless of their polemics. At Harvard, his two closest friends were "youthful, vociferous socialists" with whom he was constantly engaged in "intellectual inquiry and disputation" (Goodwin 1983: 2). Schumpeter believed that ultimately Marx and his followers were

right, that "capitalism was dying and would be succeeded by socialism, though he did not like, for himself, the prospect" (1983: 3). Schumpeter was fascinated by the "morphogenetic nature of capitalism… unlike most organisms it does not exhibit durable structural stability" (1983: 8). And even though Schumpeter had a great understanding of mathematics, and a real sense of mathematical play (which he allegedly exercised in boring faculty meetings by fooling around with math problems), he agreed, with Kondratieff, that mathematical models were limited in their ability to describe social life. Schumpeter was much more interested in the "historical, evolutionary nature of capitalism" (1983: 8). Even though Schumpeter dubbed Leon Walras the greatest economist of all time, it is not surprising that in practice he would gravitate to the work of a controversial figure like Nikolai Kondratieff, who shared both his ambivalence with respect to Marxism and his view of quantitative research in the social sciences.

In *Business Cycles*, Schumpeter claims that technology and innovation involved an expansion of credit-financed investment, from which the Kondratieff cycle took shape. He wrote *Business Cycles* in the late 1930s, and like Kondratieff, was particularly concerned with the economic history of Europe and the Americas after the First World War. However, Schumpeter had the benefit of writing more than a decade later than Kondratieff and primarily employed the Kondratieff cycle to explain what Schumpeter termed 'The World Crisis' - i.e. the stock market crash of 1929 and the resulting depression of the world economy (Schumpeter 1939: 907).

Within the social sciences, the major debates about Kondratieff cycles have occurred in the field of world-systems analysis, in which there have been two important methodological critiques of the use of Kondratieff cycles in social research. Michel Morineau criticizes the quality of the data

typically used to date Kondratieff cycles, particularly older historical data, and is critical of the type of price data used to date Kondratieff cycles, along with the unit of analysis of the available data (Morineau 1984: 589). Giovanni Arrighi is critical of the Kondratieff cycle because price cycles and systemic cycles of accumulation are not in synch with each other. Arrighi argues therefore that in social research one must employ either the Kondratieff cycle or Systemic Cycles of Accumulation, but using both in tandem, as Immanuel Wallerstein does in his work, does not work methodologically (Arrighi 1994: 7). I will detail these debates further below.

In my view, Kondratieff cycles have yielded few empirical findings, have mostly economic theoretical implications, and do not capture the idea that a cycle of hegemony cannot be parsed into its economic, political, and ideological components and still generate a complete view of the world economy. The concept of systemic cycles of accumulation, however, allows the analyst to think of a cycle of hegemony as a single complex unit, comprised of relatively autonomous elements. The concept of systemic cycles also encourages a more historical analysis than does the Kondratieff cycle, which restricts itself to sixty-year slices. Overall, the use of Kondratieff cycles on the one hand, versus systemic cycles on the other, is a substantive theoretical issue and not simply a methodological preference. By employing systemic cycles of accumulation in social research, it seems to me, the analyst is able to level an improved critique of capitalism on a global scale, one that better approximates the complexity of the capitalist world-system.

World-systems analysis in particular is a potentially helpful construct for thinking about world-economies in space and time, but as currently constructed, it is built on the flawed foundation of the

Kondratieff cycle. In subsequent sections, I argue that discarding it and substituting systemic cycles of accumulation would help world-systems analysis ameliorate its strengths and improve upon its weaknesses.

The Kondratieff Cycle in World-Systems Analysis

While greatly influenced by the work of Joseph Schumpeter, the Kondratieff cycle employed in Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis is different from the notion of the cycle that Schumpeter developed.[3] In world-systems analysis, the Wallersteinian Kondratieff cycle is a heuristic construct derived by the analyst from an empirical base (Wallerstein 2000: 209). Social scientists, world-systems analysts included, have analyzed data on various quantitative indicators of the world-economy -- such as inflation rates, prices, production, rent, wages, and profits -- to induce trends. However, in world-systems analysis, the Wallersteinian Kondratieff cycle is ultimately an interpretive argument about the patterns and trends of the world-economy whose "utility lies in its implications" (Wallerstein 2000: 209).[4] Cycles are a pattern and

3 The Kondratieff cycle employed in World-Systems Analysis is influenced by Schumpeter's work on the Kondratieff cycle, and has very little to do with the writings of Kondratieff himself.

4 Using inflation rates to date Kondratieff cycles is a controversial practice in world-systems analysis. Ernst Mandel has argued, for example, that interest is dependent upon the rate of profit, and therefore to use it as a way to adjust the rate of profit poses an endogeneity problem (Mandel 1976: 144-5). Because there is a causal loop between the rate of profit and interest rates, there is a correlation between the variable net interest and any hypothetical error term. Accounting for interest is akin to double counting the rate of profit in years with a good deal of investment activity but not in those years without a falling rate of profit coupled with increased investment.

mechanism through which an historical system operates, producing the secular trends of a historical system.

According to Wallerstein, the Kondratieff cycle has two phases: an A-phase and a B-phase. The Kondratieff B-phase is marked by a decline in the rate of profit in the arena of production. In the event of an overall decline in the rate of profit in production, capital tends to shift from the production process to the financial sector. Unemployment increases and production geographically relocates in a search for better conditions under which to resume the production of goods. Capital's priority then, is to reduce wage levels and increase the efficiency of management in order to increase declining profit margins. This process results in increased interstate competition among those states that are centers of accumulation as these states attempt to export unemployment to other core states. This in turn, results in a great deal of fluctuation in exchange rates (Wallerstein 1999: 36). The A-phase of a Wallersteinian Kondratieff cycle "changes in some important way the parameters of the world-system" (Wallerstein 2004b: 31). These changes provide a solution to the problems that occurred during the preceding B-phase and thus the system is restored to a brief equilibrium. The cyclical component of the Wallersteinian Kondratieff cycle is generally characterized by an increase in the rate of profit during Kondratieff A-phases and a decrease in the rate of profit during Kondratieff B-phases. The innovation of the Kondratieff A-phase underwrites the secular trend of a world-system.

