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Contents

Student Contributors Biographies

Felicia Chandra

My name is Felicia Chandra and I majored in Criminology and minored in Sociology at SFU. I just completed my degree so I can now officially call myself SFU alumni! My academic areas of interest are social issues and the public policies surrounding them. Now that I have completed my degree I am looking to take a break from academia and try to travel as much as I can. I have already gotten started as I just returned from Peru where I spent a few weeks volunteering at an orphanage and admiring the beautiful country. I am also currently running in Miss. BC 2014 as I feel it is a great experience and a program that will help me grow as an individual. After soaking in all of these experiences, I would like to return to school to pursue law or my Masters degree in the area of public policy. As for hobbies, I love to do anything that keeps me active including a good run or hike.

Sean Heath

My name is Sean Heath and I am currently finishing my BA in Anthropology, starting an MA in Anthropology in September 2014 at SFU. My interests in academia and research have been sport, children's sport, childhood, electronic-games/sport, community, embodiment and identity. As I stated I am going to be pursuing an MA in Anthropology, specifying in sport, over the next few years. Perhaps I will continue on to do a P.h.D. after completion of my Masters. A few of my hobbies include reading science-fiction novels, watching a variety of e-sports, swimming, hiking, and attending heavy metal shows.

Rae-Anna Hedlin

My name is Rae-Anna Eileen Hedlin and my current area of study includes Japanese language, history, and contemporary society with a primary focus on the sex and entertainment industry. I am especially interested in how notions of false intimacy play into sexual choices. I am also interested in the Third Culture Kid phenomenon and the effects on cultural identity for people who spend their formative years living in multiple countries. Having grown up between Asia and North America, I hope to continue this lifestyle. I obtained this degree as a means to acquire a long-term visa to live and work in Japan, and when the time is right I hope to return! I also enjoy karaoke, writing prose poetry, and building my new businesses, eMer Admin and Fuschia Projects.

Arvin Joaquin

My name is Arvin Kier Escanilla Joaquin and I just graduated with a degree in Communication (Honours with distinction) and a minor in Sociology. Now, I'm spending time looking at job opportunities, exploring graduate school options, and trying to be an adult (whatever that means). I am generally passionate about cross-sectional research that explores all aspects of a person's life in order to evaluate his or her experiences. Specifically, I am interested in studying the relationship of gender, sexuality, and race in evaluating and understanding one's personal and social being and or experiences. I always want to find the courage to try skydiving! But until then, I hope to start a career in creative industry, get into a good graduate program, travel the world, and still hold on to the same values and principles that I have now. I eat. I write. I blog. I photograph. I smile. I laugh. I live. I love.
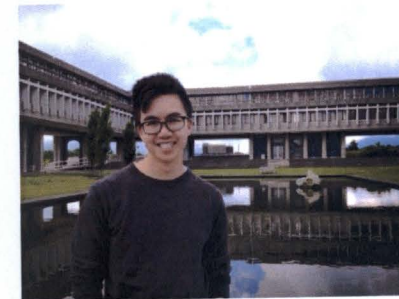
Tony Nguyen

My name is Tony Nguyen and I am a third year undergrad in Sociology. I am particularly interested in social and political mobilization, and social and environmental sustainability and the cultures surrounding both its realization and/or frustration. Still figuring out next steps. Trying to engage, be active, be creative, be caring, and be content in the meantime, and beyond.

Alessandro Perello

My name is Alessandro Perello. I am pursuing a double minor in Anthropology and International Studies. For the last seven years I have participated in humanitarian work with a Christian organization in northern Mexico. As result of my work, I have sought to use my academic studies to gain a fuller understanding of the region's social and economic history. In part, because of my studies much of the time spent in Mexico has been for weeks at a time, but in the future I hope to spend a longer period of time working there. In the distant future I also intend to return to school and pursue a Masters in Divinity. I enjoy reading, hiking, and a great cup of coffee.
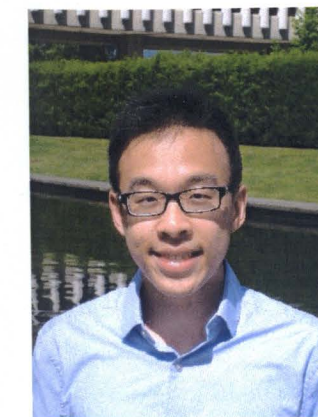
Jonathan Poon

I am Jonathan Poon and I am a Political Science Major, a Sociology Minor, and I am also undertaking the Urban Studies Program. I enjoy studying the more societal aspects of my disciplines, such as understanding the laws and policies, and the decision-making choices of governments and how it affects society. My understanding in Sociology and Urban Studies provides greater depth to the outcomes and consequences of these choices. I am currently keeping my options open in regards to my plans in the future (as exemplified by my broad reach of academic disciplines), but I am preparing myself to apply for law school. Outside of my immense love for academics, I enjoy playing a wide range of sports (especially in the summer!) including golf, tennis, volleyball, badminton, and biking.

Learning to Swim: Age Group Swim Clubs and Embodied Identity in Canada

Sean Heath

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Introduction

The production of a swimmer's body is not an overnight process. It begins at a very young age and can continue at the amateur competitive level into one's early 30's. This Essay is concerned with the development of the child, from the age of five, when they can join club swimming, through to their maturation as young adults, where they have hopes of competing at the international level in the Olympics. This is a large age range, but one that is necessary to investigate if I am to be able to relate the nuanced creation of identity to the embodied activity of age group club swimming.

British Columbia, and the City of Vancouver in particular, is located at the hub of competitive swimming in Canada. The province has two of the four national training centres for swimming in the whole country, one in Vancouver and the other in Victoria. These training centres, combined with an almost religious notion of entering one's children into swimming at a young age in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, presents a hotbed for studying the production and reproduction of swimmers' bodies and embodied identities.

In the Greater Vancouver region, I have observed four different types of swim clubs, each of which has a different take on the diverse bodies that participate in their daily activities. There is the non-profit swim club that seeks to obtain high standings in the competitive world of swimming, provincially, nationally, and internationally. Another club formation is that of the for-profit business model of swim club, which also seeks to place children on the podiums of high level provincial and national competitions despite having significantly less resources than the non-profit model. The third type of club is based at a single pool that has morphed into a non-profit organization with a board of directors managing the finances of the club, which seeks to develop child and adult bodies into competitors at the provincial, national, and international levels. Finally, we have a municipal recreation community development swim club that seeks to introduce swimming as a sport to children without the pressures of mandatory competition. However, the club has an intended design to produce competent swimmers who will have the capacity to move into higher levels of competition if so desired. In short, I will be looking at what Richars L. (2011) refers to as:

> Research conducted within youth sport clubs,
> as essentially social settings, [for which] the
> social and cultural context assumes pivotal
> importance as a factor influencing all aspects
> of participation in youth sport including the
> development of personal identity and a sense
> of belonging (Pp.551).