The law of supply and demand also structures the shift from a Wallersteinian Kondratieff A-phase to a B-phase. Profits increase to a certain point at which there arises an endemic structural, not conjunctural, disequilibrium between supply and demand; the factors that determine

supply and demand are related but shift at different rates (Wallerstein 2000: 214). Capital acts in its short-term rational interest, which leads to an overproduction in the medium-run because the variation in demand is discontinuous. It is this combination of discontinuous variation in demand and continuous shift in supply that produces the Wallersteinian Kondratieff, in essence a medium-length cycle (Wallerstein 2000: 215).

How is this related to politics? On the one hand, political struggles are often about expanding effective global demand; this can play a role in launching new Kondratieff A-phases of the world-economy (Wallerstein 2000: 216). On the other hand, the relationship between Wallersteinian Kondratieff cycles and politics remains unclear. In *The End of the World as We Know It*, for example, Wallerstein analyzes the "so-called East Asian crisis" coupling a structural to a conjunctural analysis comprised of Kondratieff cycles and hegemonic cycles (Wallerstein 1999: 54). In the analysis of the Kondratieff B-phase, which is hinged to global economic processes, the world downturn of the late 1990s at first benefited East Asia before it too was hit by the downturn. When Wallerstein analyzes the hegemonic cycle, he is able to link economic processes to geopolitical factors (1999: 55). In this analysis of the East Asian crisis, the Kondratieff cycle is much less clearly linked to political processes, even though political processes are supposed to be an important part of the mechanism of the transition between a Kondratieff B-phase and a Kondratieff A-phase. Instead it is in the analysis of hegemonic cycles that Wallerstein is able to synthesize economic, political and ideological processes in a meaningful way.

One obvious strength of the Wallersteinian Kondratieff cycle is that it offers a way to tease out the patterns of the world-economy governing the uniqueness of a given historical system. Wallerstein writes that, "no

one claims that quantitative indicators of social life in the modern world are monotone. We all agree that they fluctuate; that is, they go up and down. To talk of 'cycles' is to suggest more, however; it is to suggest some element of regularity, that is, some pattern in these fluctuations. And to suggest a pattern is thereby to suggest structures that explain the pattern" (Wallerstein 2001: 207).[5] The Wallersteinian Kondratieff cycle could allow for the incorporation of a systematized understanding of periodicity in historical research that is the result of larger structural processes. The cycles of the world-economy, after a B-phase, never return to the levels at which they were during the previous A-phase and this results in the secular trends of the world-economy. One can think of each cycle as three steps in one direction and two steps in the opposite direction. That net change reflects the contradictory development of cycles of the world-economy, which over the *longue durée* generates the decline of the world-system. Each cycle has a similar tendency and trajectory, but because historical events never repeat themselves, each cycle makes a unique contribution to the secular trend of the world-economy. The combination of cycles and trends therefore allows world-systems analysts to make historical comparisons as well as understanding the development of capitalism over time and space.

Immanuel Wallerstein points out that there is a symbiotic relationship among politics, economics and ideology; they all cause each other and ultimately cannot be disentangled (Wallerstein 2000: 216; Wallerstein 1999: 54-5). Wallerstein also argues that cyclical time is also

5 In one important subfield of economic history, however, some claim that while indicators do fluctuate, they do not do so as a result of an underlying pattern: such variation can even be random. See Hoffman, Postel-Vinay and Rosenthal (2007).

linked to ideological space. The way we distinguish space within a specific cycle of the world-economy has "political, military, cultural and above all ideological" implications (Wallerstein 2001: 141). Socially created ways of categorizing, structure how individuals make sense of the world, but these categories are linked to a specific time period. They are explained by and explain "major economic, political and social thrusts" (Wallerstein 2001: 142). Nevertheless, these and other more specific propositions about the way in which economics, politics, and ideology interact to produce cycles and trends evince a logic that undermines the utility of the Kondratieff cycle for historical social science. Wallerstein himself notes that the rewards of analyzing Kondratieff cycles "have been meager. At the level of empirical data, a half a century of spasmodic empirical work since Kondratieff has not added all that much to the basic findings he presented" (Wallerstein 2000: 210). The research on Kondratieff cycles has helped inspire the realization that there should be a single theoretical and historical framework that can help the historical analyst capture the relative similarity of each cycle of world hegemony. Yet the research on Kondratieff cycles has not produced many important discoveries about the workings of historical social systems.

Contemporary Analytical Examples

Current research in a number of academic disciplines – including economics, political science, sociology and history -- that employs Kondratieff cycles is simultaneously inspiring, because it introduces more rigorous periodicity into social research, and flawed, since this research could benefit further from employing the concept of systemic cycles of accumulation. In this section of the Research Note, I provide examples, selecting among the strongest recent research for that purpose.

In his polemically-titled "Is Economic History too Complex to be Left to Historians?" Patrick Verley criticizes fellow historians who see themselves as confined to "establishing facts" and shy away from interpreting them. He prefers nomothetic to idiographic history and, discerning a decline in nomothetic history, claims that the discipline as a whole is declining (Verley 2005: 374). Economic historians should look to the work of Schumpeter and Alexander Gershenkron, Verley claims, to understand the present as a result of "long-term historical dynamics" (2005: 375). The ultimate solution, according to Verley, is… the Kondratieff cycle, a mechanism for deciphering "the interaction of economic, social, political and cultural factors" on a macro-social level (2005: 386-7). However, the Kondratieff cycle does not incorporate the socio-cultural factors and the wider time interval that Verley wants to bring into economic history.