In this essay I will argue that swimming is an embodied practice that affects the identities and bodies of those participating in it (i.e., athletes) and the social groups and institutions that support it (e.g., family members, peers, school mates). For some young boys and girls in Canada, swimming is not only a recreational practice and life-skill, but it may also dominate their families' lifeworlds and everyday practices.

Conceptualizing a Framework

A methodological framework that I have chosen to apply in my research is that of practice theory. Sherry Ortner, building on the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens and Marshall Sahlins, presents a compelling and accessible take of practice

theory in her work. Practice theory is rooted in theories of constraint (e.g., Bourdieu's structure of habitus): human behaviour was controlled and managed by outside cultural and social formations. Ortner notes that what was overlooked by these early practice theorists was "attention to either the processes that produce and reproduce those constraints" (2006:2). Weaving considerations of power, historicity, and the reinterpretation of culture into her theory of practice, Ortner seeks a framework for understanding larger systematic constraints of society and culture, and the everyday practices of social actors that inform and transform the larger "system." This "relationship between the structural constraints of society and culture on the one hand and the 'practices'…of social actors" (Ortner 2006:2) on the other, became entangled in Ortner's framework of practice theory. This is dialectics at its finest.

Power unifies yet struggles to constrain social behaviour. This can be understood as the "dialectic of power". Power comes in many different forms. One way it is exercised in the swim club world is through hierarchies and hegemonic control, "the conscious systems of beliefs, [sic] the whole lived social process as practically organized by specific and dominant meaning and values" (Williams 1977:109). Whether it be a board of directors for the non-profit swim club, the head coach of the private business swim club, or the program directors of the community recreation centre, these bodies come across "as strongly controlling but never complete or total" (Ortner 2006:7). Social actors within these systems of control produce what Giddens describes as the "dialectic of control" where "those being controlled have both agency and understanding" (cited in Ortner 2006:5) and can avoid or push back against the hegemony. Thus, the head coach of the non-profit swim club has to work within the constraints of the board of directors. Even so, the coach has highly developed knowledge and uses her agency to affect change in the club structure.

While classic notions of culture (e.g., kinship, subsistence systems, social institutions) place culture

as enabling and constraining, it takes on new meanings when "embedded in narratives of power and inequality" (Ortner 2006:14). New notions of culture are constructed as "learned, shared symbolic behavior that functions as an adaptive mechanism as well as a guide for collective and individual human action" (Blanchard 1995:34). Another way of understanding culture is as "a critical construct that allows people to define their human experiences" (Weiss 2000:183). Some of the power relations and inequalities in the swimming world include one, the power of coaches, parents, board of directors, and national administrators; and two, the inequality of economic and social positions of families trying to get their children involved in swimming. A central concern of power dynamics in swim clubs is the availability of pool space. Does the club have a designated pool to swim at? Does the club need to rent space for their swimmers? Is there competition between clubs, each of which may vie for lane space and times? What practice times can be made available, and do swimmers and their parents have the flexibility to get their children to those times and places? These questions suggest that the "social reproduction [of swim clubs] is never total, always imperfect, and vulnerable to the pressures and instabilities inherent in any situation of unequal power" (Ortner 2006:7).

Pool Wars: Vying for Space

Having designated pool space is invaluable for a swim club. If your club is attached to a specific centre then there is a security in knowing that you always have your choice of times and spaces to run practices. If your club does not have this luxury then you must deal with renting out space from different pools. This can result in the possibility of having less than ideal choices for lane times and space. This can be a big hit to your swimmer and coach base if the only practice times you can get are during the middle of the day (i.e., during school hours) or just before and after school (i.e., during work hours). Coaches may find it difficult to manage a part-time coaching position if they are already involved in full-time work and parents might not be able to drive their children to practices. Depending on the

enrollment of athletes and availability or funding, for many non-profit swim clubs, "what is required in the way of facilities to stage a game or sporting event runs the gamut from temporary, informally used, and roughly demarcated spaces to expensive, purpose-built, and exclusive ones" (Dyck 2012:12). Exclusive swim clubs, which are found more often in the United States than in Canada, usually own the pool that they practice at, and rent out their space, and offer public memberships.

As previously mentioned, the growth of a swim club is constrained by the amount of pool space that they can access and by the times of their scheduled practices. Before further addressing issues of accessibility, I want to discuss community-run development swim club. This club model, focusing on semi-competitive swimming, has some leeway in organizational flexibility that other competitive oriented clubs do not. For instance, they can schedule practices and run meets due to the control of pool space and time that being a part of a recreation program body affords. Membership is more lax as children and youths can participate in practices from anywhere from once to six times a week. Competitive clubs, depending on the age and competitive orientation of the respective group, usually require a commitment of three to nine practices per week.

Coaches in the development club are chosen from available staff members of the recreation's body. Many of these instructors are certified to teach age group swimming lessons and are given additional resources in their coaching role but do not necessarily have their coaching certificate per-say. Their job is a part-time position based on an hourly wage. Coaches for non-profit clubs are paid a yearly salary. Coaches for non-profit competitive swim clubs have an additional advantage because they can plan the entire year since they know their groups will stay relatively the same with only one or two athletes leaving during the season for various reasons. This is not so for the development club as a new "series" begins every two or three months. Hence, there can be a large flux in the number and type of bodies that move through the program.

Competitive clubs' coaching staffs adhere to the notion that "practice makes perfect." Likewise, the developmental club's often younger and less experienced staff than that of competitive clubs, are encouraged to follow the "practice makes perfect" motto, but to a lesser extent. Both types of clubs recognize that swimming's embodiment, like any bodily activity, comes from repetition. Susan Brownell, in her study of Chinese body and training practices at the varsity level joked with her teammates that "'practice makes permanent.' By this we meant that once you learn a sport's techniques in a certain way, it is hard to change it later" (1995:12). Young instructors/coaches are less constrained by this principle than the older coaches of the competitive clubs. This is because the career coaches were trained in certain ways in their career as competitive swimmers. They had bought in, so to speak, to the older model of coaching. Now these coaches reproduce the training practices they experienced with their own group of swimmers. That is not to say that all competitive coaches were once swimmers but certainly the majority were at some point. Flexibility in a coach is a highly sought after quality. Young coaches often have the malleability to learn in new ways, but do not have the experience to be recognized in the hierarchy of Canadian competitive coaches. In this way, the practice of swimming as "sport is a part of the utopian striving of humankind because it is a liminal world of 'play' that offers an opportunity for controlled experimentation with new social structures" (Brownell 1995:33). Coaches, parents, and athletes have the ability to play around with varying coaching and training models as can been seen in the four swim club structures I have analyzed.