In his "Cyclical, Hegemonic, and Pluralistic Theories of International Relations: Some Comparative Reflections on War Causation," Frank Kohout employs the Kondratieff cycle to analyze war causation (Kohout 2003: 51). He concludes that there seem to be several limitations. First, he finds the Kondratieff concept to be too rigid in terms of its delineation of time intervals; this, Kohout argues, prevents the analyst from "obtaining a proper understanding of social, political and economic components of the cyclical phenomenon" (2003: 63). While Kohout opines that socio-political and socio-cultural variables "are as essential as a determining variable for war causation," and further states that the Kondratieff cycle is an inadequate tool for sorting out the complexities of war causation, he nonetheless argues for using the Kondratieff cycle in further research on war causation, because of its

macro-historical perspective and incorporation of periodicity (2003: 63). While the Kondratieff cycle has its problems, Kohout claims that it remains the best and most "sophisticated" methodological tool through which to understand war causation as incorporating the other theoretical aspects into the analysis would render cycles inoperable. But what then, are we left with if Kohout himself acknowledges that including socio-political and socio-cultural variables is essential to understanding war causation? How can we possibly leave these out of a model of war causation in the world-economy?

Walden Bello begins his article, "The Capitalist Conjuncture: over-accumulation, financial crises and the retreat from globalisation" by delineating a Kondratieff cycle with an A-phase from 1945-1975 characterized by economic boom and "the civilian application of technologies" (Bello 2006: 1347). Then, he claims the Kondratieff B-phase began in the 1970s when overproduction translated into a decrease in the rate of profit coupled with a realization of the limits of technological growth (2006: 1347). He then goes on to list numerous economic consequences of this Kondratieff B-phase, including: slowdown of growth in production, decline in world production, increasing unemployment, a shift in the loci of profits, financialization, increased indebtedness, relocation of production to the periphery, rise in military expenditures in order to stimulate demand, falling real wages, an expansion in the informal economy, increase in food prices, increased 'illegal' migration, currency manipulation, and the 'third world' debt crisis (2006:1347-8). Bello lists only economic consequences. Even his mention of increased military expenditure, which clearly does stimulate demand, also has implications for the politics of a waning hegemony and processes of war-making more generally.

This lack of theoretical space for non-economic phenomena becomes more notable in the next section of the paper where Bello claims that globalization was part of a Clintonian grand strategy to create export markets for US products and that the WTO was a Clintonian attempt to reverse the loss of ideological power of the US over the rest of the world (2006:1349). He then links this vying for ideological power to the boom times of the late 1990s via the Clinton administration's role in promoting a further financialization of the world economy. Bello argues that the Bush Administration, then, responded to the economic insecurity of the early 2000s and the loss of legitimacy of the United States, with policies best characterized by *realpolitik* (2006: 1359-64). With these policy changes, Bello concludes that the era of globalization had ended, marked by a change in US goals from "corporate-driven globalisation" to "the accumulation of strategic power above all" (2006: 1365).

Minqi Li's "The Rise of China and the Demise of the Capitalist World-Economy" (2005) examines China's potential as the next global hegemon and assesses the potential impact that the rise of China might have on the rest of the world system. Li dates a Kondratieff cycle with an A-phase beginning in 1945 and a B-phase starting in the mid-1960s. While this allows him to discuss changes in global inequality and structural processes occurring in the so-called short 20th century, Li ultimately wants to determine the institutional changes that might revive global mass consumption (Li 2005: 424). In order to address this problem, he must discard the Kondratieff cycle, and instead look to secular trends of the world

system and to systemic cycles of accumulation (2005; 425-6).[6] He does so by claiming that neoliberal policies and institutions were employed by dominant classes as a strategy to overcome the limitations of the worldwide decline in the rate of profit (2005: 422). In making this move, Li is able to bring ideology, politics and institutions into his analysis. And furthermore, by incorporating these additional variables into his analysis, he must widen the historical scope of his analysis beyond the 60-year Kondratieff cycle in order to track the development of neoliberalism over the course of the latter-half of the 20th century and into the 21st. By widening the historical timeframe, and taking into account larger geo-political and military considerations, he is better able to situate his data (on the distribution of value added in global commodity chains, manufacturing worker's wage rates, class structures in the core, semi-periphery and periphery, and projections of GDP growth) within the context of theory, thus bringing about stronger claims about the future implications of China's potential as a future hegemon.

Both Bello and Li's analyses focus on the geopolitics, military strategy and ideological aspects contributing to the millennial developments of the world economy. The Kondratieff cycle, the construct meant to structure their analyses, is only briefly mentioned in the beginning of the papers and only with respect to its economic implications. They would be better served by employing the systemic cycle of accumulation that would allow them to fit the geopolitical, military and ideological causes of crisis into their respective methodological frameworks and also to further historicize their arguments. By incorporating more of

6 This methodological move is made with little fanfare. Li simply claims that he is "look[ing] beyond" Kondratieff cycles, but makes no argument as to why this must be done (p. 425).

the historical developments in national policies, the military and the ideological power of the US and China in the world-system, it would also strengthen their claims about the role of these factors in contributing to crisis and hegemonic transition, and further interweave them with the structural economic foundations for which they rely on the Kondratieff cycle. In Bello's case, this change in methodology from the Kondratieff cycle to systemic cycles of accumulation would show that the cause of crisis is not simply a continuity of bad policies over two presidential administrations – something that clearly, Bello is making every effort *not* to argue – but instead, part of the underlying contradictions of the capitalist world-system.

In conclusion, there are two ways in which current scholarship employs the Kondratieff cycle. First, some scholars in the world-systems tradition (such as Walden Bello and Minqi Li) invoke Kondratieff cycles in deference to the theoretical history of world-systems analysis, even though they don't use them in their concrete analysis. Second, scholars working outside of the world-systems tradition, do use Kondratieff cycles (such as Franz Kohout and Patrick Verley) but seem to be unaware of the limitations of the Kondratieff cycle, and simply think of it as the only existing methodological tool by which to incorporate periodicity into social research. Either way, the result inadequately describes and historicizes the target of analysis.

Theorizing Patterns of the World-Economy: What Next?

In my view, this systemic shortcoming is due to the fact that the concept is so deeply rooted in the logic of economics that it can do no more than gesture at the complex relationship between economics and

politics and ideology, all of which propel the world-economy forward and contribute to the rise and fall of a hegemonic power. The key to proceeding from here, I contend, is to embed the 'economic component' that is the Kondratieff cycle within the conceptual framework of the cycle of hegemony, which rests on the assumption that the three types of power are intrinsically linked.