Performance and Bodies

The body is a discursive site with ever increasing webs of meaning ascribed to it by the social world. The athlete's body is doubly so as it is a contested site for the production of local and national symbols. As Brownell aptly puts it, "the horizons of an athlete's world never stray far from her body. The course of an athletic career entails development of

the ability to focus increasingly greater amounts of awareness on increasingly specific parts of the body" (1995:6). In the past this striving toward a "greater awareness" of one's own body has taken precedent over education of the mind. Divided into the camps of body and mind the "horizon of an intellectual's world lie[s] at the edge of an ever-expanding cosmos of ideas that seems to recede further and further from the body" (ibid:7). For today's youth this no longer needs to be the case, although many universities give great sums in scholarships to exceptional athletes with marginal grades. The education of high performance and elite athletes, particularly swimmers, can be structured in ways contrary to classic public school education. Special permission may be granted to young athletes so that they are able to continue standard public education outside of the classic nine-to-three schedule. With an increased emphasis on educating at the individual level and the flexibility of course hours, many of these children and youth do not have to sacrifice education for athletics. Rather both can be pursued at a high standard that leads to many more possibilities in the construction of an identity at an early age. Sport and academics both influence the construction of embodied practices in children. Yet these institutions no longer need to compete for space. This may allow children and youth more agency in creating an identity that is unique to their swim clubs and academic institutions of choice.

Taking a step back, it is not just how body image is constructed, but how people know how to use their bodies, what Marcel Mauss calls "techniques of the body" (Dyck & Archetti 2003:7). These are inscribed in the training of the body. Diving head first into water isn't the most natural of movements and is often accompanied by reactions of self-preservation, such as by any jerking or contorting motion that hinders the head from entering the water just after the hands (followed by the rest of the body). Dive training requires manipulation of the body and much practice. To "'train the body,' combines the two kinds of body, implying that one simultaneously trains the body-person and flesh-body" (Brownell 1995:17). The flesh-body is exactly that, one's musculature, ligaments, skeleton and

other organs required for the sport at hand. The body-person is one's individual identity manifested through body culture. Included under the umbrella of body culture are daily practices, understandings of bodies, lifestyles, and public displays of bodies – it is everything about one's social environment and culture that has been internalized and inscribed onto the body. Since training for swimmers most often occurs in groups of age and ability level, embarrassment, fear, and shame are emotions that shape the body-person and can matter a great deal in these social settings. Thus, we can "identify the body as a social as well as a psychological and biological phenomena" (Dyck & Archetti 2003:7).

As stated previously, training the body is a social event where athletes watch and learn from one another. Movements are mimicked by other athletes. Strokes and turns are scrutinized by coaches and spectators. Techniques are routinized and replicated in training regimes when they are valued or seen to give an edge to the athlete. Yet these movements are only one part of the practices in which we use our bodies. Sports are "part of the entire culture of the body" and are an arena for the display of the "body as a cultural artefact" (Bownell 1995:8). Brownell goes so far as to use the term "body culture" to describe the ways in which people use their bodies and how we can read those bodies:

> Body culture is a broad term that includes daily practices… It also includes the way these practices are trained into the body, the way the body is publicly displayed, and the lifestyle that is expressed in that display. Body culture reflects the internalization and incorporation of culture. Body culture is embodied culture (idib:10-11).

The meaning and significance of these bodies and performances are socially constructed in contested corporeal spaces. As any swimmer knows, a personal best or record breaking time in practice does not have the same meaning as a personal best or broken record at a sanctioned swim meet.

This moves my analysis of swimming from a recreational pursuit to that of sport. Noel Dyck and Eduardo Archetti argue that "sport and dance

combine techniques of the body, social practices and cultural imagination in ways that fuel the generation of embodied identities that reflect and address issues that do not necessarily begin or end on the dance-floor or field of play" (2003:15). Sports are seen to be appropriate areas for growth and development of the physical body. Sport can also been seen to inscribe the moral values of society. There is hope that sport activities will provide children and youth with skills that they can apply later in life as healthy, competent adults (Dyck 2012:4). Far from being the fun games which girls and boys engage in, their achievements in this realm of play can become the "objects and products of adults' 'work'" (Dyck 2012:3). For, as Dyck argues, "children's sports in Canada revolve around various modes of work that are engaged in by parents and coaches as well as the boys and girls who venture" (2012:3) onto the pool decks of club swimming.

Light and colleagues have identified three stages that children move through in their sport development: sampling phase, specializing phase, and an investment phase (2011:552). The first phase of this process is where children "sample a range of different sports with an emphasis on fun and deliberate (structured) play rather than formal training" (ibid:552). This first phase is where the developmental swim club places its emphasis. Run by a community recreation centre this trend is not surprising. From this first stage, children and youths "move from deliberate play to deliberate (structured) practice aimed at improving performance, [they] play fewer sports and engage in serious practice[s], [yet these practices] still maintain fun and enjoyment as a central element of participation" (ibid:552). These are the characteristics of the second specialization phase. The third and final phase of sport development is centered on investment. This "involves an increasing focus on one sport with a commitment to intensive training and competitive success at around the age of sixteen. In this phase young people 'invest' in a single sport" (ibid:552). By investing in the embodied activity of swimming at an early age, competitive and elite swim clubs attempt to narrow the focus of youth's constructed identity. Of course this does not bypass

the sampling of sports that parents recommend for their young children. At any moment children do have the ability and agency to "move sideways" (ibid:552) into activities geared more toward recreation or to even completely remove themselves from all sport activities. From my own experiences as an athlete and from research with parents of other athletes, there is usually a push for children to see an activity through the entire season before making a final decision on whether to continue on or drop out.

The Affective Body

So far I have described the body as being socially and culturally constructed. Yet, the ways in which we view our bodily identities may be in part constituted on the physical form and idea of an enclosed identifiable entity. The body is much more than this. It is a fluid form, exfoliating the space it occupies. Our bodies house the potential to shape themselves and their surrounding context. A certain practice I have observed in swim clubs is that of training 'the n body.' Here, n represents the potential of a young body to be formed into a range of swimmer types. Continued training applies the four strokes (i.e., butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle) to the n form: $n+x$, $n+z$, $n+y$, $n+v$. Yet, there are long, short and middle distances, relays, and individual medley (IM is a combination of all four strokes) races for all of the strokes in competition. Now we can take this body and add distance for all the strokes, $n+y+1$, so as to perfect the short distances before moving into longer swims, $n+x+2$, $n+z+3$, $n+v+4$, and so forth (Gil 1998:134). We now have a formula for producing from the abstract body any type of swimmer. Once we accept the possibility of being able to deduce all the relations between the body and objects we come to an abstract form, or abstract body. This body has the capacity to translate contexts and codes being itself an infralanguage. Jose Gil's infralanguage consists of an "abstract body [which] translates as it follows the totality of [the]…forms that compose it. It is in this sense that it can be said to be the 'basis' and 'matrix' of meaning" (1998:135-36). This fluidity of the body allows for it to be open to technological

investment. By applying these technologies to the body coaches seek to harness the affective potential of the body image. In the international spotlight of Olympic competition the Freestyler or 1Mer's body (say, Michael Phelps) can translate codes and contexts of national dedication. In Phelps' case, this is an American 'all or nothing' attitude. The US credo of "winning at any cost" combines a single mindedness of training regimes that attempts to break down swimmers by having them fail constantly in order to breed a frustration and desire that strives for something greater. I am not promoting this type of training ideal of the body, nor am I suggesting that it is the only coaching method used in the US. Instead, I am using it as an example of the way the infralanguage of the body conveys meaning without the use of standard language.