There have been times at which the world economy has been centered around a certain geographical location – Amsterdam in the 17th century; London in the 19th; New York in the 20th, to put it bluntly -- and that location has the political, economic and ideological capacity to set the ground rules for capital accumulation. Because of the delicate balance involved in acquiring diverse forms of social control over large territories, and because in the capitalist world-system no organizing logic or equilibrium goes unchallenged, this organizing capacity is fleeting. Each successive geographical space that is the site of control of the system has remade the world-system in part because it has provided fixes for what was unsuccessful about the previous hegemonic form. It therefore makes sense to identify the general trends of such an ebb and flow, while also remembering that there are secular trends overlaying the waxing and waning of hegemonies. It seems highly unlikely, however, that this can be encapsulated in a general formula, or reduced to an ahistorical series of indicators. A more useful starting point lies in Michel Morineau's and Giovanni Arrighi's critiques of Kondratieff cycles (1984 and 1994 respectively).

Mornineau's critique begins from the premise that Kondratieff cycles are not as empirically regular as they are theoretically assumed to be (Morineau 1984: 578). Built into Kondratieff's theory is an assumption that the cycles are 60 years long; in practice, there is far greater degree

of variation. "*La sophistication mathématique, communément acceptée,"* he writes, *"a fini par render insensible a des difficultés primaries, considérables*" (1984: 578).[7] The data used to calculate Kondratieff cycles have been keyed to the prices of very specific commodities for certain nation states (1984: 584). Kondratieff cycles would be as long as 110 years if they were calculated using data from different commodities or nation-states. Moreover, the earlier historical data are of poor quality (1984: 580). According to Morineau, some economists believe that Kondratieff cycles are only compatible with industrial capitalism (1984: 578), and if that's true, Kondratieff cycles only fit the 19th and 20th centuries. However, if Kondratieff cycles are found in previous eras, say from the 13th century onward, then it complicates our understanding of the Kondratieff cycle. Morineau believes that it reveals an epistemological problem of the Kondratieff cycle, if in fact agricultural societies and industrial societies share the same underlying structural determinant (1984: 579). Morineau therefore, calls for the rejection of Kondratieff cycles and instead, cycles of multiple *fluences* on a global scale (he describes these as consisting of various developments that influence the trajectory of the global economy such as demography, political developments, and technological developments) and *pulsions* (which for Morineau consist of human responses) without fixed chronological cutting points (1984: 593).

While I agree with Morineau that there is cause for concern about the quality of the historical data and the temporal regularity of the

7 "The level of mathematical sophistication that is generally characteristic of analysts of Kondratieff cycles obscures the considerable and simplistic shortcomings of analyzing data in order to date a Kondratieff cycle" [my translation].

Kondratieff cycle, Morineau's *fluences* and *pulsions*, outside of the context of a chronology, seem inadequate substitutes. The Kondratieff cycle aims to identify underlying patterns of the world-economy stemming from a structural logic inherent in the world-system, and while it fails to accomplish this goal, the aim remains worthy. While examining the world-economy through *fluences* and *pulsions* is certainly not akin to claiming that global economic variation is random, it reduces the world-economy to a series of ahistorical indicators, denying theoretical space for the historical context that is key to identifying structural patterns and trends of the world-economy.

Giovanni Arrighi, in *The Long Twentieth Century,* takes Marx's general formula of capital, fits it to the *longue durée*, and changes the unit of analysis to the world-economy in order to better describe the mechanism behind hegemonic cycles. Marx's analysis of capitalism is complemented with an analysis of finance that de facto builds in a political and ideological component (Arrighi 1994: 5).[8] In *The Long Twentieth Century*, Arrighi excises Kondratieff cycles from his analysis on the grounds that "secular price cycles and systemic cycles of accumulation are completely out of

8 The key role of politics and ideology in the systemic cycle of accumulation rests on Arrighi's merging of Marx with Braudel. A Braudelian conceptualization of the world economy allows Arrighi to see "capitalism as being absolutely dependent for its emergence and expansion on state power as constituting the antithesis of the market economy" (Arrighi 1994: 10). In this, "the leadership of particular communities and blocs of governmental and business agencies that were uniquely placed to turn to their own advantage the unintended actions and consequences of other agencies" becomes crucial in the expansion and restructuring of world-historic capitalism (Arrighi 1994: 9).

synchronicity with one another" (1994: 7).[9] He claims that the use of systemic cycles of accumulation instead of Kondratieff cycles is a purely methodological move. However, it allows him a great deal of theoretical leverage. Systemic cycles of accumulation comprised of M-C phases and C-M' phases emphasize the structural component of the cycle without negating the role of politics, ideology or culture. In the systemic cycle of accumulation, all forms of power track together. M-C phases are characterized primarily by productive accumulation and all of its related processes, while C-M' phases are comprised of financialization and related processes. The longer M-C-phases/C-M'-phases of the systemic cycle of accumulation take all the positive elements of the Kondratieff –allowing for identifying patterns, and implying an underlying structural logic – but they also allow multiple forms of power into the analysis. Most importantly, the use of systemic cycles of accumulation does not assume that the world-economy can be reduced to a series of indicators.[10]

Take, for example, the US-based cycle of accumulation. It begins in 1873, with the crisis of the British systemic cycle of accumulation. This historical moment is characterized by economic, political, military

9 Faced with this discrepancy, Arrighi claims that one must employ one or the other, but not use both in tandem as Immanuel Wallerstein does in his work. Arrighi uses systemic cycles of accumulation because, he states, they "are far more valid and reliable" (Arrighi 1994: 7).