Gender and Affect

Gender is a point of high contention when discussing any athletic practice. Male and female athletes are separated in international tournaments. While we may think of the ideal body as tall, lean, muscular and defined, the swimmer's body can be presented as problematic for the "self-consciousness of individual performers" (Dyck & Archetti 2003:10). The exact dimensions of swimmers' bodies are as varied as snowflakes, yet they all have similar defining features: broad, muscular shoulders and latissimus dorsi muscles (lats), a tapering toward the waist, lean and muscular legs, lean and muscular arms, large feet, and hairless when racing. The reason I term this body image as problematic is because of popular media images of ideal bodies. For women, such a body is tall and skinny with little muscular definition, not unlike the supermodels who stride down *Victoria's Secret* fashion show runways. For men, the ideal body is the muscular body-builder, bulging muscles that seems to defy the human skeletal frame, such as that of Arnold Schwarzenegger in the 1982 Hollywood film *Conan the Barbarian.* Culture in the West is infested with Hollywood images of bodybuilder men and supermodel women. Advertising industries of all sorts use these images to create consumer demand

and "circulate affective energy in an affect economy" (Wissinger 2007:233). The surfacing of an affective sense that ideal body images can bring about demonstrates for Elizabeth Wissinger that "affectivity occurs between bodies, between physiological arousal and the conscious realization of it by bodies. Affect is social in that it constitutes a contagious energy, an energy that can be whipped up or dampened in the course of interaction" (2007:233).

To understand affect more closely I turn to Brian Massumi's *The Autonomy of Affect*. It can be hard to grasp Massumi's difference between emotion or feeling and that of affect. Using the autonomic nervous system as a starting point for his empirical study, combined with a theoretical grounding of affect, demands that readers have a grasp of psycho-linguistics and anatomy. Not surprisingly, most anthropologists did not minor in neuropsychology or do not read widely in this field. Thus, Massumi's work requires some background research in psychological theory to begin to understand the distinction between intensity and "form/content (qualification)" (Massumi 2002:25). Intensity to me seems close to the affective, in so far as it is a full body response that is autonomic.

Language, relevant to the production of knowledge and discourse, falters when attempting to describe affect, which is a wholly felt sensation. But Massumi does provide a good differentiation of emotion and affect: "Emotion is qualified intensity" whereas "affect is unqualified... not ownable or recognizable" (Massumi 2002:28). To put it simply, emotion can be targeted, infused with function and meaning, and be ordered into semantic and narrative structures. On the other hand, affect denies linguistic trappings while being relatively autonomous in nature.

Hard to grasp is the realm of the virtual. The half second of space between perception and action composes the virtual realm. This all happens before perception in a liminal space. Simply put the virtual is a *"realm of potential"* (Massumi 2000:30, emphasis in original). This idea of potentiality comes into play when trying to define affect in relation to its own

effects and conscious knowledge. If you have affective potential or are caught in an affective state then the inclusion of the idea of this potential creates affection. In essence, this makes affect a virtual process. This tie to the virtual is what makes affect autonomous as we cannot pinpoint where it happens. It has the potential to happen or fizzle out like quantum particles. Akin to this virtual realm is Wissinger's example of the "x-factor," that super-models cultivate or have naturally. It is "in some ways immeasurable, but constitutes a necessary ingredient nonetheless" (2007:237).

Gendered Bodies

I have strayed far from the gendered body of the youth club swimmer. But the affective potential of images in popular media has an immediate effect on the embodied identity of swimmers. As stated earlier, the inverted triangle on top a popsicle-stick that is the swimmer's body has an impact on the self-consciousness of young athletes. Girls may think that they need to lose weight, slim down, wear makeup, or be curvy thanks to the technological transmission of the ideal model by the affective economy. The affective economy is everything used to create, transmit, and sell us an ideal image, an image that plays off the emotional intensity that we feel. Yet, this is opposed to a healthy, strong swimmer. Not unlike the gymnast, the swimmer's well-defined musculature is considered unattractive in the fashion industry. A broad shouldered female swimmer may think that her embodied identity is more masculine than feminine. This may become problematic when identity is so malleable in the early years of development.

Many coaches understand the vulnerability of the self-conscious identity creation of young athletes, but some do not. That said, all coaches and parents know that the human body goes through much change come puberty. Parents and athletes often do not comprehend the full ramifications of physiological growth. The female physiological body is special in this regard. Male bodies tend to be easier to predict through the growth phase of puberty as they often get taller and fill out to accommodate muscle growth. Female bodies do the same but have

the additional complication of breast and hip growth. From the conversations that I have had with different coaches, puberty for a female places her swimming career in a liminal zone. Different coaches have noted that female race times in certain events do not decrease (that is, get faster) between the ages of 14 and 18. Perhaps these coaches didn't have great female swimmers in that age group. More likely, though, is that this shows that the growth of a female's body hinders her performance in the pool. This lack of increased performance is doubly problematized if we look at the example of a female triple-A breaststroker who grows large breasts during puberty. Essentially, this can end her career path as a competitive breaststroker, not from her own lack of practice and dedication to the sport, but rather the sheer amount of drag her body now creates in the water. For this reason coaches cannot accurately predict whether a female athlete will be able to compete at the Olympic level until she has reached the age of 16 or older and has gone through the initial stages of puberty. The development of the young female athlete in the swimming world is done as roundly as possible, attempting to make them competent at all strokes and distances. If this is done well it can place them on a competitive track with the hope for advantageous physical growth during puberty.

For men there is a different reaction to the affective-economy body-image industry. Earlier in this essay I suggested that the body image presented to young boys and men today is that of a body builder. When this is not the case, and the media lens is focused on athletes, the body image still is presented in a body builder's spectrum and the body's ability to lift raw weight. Take for example popular television commercials for Reebok. This sports gear company uses hockey players to play on the affective force that these cultural heroes, such as Sidney Crosby, have in Canadian society. In one particular recent commercial you can see hockey players pulling sleds piled with weights and doing squats and jumps while carrying Olympic bars with weights on the end (Brown 2012). The narrator in the background mimics an internal dialogue with 'the self.' He asks, "How do I want to live my life?

To live my dream or to dream bigger" (Brown 2012). During this narration, viewers are shown images of hockey players scoring goals and players doing weight training off the ice. For young athletes their dreams and ambitions are presented to them as involving weight training and building the strength of the body. But this body is a hockey player's body. This body moves along the medium of ice and its techniques involve physical contact with other bodies vying for position, an exfoliation of the body into the surrounding space. These images affect the self-identity of young athletes, many of whom are unable at the age of 12 or 17 to compartmentalize the different embodied forms of athletes in different sports. Thus, a desire to build muscle and put on body mass may crop up in a swimmers mind as the proper way to become a successful athlete and superstar.

Power and strength are not tied to weight training, bulking up, or being physically powerful in the embodied identity of the swimmer (that is to say, to be able to knock someone bigger than you to the ground using your own body weight). A streamlined and lean body is the ideal body for the competitive swimmer. Streamline is a hydrodynamic term denoting the efficiency of an object to move through a body of water. Strength is associated with the body's ability to anchor hands and arms in the water to pull the body forward, exfoliating the space in a linear direction. The legs provide the kick out the back end, sort of like an outboard motor on a boat. To maintain the continuous pace through the water over short and long distances requires every muscle to be strong. Bulk muscle mass will not make one faster in the water. In fact, it will most likely slow a swimmer down. Any extra weight one has to move is represented in a larger profile which, in turn, creates extra resistance in the water. The ideal male bodybuilder form that the media presents to young athletes is anathema to their success as a swimmer.

Efficiency of the swimmer and the male body involves shaving or waxing down excess hair before competition. Shaving and waxing is most readily equated to female practice in Western society. Next to the burly lumberjack type of the manly man hockey player image, which seems to constitute masculinity in Canadian society, the shaved, slim swimmer body in a skin tight swimsuit can look wimpy. Young boys and teenagers probably wouldn't want their school peers to see them shaving their legs let alone standing on a starting block in a small Speedo suit that resembles underwear. What does this do for the body image, the identity of young athletes in the swimming world? At this point in my research I have not been able to discuss this with young athletes. But this does point to the socially mediated nature of individually experienced "body discoveries" (Dyck & Archetti 2003:10) as young males and females immerse themselves into the embodied practices of swimming.

Swimming with Others, Performing as an Individual

What would a swim meet or practice look and feel like if you were the only one there? Is racing the clock or attempting to beat a record valuable if it is done as a solitary endeavor? Dyck and Archetti make a penetrating observation when they say, "an individual's embodied discoveries or achievements cannot be readily verified or discursively celebrated without the assistance of knowing witnesses" (2003:10). To strike this point home, does the time of 59.54 seconds for an age group swimmer in a 100-meter breaststroke race mean anything to non-swimmers? If one is a non-competitive swimmer, without getting into a pool and trying it yourself, it simply is an amount of time. Swimming can be a leisure activity, but it can also be a sport and "like ritual, dance, and theatre, sport is a performance genre with a certain audience appeal" (Brownell 1995:28). It requires participants, both in the pool and on the deck, to create the spectacles which are swim meets. Without the comparison of another body attached to a name and identity, swim times mean little to age group swimmers. Coaches who have been involved in the sport for many years may have a different take. These same coaches are equipped with developmental charts that display times which athletes should be accomplishing in their respective events as they develop at different ages.

Michael Phelps, with his success at the 2008 and 2012 Summer Olympics and his standing as the winningest Olympian of all time, placed the world of competitive swimming at the forefront of people's minds around the world. The name "Michael Phelps" is now commonplace in North America, demonstrating that "an individual's body is not entirely his or her own, but rather, is subjected to demands and pressures that constantly challenge the notion of individual autonomy" (Brownell 1995:23). For Phelps is an American national hero, no longer just an elite American athlete. Before the podium placements, not many outside of elite competitive swimming knew or even cared about the athlete from Baltimore, Maryland, which emphasizes how "sports practices mediate between the private world of everyday body techniques and the public world of shared performances and, thus, play an important role in the formation of public opinion" (Brownell 1995:29).

More attention is being brought to bear on the athlete in sports such as swimming because of its seemingly individual pursuit. Even relay races can be broken down to the individual swimmers' performances with blame or fame being cast on a particular athlete's leg of the race. All practices and races are watched intensely at the elite competitive level. Likewise, "easy" developmental meets are also watched closely even though everyone is declared a winner to some extent. As a lifeguard myself, I have noticed how "coaches monitored swimmers by pacing along the poolside while external surveillance also operated through authority figures such as lifeguards, poolside helpers and parents with numerous individuals monitoring the poolside during training sessions [and meets]" (Lang 2012:25-6). Fellow athletes are not removed from this monitoring gaze. At younger ages, this gaze rarely results in self- or peer-disciplining and routinely results in joking, teasing, chatting, and tomfoolery that children engage in on a regular basis. Coaches and parents try to:

> ...regulate [children's] behaviours towards accepted standards. For swimmers, exposed to a discourse of physical preparation that equates compliance with strict training regimes and controlled lifestyles with success, these standards included undertaking frequent, intense training sessions, adhering to strict discipline and recording their times, stroke and heart rate, session attendance and weight. Guided by this discourse of physical preparation, athletes learned to submit to these normalized training protocols and were sculpted into compliant, docile bodies (Lang 2012:32-3).

I am not in full agreement with Melanie Lang's "docile body" analysis of how swimmers are developed. Docility, to my mind evokes notions of a master-slave relationship whereby the slave is meant to be docile, easy to control, and not impassioned in their bodily practices.

The swimmer-coach relationships that I have observed are anything but this. Both parties are often highly enthusiastic in their training of bodily techniques, in the construction of identity, and in the embodied practices surrounding swimming. Swimmers may decorate their kick boards with club mottos or inspirational sayings, cookies are baked by team members and parents with club insignia, and club caps and other clothing is worn with pride. If docility of the body can be equated to the potential which is Massumi's "abstract body" (1998:136) then Lang's training regimes still are more closely related to military rule rather than the "*mentor*-swimmer" (2010:33 emphasis in original) relationship that her participants sought after.

Conclusion

I have described some of the ways that the body is constructed in the world of swimming. Media, Olympic heroes, coaches, parents, and peer groups all have a hand in shaping the way children see and use their bodies in and out of the pool. The training practices that children are subject to shape their physical bodies and often their identities as they pursue excellence at the elite level, or participate "just for the fun of it." Either way swimmers go through extensive exercises not only in the pool, but also on dry land in the training of their bodies. "Activation," what other sports term "warming-up," is required before every workout in the pool.