10 Samir Amin supports this critique of Kondratieff cycles, claiming that using Kondratieff cycles in world systems analysis was "an error which serves to conceal real history" and that the Kondratieff cycle, "is not essential to the concept of a world-system" (Amin 2011: 88). He claims that, "it is more productive" to identify phases of accumulation because it allows the researcher to respect the specificities of each historical period and provides for a more sophisticated understanding of power (Amin 2011: 88).

and ideological crisis. The Great Depression gives rise to an increase in interstate competition, most obvious in World War II. By 1945, with the end of the period of global war, political, economic, military and cultural/ideological arrangements cemented US hegemony and kicked off the C-M phase of accumulation. During this period, from 1945 to 1970, the United States achieved dominance in economic, political, military, ideological and cultural terms. By 1970, however, the inevitable tenuousness of such a concentration of power, and the successes of rival contenders, had fostered economic and political crisis. The defeat of the US military in Vietnam and mass global social unrest circa 1968 signified the end of US military, ideological and cultural power. By 1970, the C-M' phase of accumulation began, characterized by financialization, increased interstate competition, new strategies of rule on the national state level, and different strategies of addressing grievances of global subordinate classes. The most recent period, marked by war, economic crisis and social unrest, is most likely the end of the US cycle of accumulation. In world-systems terms, it would mark the transition either to a new systemic cycle of accumulation centered around another hegemon or to a mode of production other than the capitalist world-system.

This is but a stylized snapshot. Nonetheless I hope it is clear that employing the systemic cycle of accumulation allows world-systems analysis to better detail the complexity of the historical trajectory of the capitalist world-system. The Kondratieff cycle, on the other hand, is limited in its capacity to render the symbiosis of economics, politics, and ideology in shaping the cycles and trends of the world-economy. It is clear that world-systems analysis needs better tools to integrate the different forms of power found within the world-economy (Wallerstein 1983:

90-2; Wallerstein 1999: 196, 249; Wallerstein 2001: 36, 141-2), and that Kondratieff cycles do not advance this end (Amin 2011: 88; Arrighi 1994: 7; Morineau 1984: 593). These views should be explicitly incorporated into world-systems analysis. Doing so would provide world-systems analysts with both a better way to describe historical world-systems and a more compelling critique of contemporary capitalism.

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Sex, Gender, and the 2012 Struggle over the Presidency of the University of Virginia[1]

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Abstract

This article narrates and analyzes the recent firing and reinstatement of President Teresa Sullivan, the first woman and first sociologist serving in this role at the University of Virginia, by Helen Dragas, the first woman rector directing the University of Virginia's Board of Visitors. The article foregrounds the role of gender in these events, placing them in the larger context of research about gender differences in the experiences and expectations of organizational leaders.

"…a little rebellion now and then is a good thing…"
Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, January 30, 1787

When Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia in 1819, he explicitly attempted to limit its internal hierarchies. As a result, architectural tours of the "Grounds" show a semi-circle of original buildings constructed on a cleverly disguised incline lest one building seem higher than another. Jefferson also warned against the establishment of a President, asserting that an executive position would undermine

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1 I thank both Philip Smith and Julia Adams immensely for their editorial suggestions, which have helped to shape the argument of this piece.

his egalitarian vision for this new type of institution: an excellent, public university. This egalitarianism was qualified. The university's undergraduate liberal arts college neglected to admit African Americans until 1955, and women, as undergraduate students, until 1970. And the collective governance exercised by the Board of Visitors would have some ironic effects two centuries later. Yet the vision of an excellent public university, known for its commitment to teaching as well as research, continues to inspire people committed to academic values. The University of Virginia became and remains one of the great public institutions in the U.S.

While the Board of Visitors governed the university from its founding, they eventually found the lack of a President cumbersome and appointed the university's first executive figure in 1904. It was not until 2010 that the first woman was appointed President of the University of Virginia: distinguished sociologist Theresa Sullivan, an executive with years of experience at some of the top ranked public institutions in the country. In summer 2012, however, sudden conflicts over Sullivan's Presidency threatened the stability and reputation of the university itself. In early June, Helen Dragas, the first woman Rector heading the University of Virginia Board of Visitors, met privately with President Sullivan and demanded her resignation. Dragas explained to Sullivan that she had the votes to force her out and shortly afterwards Sullivan announced her resignation. This conflict between President and Board was a struggle between academic and corporate values, and has been widely debated and analyzed as such. However, this scenario is important also in no small part because of the gender of the key players, and their status as "first woman" in each of their organizational venues. My goal here is to tease out the role gender played in this progression of events.

Despite decades of feminist activism and progress, gender inequality continues to characterize American society in virtually every dimension of life in which inequality can be measured (Ridgeway 2011). Nowhere is the persistence of gender inequality more visible than in the highest ranks of organizational leadership. To date, women comprise only 15% of top executive positions in Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst 2008), and there is a plethora of evidence that women lag behind in the top ranks of managerial leadership facing continued prejudice in many professional positions (Blau and Lawrence 2007; Solis and Hall 2011). In higher education, the figures regarding women in leadership positions are particularly striking because they challenge commonly held assumptions that Americans have been closing the "gender gap." The White House Project Report of 2009 highlights the following:

1. Nationally, women are 57% of all college students but only 26% of full professors, 23% of university presidents, and fill 14% of presidencies at doctoral degree-granting institutions.
2. The number of female presidents has not changed in the past 10 years.
3. Women account for less than 30% of board members on college and university boards.
4. Female faculty members have not made progress in closing the salary gap with their male counterparts. In 1972, they made 83% of what male faculty made; today the figure is 82%. (The White House Project 2009:10; cited in Madsen 2012:5)

These figures do not indicate that the feminist movement has

made no difference at all, nor that progress towards equality is at a standstill. Even a cursory glance at the situation of university executives and university faculty over the past two decades reveals that the situation for women university leaders has changed markedly over the decades. Some of the most high-prestige, high profile institutions have hired female presidents, who have performed strongly (Smallwood and Birchard 2001). The percentage of female faculty has increased dramatically at all levels, and the treatment of junior faculty women and female graduate students has been systematically studied and in many places improved.[2] That relative female salary gains amongst those with advanced degrees have not kept up with other sectors is a trend scholars have noted throughout the population of women with advanced degrees, the majority of whom occupy positions as managers, physicians, professors, and attorneys. Inequality in each of these sectors has been widely documented and publicized (Mulligan and Rubinstein 2004; McCall 2007).[3] Within the professoriate, more intractable issues – most prominently the biological/tenure clock overlap, and the continuing scarcity of women in STEM fields -- are generally recognized as the next hurdle facing those concerned about inequality. Statistics indicate, however, that equality is not yet a consolidated achievement, and there is no firm consensus as to what is

2 See also Corcoran et. Al 2001; Hockfield 2011; Balakrishna 2006

3 McCall writes "in relative terms – that is, if we think of gender equity as a relative achievement rather than an absolute one – the most educated women…have fared the worst of all in the past three decades. They have made strong absolute progress but virtually no relative progress [vis-à-vis men]" (2007:25); she continues "there has been a consolidation of a particular regime of relative gender discrimination, especially for women in the higher-income brackets" (2007:26).

necessary to close the gap.