Activation involves loosening up joints and muscles by swinging arms and legs through their full range of motion. Most warm-up routines are designed to get blood flowing to areas not used outside of the water, which can help prevent injury. Children take full advantage of these moments to socialize by catching up on the day's school activities and discussing what will or has happened on their precious days off and while away from their peers. Here is a place where children bond, make closer friendships within their groups, and establish a sense of belonging. It is during the pre-workout activation sessions and the post-workout mandatory stretching that children often exhibit the varying levels of a swimmer's embodied identity. Some have bought into the training regimes required of them, while others pretend and put on a show of complying with the demands of the club and coach they are attached to.

Age group club swimming can be far more than a recreational activity that parents put their children into. It can include a large assortment of activities and practices that range from that of the developmental club enrolled swimmer to that of competitive international podiums. Inside these fields, identity is contested and shaped and bodies are subjected to regimes of discipline and training, all in the attempt to form individuals who will embody the identity of their sport in and out of the pool.

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The Current Approach to Cannabis Possession in Canada: Issues and Alternatives

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Introduction

Ganja, bud, green, weed, dope and pot: the endless list of terms for cannabis displays the popularity of this illicit substance. Cannabis is the most commonly consumed illegal drug around the world (Room, Fischer, Hall, Lenton, & Reuter, 2010, p.3). Marijuana use far surpasses other commonly known drugs such as opium and cocaine. In fact, 96% of countries report cannabis consumption; it is especially prevalent in Western nations such as Canada and the United States (Babor et al., 2010, p.28). Not only is it already the most highly consumed illegal drug, but the popularity of cannabis is expanding around the globe (Babor et al., p.29). The alternate state of pleasure provided by this psychoactive drug makes it a common choice for youth and young adults. Popular support for the drug displays changing attitudes in society (Room et al., p.73). However, despite liberal views by many members of the public and an ever-growing consumer market, cannabis continues to be criminalized by many nations. Canada and a large majority of other countries across the world prohibit the possession of cannabis. This criminalization is the result of multiple factors including international obligations and political platforms (Room, p.143). Policy makers suggest that the consumption of cannabis is harmful to the social good. Nonetheless, evidence demonstrates that the current criminalization in Canada has been ineffective to a great extent. When examining scientific research, it is clear that the government has failed to adequately consider the low level of harm cannabis poses to the health of citizens, especially in comparison to legal substances such as alcohol. Additionally, analyses of current policy practices demonstrate a failure to achieve the set out goal of reducing the consumption of cannabis. Instead, criminalization has created further social issues. As society evolves it will be imperative for policy makers to consider reworking Canada's current legislation around the possession of cannabis, enabling citizens and the criminal justice system to benefit from the changes rather than being hindered.

Cannabis has had a long history of use by members of society both socially and, in some cases, for religious purposes (Room et al., 2010, p.49). In Canada and other western nations, the popularity of the drug emerged during the 1960s among youth (Room et al., p.4). Boyd (2013) points out that this surge in the use of marijuana was a result of the civil rights era creating a rebellious culture amongst young people (p.38). Evidence shows that there seems to be global trends associated with marijuana use; consumption increased in the 1970s, decreased during the 1980s and peaked once again in the 1990s (Babor et al., 2010, p.222-225). Today, statistics show that 40% of American adults have reported using cannabis in their lifetime. Furthermore, use usually occurs during late adolescence or early adulthood and dwindles off by the late twenties or early thirties (Room et al., p.5). Unlike other illicit substances, cannabis is readily available in many affluent countries. It is most often produced domestically because of the ease of growing the plant (Room et al., p.58). Illegal markets distributing and producing the drug do exist. However, cannabis is quite frequently obtained outside of these markets through personal social networks (Babor et al., p.73). Research suggests that the number of individuals distributing the drug has increased in recent years, likely due to the demand and popularity of the drug (Room et al., p.60). Cannabis obviously has a significant presence for

drug users, but the policies established by the Canadian government in response to the substance have been largely ineffective.

The Canadian Approach

Canada's *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA) outlines the prohibitions surrounding the production, distribution and possession of cannabis. Though this substance has been deemed illegal, there was no debate in the Canadian Parliament when this label was established in 1923 (Boyd, 2013, p.36). Gordon (2006) argues that criminalizing cannabis was the result of attempts to inhibit the spread of Caribbean culture in Canada (p.64). Others point to international obligations through the 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs as well as immense pressure from the American government (Babor et al., 2010, p.205). Regardless of why cannabis was initially criminalized, evidence reveals that the CDSA provisions on the possession of this substance have not been as efficient as the government might have hoped.

Cannabis and its derivatives are found in Schedule II of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*. The drug does have a less severe punishment available in comparison to other substances. Under s. 7(2), the production of cannabis is an indictable offence punishable for a term of no more than seven years; other illicit substances have a maximum life sentence. The possession of the drug can be charged as an indictable or summary offence with a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars. Although more leniency has been provided in regards to cannabis, the prohibition of the drug still accounts for at least half of arrests under the CDSA (Room et al., 2010, p.83). Gordon (2006) suggests that the provisions in the legislation allow for an increase in police powers (p.66). This results in small-time dealers and individuals in possession for personal use to be targeted (Gordon, 2006, p.74). Due to the significant number of people charged with possession of marijuana, fines are more commonly imposed by courts rather than jail time (Room et al., p.66). In addition, conditional sentencing has also become a common diversion practice (Room et al., p.83). Nonetheless, these alternatives still produce a

great burden on individuals and the criminal justice system. For persons who carry a criminal record for cannabis possession and distribution, there are many barriers to employment, stigma and strain on social relationships (Room et al., p.66). The use of conditional sentencing widens the net of who may come in contact with police and continues to produce the stigma of being associated with the criminal justice system (Room et al., p.80). The experiences within Canadian courts also demonstrate the inefficiency of the current approach to cannabis. In *R. v. Readhead* the accused has three previous charges for trafficking marijuana. As pointed out by the British Columbia Court of Appeal, Mr. Redhead's past experiences with the criminal justice system did not deter or rehabilitate him in any way. In *R. v. Evers,* the accused lacked remorse for producing marijuana and she explicitly stated that she intended to continue her grow operation in the future. Nevertheless, the trial judge did not feel the need to impose jail time on Evers. In fact, the fine that was levied on the accused at trial was unlikely to be pursued for collection by the Crown. The approach outlined in the CDSA creates unfair targeting, unnecessary arrests and causes the public to view police powers negatively (Room et al., p.73-74). Rather than arbitrarily prohibiting the possession of marijuana, the government should consider scientific research on the actual effects the substance has on the health of Canadians.

Effects of Cannabis Use

In *R. v. Malmo-Levine; R. v. Caine,* the Supreme Court of Canada declared the prohibition of cannabis as an issue of public health and safety. The majority ruled that peace, safety, order and health all justified criminalization of the possession of marijuana. In addition, the prohibition was viewed by the court as a way of protecting vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women and schizophrenic individuals, from the negative effects of the drug. Although the court's ruling was seemingly beneficial to society, the reasons provided by the judiciary display the current lack of knowledge around the actual harms of cannabis. Evidence shows that the drug has historically been used in religious practices

because of the sense of relaxation and sensory distortion it provides (Room et al., 2010, p.16). About ten percent of individuals who consume the drug become dependent, a rate that is extremely low in comparison to other illicit and legal drugs (Room et al., p.5). In fact, Room et al. (2010) point out that tobacco, a drug that is licit and readily available to Canadians, has a dependency rate of 32% (p.24). Over dosing on marijuana is an extremely rare occurrence. Nonetheless, a high dosage can impair ones immune system (Room et al., p.17-18). Those who are dependent can face both cardiovascular and respiratory issues such as chronic bronchitis. In addition, research suggests that high levels of cannabis use can be linked to lung and prostate cancer (Room et al., p. 27). Room et al. (2010) found that addiction treatment admission rates in Canada were greatest for cannabis users (p.70). However, the researchers caution that this may be a result of referrals from the criminal justice system and an increased awareness of the harms associated with the drug (Room et al., p.71). Despite of the negative effects of high levels of cannabis use, it is vital to acknowledge the fact that most individuals do not become dependent on the drug. Rather, most will experiment with cannabis use only a few times in their life (Room et al., p.50). Of course, the short term effects of marijuana also have negative consequences. Reactions are delayed when one is under the influence of cannabis which makes operating a motor vehicle dangerous. Still, in comparison to the legal substance of alcohol, this level of risk is relatively low (Room et al., p.17). Indeed, cannabis is a minimal risk drug even when factoring in both alcohol and tobacco (Room et al., p.40). Like all drugs, cannabis use has negative outcomes. However, the evidence shows that this does not justify the prohibition for the possession of the drug. Legal substances can be more damaging and addicting than cannabis is capable of being, but it is still criminalized in Canadian society. Instead of focusing on the evidence and promoting the health and well-being of Canadians, the prohibition on the possession of marijuana leads to further harm for users.

Consequences of Criminalizing the Possession of Cannabis

Policy makers rationalize the tough on crime approach to cannabis as a way of preventing use through deterrence as well as interference with distributors and producers. Room et al. (2010) state that this justification cannot be upheld; an increase in arrests under the CDSA has not led to a decrease in the use of marijuana (p.69). On the contrary, the number of distributors and consumers has increased in recent years (Room et al., 2010, p.60). Rather than preventing the use of this illicit substance, the current prohibitions expose users to illegal markets. Room et al. (2010) note that the cannabis illegal markets do not have the same level of violence as those of other illicit substances (p.61). Nonetheless, exposure to these environments as a way of obtaining cannabis leads to the potential for the introduction to harder drugs such as opium and cocaine (Room et al., p.33). In *R. v. Malmo-Levine; R. v. Caine* the dissenting Justice Arbour stated that criminalizing the possession of cannabis punishes those who pose little risk to society and violates their right to liberty under s.7 of the *Charter.* Justice Arbour went on to argue that the harmful effects of marijuana do not justify the prohibition of the possession of this drug. Additionally, the idea of protecting "vulnerable groups" in society is illogical as imprisoning them for cannabis possession does not assist them in any way. Though the majority of the Supreme Court of Canada did not agree with Justice Arbours' views, his argument is consistent with the research evidence surrounding this societal issue.

Policy Alternatives

Criminalizing the possession of cannabis is harmful to Canadians. The government may consider looking to other countries as a way of modifying the current system and diminishing the unnecessary damage to citizens found in possession of cannabis. Though the substance is generally criminalized around the globe, there are examples of nations that have worked to minimize the risks and consequences associated with prohibiting the possession of the drug. One of the best known

examples comes out of the Netherlands. This European nation famously takes a *de facto* legalization approach to cannabis (Room et al., 2010, p.92). Although the drug is still deemed illegal, personal use of marijuana is tolerated (Room et al., p.92). Cannabis is made available through 'coffee shops'. These dispensaries help prevent consumers from being exposed to illegal markets (Room et al., p.94). It is important to take into account that, even with this *de facto* legalization in place, the Netherlands has a lower rate of cannabis use than the United States (Babor et al., 2010, p.32). This evidence demonstrates that the legalization of marijuana will not necessarily lead to an increase in use among citizens. However, the approach taken by the Netherlands is not without its downfalls. Issues arise out of the supply of and demand for cannabis. Confusion occurs due to the fact that the drug is still illegal; the production of the substance often continues to come from illegitimate, criminal sources (Room et al., p.95).

Another means taken on by Spain and Portugal is the *de jure* legalization of the possession of cannabis. This scheme allows for personal use quantities to be carried and consumed by citizens (Room et al., p.97). The formal legalization of possession for personal use helps to ensure that an individual's rights and liberties are not violated by the state's prohibition of drugs. Nevertheless, this approach also has disadvantages when considering the illegal production and trafficking of illicit substances.

A third method is the decriminalization of the possession of cannabis. This system was adopted in Western Australia. Rather than criminalizing the substance, fines are imposed as a way of preventing the stigma of the criminal justice system (Room et al., p.66). Studies show that this civic approach does not lead to an increase in use (Room et al., p.112). Additionally, those who were subject to fines, as opposed to the criminal justice system, had suffered fewer negative consequences in relation to employment and personal relationships (Room et al., p. 114). The main criticism directed to this process is that people from disadvantaged groups, such as the indigenous population and visible minorities, are often burdened financially by the imposition of fines (Room et al., p.116). Members of the middle and upper classes do not feel the same level of impact if they are found to be in possession of marijuana. If this method were to be taken on, considerations would have to be made as to where the money from the imposed fines would be streamed (Room et al., p.127). Also, thought would have to be put into how to avoid net widening by authorities.

Each of these approaches has advantages and implications that the Canadian government may wish to consider in reformulating the current legislation on the possession of cannabis. However, even with these examples in place, Canada's international obligations need to be kept in mind to determine what kinds of changes, if any, policy makers can actually implement.

International Obligations

The international 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs has had a significant impact on Canada's current approach to cannabis possession. The Convention places the substance under Schedule I as an extremely harmful drug (Room et al., 2010, p.11). Babor et al. (2010) state that this classification was largely a result of heavy pressure from the United States to have cannabis added into the agreement (p.205). The World Health Organization (WHO) made attempts to move cannabis to Schedule IV of the convention, a class containing low risk drugs (Room et al., p.11). Research conducted by WHO suggests that marijuana does not have significant impacts on health in comparison to other drugs. Nonetheless, through influence from the United States Office of National Drug Policy, this reclassification was rejected without strong justification (Babor et al., 2010, p.24). The United States government claimed that moving cannabis to Schedule IV would cause tension among countries (Babor et al., p.214). Room et al. (2010) point out that without cannabis in the Convention, the war on drugs would not be viewed as a global level issue (p.9). The United States has played a leading role in keeping cannabis central to the war on drugs; this approach provides the nation with a platform for American policy (Babor et al., p.214).