In the academy, students, faculty and administrators effectively shut out awareness of gender bias in order to function day to day, and they often seem surprised when confronted with hard evidence of a continuing problem. One distinct obstacle to recognition of bias is the widespread postfeminist conviction that gender discrimination has been erased. This is one reason why the events in Virginia were not interpreted, by most commentators, through a gender-specific lens, or with the benefit of research about the gender dimensions of leadership. One other possible reason is that multiple lenses are applicable. Although research shows that autocratic leadership styles are more successful for male leaders (Madsen 2008; Eagly et al. 2003; Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt 2001) in most settings, the autocratic nature of Rector Helen Dragas' decision was unpopular. This is perhaps because universities prize more consensual leadership styles, and/or perhaps because autocratic women are simply unpopular in most settings, doubly so in the university. To aid my analysis, further narrative detail is helpful to begin to parse the role of gender in the incident.

Shocked at the sudden deposition of the esteemed and increasingly popular President Sullivan, the faculty senate and council of chairs at the University of Virginia lost no time in pressing the Rector and other Board members for further details justifying the move. All that initially emerged were emails referencing the need for a long-range plan to make money from online learning and vague phrases such as the new corporate "strategic dynamism," which describes a pattern of frequent, top-down changes. There was also a cryptic reference to unspecified "philosophical differences" between Sullivan and the Board. There were no allegations of misconduct or incompetence, and ultimately, no concrete reasons for

Sullivan's ouster were ever offered by the Rector or other Board members. Frustrated faculty, students, and staff, organized via a Facebook page and held several demonstrations and vigils demanding both a better accounting of the decision and Sullivan's reinstatement.

The Board's actions evoked a negative response for several reasons. First, they exemplified a unilateral style of governance, emphasizing the Board of Visitors' power to mandate who should occupy the executive position at the University, and the concomitant powerlessness of other university constituents --including faculty – not currently represented on the University of Virginia's Board. Board members are appointed by the state's governor, and appointments often go to those able to write substantial checks to political campaigns in the state.[4] Board members' wealth enables this level of power even within an institution of higher learning, and this is simply taken for granted. But this ambiguous claim to power leaves this power only semi-legitimate, and therefore more vulnerable to the effects of gender and other biases.

The fact that there was never a clear communication of rationale for the Board's action – the unwillingness of the Rector to specify the "philosophical differences" to which she alluded – made the process ever more murky and open to suspicion of bias. Leaked emails indicated the Board's opinion that the university was at risk because it lagged in the kind of purportedly profitable online education recently implemented by MIT, Harvard and other institutions. Faculty knowledgeable about these efforts knew that for MIT, Harvard, and Stanford, online education was not designed as a money-making enterprise and has in fact cost rather than

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4 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Virginia

earned money to date. Board e-mails revealed University of Virginia Board members had done little investigation outside of reading and circulating a newspaper article documenting the increasing use of online education at prestigious universities. To faculty, this symbolized a lack of respect for the value of research, and encroachment of corporate values in a university system set up to resist them. At the very least, the process highlighted how problematic was the lack of faculty and student representation on the Board. As one faculty member put it, "students, alumni, and faculty are also stakeholders in the future of the university, and we have knowledge and a diversity of perspectives that the members of the BOV may not have."[5] Even University of Virginia faculty who themselves had researched what seemed to be a central issue in the incident -- the effectiveness of online learning -- were not consulted, and their research not cited.[6]

Challenges and questions mushroomed rapidly. As a vehicle for analysis and organization of demonstrations, social media played an enabling, perhaps transformative role, as bloggers, tweeters and Facebookers wrote around the clock. It soon became clear that the unilateral and economistic aspect of the Board's actions clashed with the sensibility of the majority of faculty members who held that the university should not be run primarily as a profit-making business. Faculty and researchers expressed respect for *Wissenschaft* or dedication to scientific knowledge and expertise in the broadest sense however tedious to access

5 Alison P. Weber, Professor of Spanish and President of UVA's Phi Beta Kappa chapter, quoted by Tharp (2012).

6 Vaidhyanathan (2012b) discusses the work and experience of many UVA professors and units – all ignored by the Board -- relevant to this issue.

and difficult to understand. Faculty had therefore been energized by the appointment of President Sullivan, and her hiring of John Simon, a distinguished chemist and former Vice-Provost at Duke, as Provost. Sullivan and Simon personified intellectual integrity in their leadership styles and as such, faculty members worried that the President and Provost's public defense of academic values and faculty governance, had contributed to Sullivan being made a target for removal. The exercise of power by Helen Dragas, seemingly against these very academic values, was finally deemed unacceptable. After two weeks of activism by faculty and students, President Sullivan was reinstated on June 26.

Of course, this account compresses the facts of the case. Rather than the specific details of the Sullivan-Dragas conflict, what concerns me most in this analysis is the intersection of gender, culture and politics at play in our society that first enabled, and then dismantled, such a controversial (mis)use of the Rectorship by a "first woman," targeting the "first woman" President. Neglected in most other analyses – and there were many in current news organs as the situation unfolded -- was any analytic discussion of the mediating role played by gender and its interaction with wealth and power in the various facets of this story.

It's not easy to parse the operation of gender amid the swirl of events. How much of the protest's success was due to the fact that in twenty-first century America, women, even wealthy women, wield less power than men, and as decision-makers are received far more ambivalently? Media treatments dubbing Dragas "dragon lady" – and worse -- underscore that in addition to genuine philosophical disagreement, sexism inflected the way her actions were received and interpreted. As current research on women leaders demonstrates (Madsen 2012; Dominico et al. 2009)

sexism perhaps also contributed to her immediate and almost universal unpopularity. It is impossible to claim with certainty that in this specific situation, Dragas' gender made her "edict-style" exercise of power more unacceptable to respondants than it might have been if performed by a male Regent. But research (Madsen 2008; Eagly et al. 2003) suggests that in a male leader it would have been more likely to increase rather than undermine his authoritative appearance; though in university settings this can work both ways. Authoritarianism in general tends to be unpopular with faculty. At times, authoritarianism as a strategy for women can succeed quite well in other arenas. Margaret Thatcher comes to mind as an example, and one who has been widely analyzed (Hall and Jacques 1983), but these examples are rare.[7]

Also difficult is analytically distinguishing the key ways in which gender manifests (in everyday life. These manifestations include the perception of biological sex as a gendered phenomenon; differential expectations of women's and men's leadership; the gendered language used to describe female leaders in popular discourse and impact of this language on perception; and finally, women's and men's strategic attempts to use those expectations in leadership situations. Each of these factors likely played a role in events at Virginia, though extricating the part each played may not be empirically possible without more information, some of which won't become available (legally) until more time has elapsed.

It is clear that Sullivan faced heightened vulnerability because of her status as the University of Virginia's first woman President, and the image attendant upon this role. Bigelow et al. (2011), investigating a related

7 I am indebted to Philip Smith for this reference and parallel.

case, found that investors are less likely to support female-run firms. One persistent thread in the rumors surrounding the Sullivan firing questioned (without evidence) her effectiveness as a fund-raiser. According to the research, gender colors the executive's image in the eyes of the investors, the group from which the University of Virginia Board was drawn, and the group which failed to halt Dragas' attempt to unseat Sullivan.

Another recent study published as a Ross School of Business Paper in 2009 concluded that "female executives have a disadvantage relative to males in accessing inside information" (Bharath et al. 2009). Certainly Sullivan could have benefited from an inside "leak" to warn her of the coming coup and allow her some time to mobilize her forces. This kind of inside information, crucial to the success of executives in many organizational contexts, is generally less accessible to women. Once again, the way in which women leaders are perceived translates into different treatment. The internal allies who could have helped Sullivan head off opposition at the pass, which as the research indicates is common practice between male leaders, apparently did not give her this benefit.

Brown, Van Ummersen, and Sturnick (2001) note that female university presidents are more likely than their male counterparts to have experienced problems in retaining the confidence of the Boards of Trustees that put them in place, and are less likely to obtain "second chances" by those boards for errors or unpopular decisions. Certainly this seemed to be the case at first when the Board initially failed to stop Dragas' action with some of its members actively supporting it (including the vice-Rector, who afterwards resigned in the face of the protests). Once again, women leaders' gender-specific "image" seems a likely explanation here.

Differential expectations of women's leadership also played a

role in Sullivan's difficulties. Many studies cite the widely recognized "glass cliff" phenomenon, where women are more likely to be appointed to executive posts of organizations in crisis partly because they are seen as possessing stereotypically feminine qualities like compassion and the ability to listen, perceived as necessary in crisis situations. (The recent appointment of Marissa Mayer as CEO of the troubled company Yahoo! is a prime example.) Haslam and Ryan argue recently in *The Leadership Quarterly* (2008) that because women leaders are overrepresented in precarious organizational leadership situations they are more likely to fail. Sullivan assumed the helm during one of the most serious budget crises in the university's history, at a time when state support for higher education in Virginia was decreasing markedly, with disastrous long-term impact on the institution's ability to offer students the quality education for which the University of Virginia is known. The severity of the crisis may have cast Sullivan's unwillingness to institute changes immediately upon taking the helm in a particular light. Her desire to involve faculty and staff in instituting changes and her commitment to a democratic rather than autocratic process may not have appeared sufficiently decisive to evaluators during the turmoil of economic crisis. Both factors might have given the impression of a more "feminine"-style reign following her first two years, and this in itself might have weakened the Board's ability to see her as a hard-hitting problem solver rather than a comforting leader. The possibility that she might be both was too large a stretch for those looking through a conventionally gender-stereotyped lens.

That Sullivan was seen generally as "too informal" in her leadership style – and that this was perceived through gender-specific lenses – is supported by the fact that in Sullivan's performance review

last year, Dragas reported Board members' criticisms of Sullivan's style of dress as often "too informal" (reported in a recent *New York Times* article, Rice [2012]). Sullivan responded to the reporter's discussion of this fact by saying "I don't know what the unprofessional dress was," and goes on to comment "People are very much aware that I'm the first woman president of Virginia. It would be naive to think it's not there as an issue." Dragas, however, denied outright that gender was an issue, responding to the reporter's intimations that her mention of clothing in the review indicated too heavy a focus on Sullivan's appearance defensively: "'If the president had been a man, I would have conveyed the same sentiments from the board, no question about it.'" Nowhere in his account of these events does *Times* reporter Andrew Rice offer any analysis drawn from the research about gender bias, nor does he allude to this work. As someone who used to jog on the University of Michigan track along with Lee Bollinger, then Dean of Michigan's Law School and currently President of Columbia University, I can attest to his daily public appearances on that very track in "unprofessional garb," and also to the lack of critical mention of it – instead, his athleticism was celebrated on the campus as a positive attribute.

Gender as a factor in this kind of judgment is evident to most observers; in some ways, the bias of Sullivan's performance review speaks for itself, and it is almost understandable that Rice felt it unnecessary to comment. But on another level, this incident raises broader theoretical questions about what "professional" appearance is, how it differs for men and women (echoed in Sullivan's puzzled response: "'I don't know what the unprofessional dress was'"), and how this affects women's ability to lead effectively. Research in the history of clothing indicates that the male business suit -- still not worn by women in the same easy, fitted, informal

manner it is worn by "professional" men – is one of the key elements of modern dress. It permits easy, fluid movements, is relatively comfortable to wear, gives its wearer a modern, professional look, and displays the body only indirectly. There is no similar consensus in mainstream Western culture about what constitutes professional garb for women, or what constitutes a professional look – except, perhaps, that such a look by necessity involves footwear that is not only uncomfortable but medically hazardous. Ironically, in some situations women are seen as dressed "too glamorously" for professional legitimacy, as in the case of French politician Segolene Royale being criticized for her low-cut blouse.[8] More often, they are criticized for being too frumpy, knowledge no one following Hilary Clinton's presidential campaign could escape (Lawrence and Rose 2010). In Virginia in particular there is a prominent Southern culture that foregrounds the "lady" and her charms; this shapes expectations of women's appearance and their dress. Undergraduate women have a tradition of wearing sundresses to class and to football games in warm weather, rather than the more informal garb sported by students on most college campuses. These normative expectations complicate the issue of what a "professional appearance" for women might look like in the Southern cultural context of the university's culture. Given that in her first two years Sullivan paid 45 visits to senior donors who, given the lack of women undergraduates prior to 1970 are predominately men, it is fair to assume that President Sullivan encountered some specifically Southern expectations regarding women's

8 See "Valerie Trierweiler VS. Segolene Royal: match de look au sommet." *Pure Trends* ven. 31 aout 2012. http://fr.pourelles.yahoo.com/valerie-trierweiler-vs-segolene-royal-match-look-sommet-163000872.html

appearance that were at odds with dominant U.S. professional culture, and her own past experience. These expectations would be confusing at best.

Yet Sullivan's informal style did play well in the academy with respect to faculty expectations of their leader. This is part of the specificity of leadership in the academic context. By making frequent references both publicly and privately to the importance of faculty governance and a more democratic ethos, Sullivan had accumulated a strong following among faculty. The contrast with Dragas could not have been more stark. A female leader supporting the democratic value of faculty governance is simply a more acceptable image than a female leader projecting a more authoritarian demeanor; perhaps even more so in the academy, where softer leadership styles play best. In this sense the Virginia experience supports the research findings already established.

Public discourse also played a key role in the resolution of this case, which spurred faculty, alumni, and students to organize and demonstrate; the discourse surrounding the events was laden with gender stereotypes, yet rarely identified gender overtly as an important issue, as the *New York Times* example indicates. The *Washington Post* described a "catfight" between two "dragon ladies," citing the oft-repeated dictum that women disadvantage other women in the workplace. The Charlottesville *Hook* mentioned "plus-size bullying," citing and in part using language which contributed to the widespread unconscious prejudice against and defamation of women, particularly if their appearance deviates from narrow, sexualized parameters. No mainstream media accounts contextualized this language as part of the broader prejudice women face when they assume top leadership positions. Neither did analysts discuss the delicate interaction between wealth and gender in the rise to, if not

always in the operation of, power. As few discussions of Melissa Mayer's pregnancy have done: far from the experience of most women, a pregnant CEO whose wealth enables round-the-clock nanny help will have fewer problems at work, at home, and in her attempt to balance work and family.[9] There is a body of research that should be better known that illuminates the concrete mechanisms that shape the gendered path of success for high level leaders. Rather than informing the public of this work, most public discourse instead sensationalized and personalized the Sullivan-Dragas story. Ironically it was in part this sensationalism that kept the story front and center in the news, and aided the democratic movement that help reinstate President Sullivan.

How did Sullivan conform to or deviate from gendered expectations in this situation that threatened her leadership? Her choices were limited. While she courted some criticism for resigning too quickly and without sufficient protest, she'd likely also have received forceful criticism if she'd responded with a more heavy-handed and critical response commonly associated with uber-male leadership styles. Against all odds, Sullivan has emerged a dignified, respected figure. Whether or not she meant to act strategically, she handled a very difficult situation extremely well, not only reversing in unprecedented fashion the Board's decision, but also becoming a heroic figure to faculty members looking for consultative guidance. As Sullivan continues to work with Dragas and other Board members with professionalism and no public hint of malice, she is garnering even more support. This is particularly notable in a university whose faculty had been demoralized by lack of decision-making power; years of salary stagnation;

9 Douglas and Michaels' discussion of the coverage of "celebrity moms" is quite relevant to this point (Douglas and Michaels 2004).

unusually large gender-specific pay differentials; the declining social prestige of Virginia's traditionally esteemed humanities education; and an increasingly unsympathetic state legislature. Sullivan has regained what is still a very tough job.

Finally, while Dragas' wealth may have led her to assume that she could exercise unbridled power in a system where wealth is often synonymous with political clout, her sex made others less willing to accept her exercise of this power in the face of an increasingly unpopular and seemingly authoritarian decision. After the unprecedented uprising by students, faculty, and alumni, statements by the ACCU, extensive coverage in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, Facebook campaigns, tweets, blogs, etc., the unwarranted dismissal of Sullivan was reversed, and Dragas' authority entirely undermined. The outcome was just, but the process, and its mediated versions, frequently sexist. It should be possible to uphold academic values – and to enable strong female leadership -- without the attendant sexism, and even misogyny, we viewed in this case.

The events of the last few months have left University of Virginia faculty feeling vindicated but weary and cautious about the future. More broadly, faculty concerned about sustaining academic values in public universities while supporting academic leadership outside of the ranks of a wealthy and predominantly white male elite have real cause for concern. Current global economic retractions have strengthened the widespread faith in the dominance of ' bottom line' business principles as the key to the successful governance of non-profit institutions. The values of *wissenschaft*, Max Weber's 'science as a vocation', and of democratic, shared governance embedded in public universities remain at present fragile and in need of more sustained defense. Yet in its most hopeful light, the University of

Virginia drama shows that and how faculty and researchers are able to harness the new media environment in order to create a reasoned sphere of public debate within which these issues can be argued and listened to with attention to research, resistance to prejudice, and hope for a more egalitarian future.

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