In addition to the 1961 agreement, the United States government works to certify countries that comply with international agreements to criminalize cannabis. Failure to meet the standards set out leads to a loss of certification which threatens foreign assistance and funding in development (Babor et al., p.215). This immense pressure from the American government plays an imperative role in criminalizing cannabis in Canada. On a broader level, failure to comply with the convention would also cause the nation to be viewed as uncooperative globally (Babor et al., p.216). There would likely be major harm to international relations if Canada chose to legalize the possession of cannabis. Although views are changing around marijuana, it is unlikely that Canada, or any other nation, will challenge international obligations on its own. Room et al. (2010) point out that countries would have to work together to de-schedule cannabis from the Convention or work to create a new treaty altogether (p.129-136). If Canada were to follow the best available evidence on cannabis, the nation would challenge the current international law by legalizing the substance.

Considerations & Conclusions

The legalization of cannabis in Canada would assist in preventing the harms associated with the prohibition of the substance. Although crime will always exist, allowing people to freely consume the drug would significantly reduce unnecessary arrests and the stigma associated with illicit substances. The government would, however, need to put serious consideration into how cannabis would be produced and distributed. There would need to be strong regulation and systems in place to prevent illegal activity in the production of the substance (Room et al., 2010, p.103). Room et al. (2010) suggest adopting the model used for the distribution of tobacco (p.159). The government would need to work to limit advertisements, prevent minors from accessing the drug and regulate the potency and quantity of the substance (Room et al., p.171). Most importantly, there would need to be education on the harms associated with cannabis use. Babor et al. (2010) advise that the availability of social and health services are imperative to reducing crime, disease and other dangers linked to drug use (p.242). Treatment has been shown to be more effective than punishment (Babor et al., 2010, p.252). With the legalization of cannabis, evidence-based treatment would be vital to put in place so that the health of Canadians could be protected (Babor et al., p.248). Programs in schools would provide a way of reducing use by youth. Focus on social skills for children and the management skills of teachers have been shown to be effective in deterring drug use (Babor et al., p.110-113). Programs for families surrounding communication have also been linked to reduced rates of marijuana consumption (Babor et al., p.114). Accessibility to such resources could help address the actual problems associated with cannabis use. The legalization of cannabis could be a positive step for Canadian society if the implementation is conducted thoughtfully by the government.

Cannabis is a commonly used drug around the world and its popularity is growing. Canada's current approach prohibits the possession of the substance. Although the government and judiciary claim that the criminalization is for the protection of citizens, this idea is not well justified. In comparison to other illicit and legal substances, cannabis poses a low risk to drug users. There are countries that have taken different approaches to the possession of the drug. *De facto* and *de jure* legalization as well as decriminalization are a few of the systems that have been established to accommodate the increasingly liberal views around cannabis. Nonetheless, international obligations and pressure from the United States has prevented Canada from legalizing the drug. If policy makers were to follow the current research on cannabis, the possession of the substance would be a lawful act. Legalizing cannabis could help reduce the harms that come out of prohibition. However, the government would have to consider factors such as regulation and education to ensure that the health and well-being of Canadians is kept in mind. As society becomes more accepting of cannabis and research demonstrates the low risks associated with the drug, Canada will need to seriously consider altering the current approach to cannabis possession.

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Carrying the Cross: Being Gay, Catholic, and Filipino

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Introduction

Everyday we are confronted with topics that show the interplay of religion and society, topics that range from the mundane to the transformative. In fact, religion plays a huge part in an individual's holistic being that it can affect the way he or she articulates with and to the society he or she lives in. Furthermore, throughout the course of history, religion is considered a huge part in better understanding a particular society and that society's citizens' way of life (Durkheim, 1915; Orsi, 2003). However, certain religion is more prevalent over the others and this difference in scope is evident in some parts of the globe. In the Philippines, for instance, the number of Filipino Catholics reached 76.18 million out of the country's estimated population of 96.8 million (Uy, 2013). This is a considerable statistic for it shows how the majority of the population shares collective views and beliefs as a result of being part of the same religion. Nonetheless, it is important to note that although the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, it is noticeable that there is more widespread acceptance of homosexuality than might be expected.

Moreover, reports like this make us reflect and wonder about the impacts and effects of certain religions in the lives of individuals in a particular society (i.e. The Philippines) that they dominate; also, it makes us question how the prevalence of this religion impacts the lives of people, more specifically, the way it affects the lives of the members of a historically marginalized group such as the LGBTQ community. Thus, in this essay, I will try to explore the lives of the LGBTQ community in the Philippines, most specifically, Catholic Filipino gay men. And I will argue that although these men embrace their homosexuality, they still do this in and around the norms, values, and teachings of the

Roman Catholic Church. In doing so, I hope to make the reader better understand both Filipino homosexuality and Catholicism in the Philippines. As Robert Orsi puts in his argument, in order to better understand a particular religion, it is best to look at the collective memories and shared experiences of adherents rather than just at official doctrine (Orsi, 2003).

To better contextualize this topic, this essay is divided into different sections. In the first section, I present some of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines and its views and stance in regards to the issue of homosexuality. Then, I contextualize this by presenting the Catholic Filipino gay men and their ways of operating both as catholic and homosexual in the contemporary time. In the same section, I provide some examples and narratives on how the image of the Catholic Filipino gay man is presented in the media. The essay ends with reflections on the effect of the Roman Catholic church in the lives of Catholic Filipino gay men and an analysis of how male homosexuality is articulated within the context of a predominantly Catholic society such as the Philippines.

Catholicism in the Philippines: The Paradox of Faith

"All passions are dishonorable, for the soul is even more prejudiced and degraded by sin than is the body by disease; but the worst of all passions is lust between men.... not only are their passions [of the homosexuals] satanic, but their lives are diabolic... There is nothing, absolutely nothing more mad or damaging than this perversity."
-*Saint John Chrysostom ,347-407*

As a predominantly Catholic Christian nation, albeit with a substantial Muslim minority, the

Philippines is a unique case in Asia for it sports a wide variety of modes of how homosexuality is expressed rather than the usual dominance of one stereotypical model (Dynes & Donaldson, 1992). This can be traced from the country's history of being a Spanish colony in the mid-Sixteenth century. During this time, the islands were put through the inquisition- an inquisition that put a number of gay men to death. However, Christian homophobia never took root, giving the Philippines the reputation of being one of the most tolerant nations on Earth (Dynes & Donaldson, 1992, pp. xii).

In fact, in a recent survey, the Philippines run against the existing global trend, which states that the centrality of religion in people's lives is a negative correlate of homosexual acceptance. In other words, the more important religion is for a particular country, the less tolerance is exhibited (Bernal, 2013, para. 11). Furthermore, the result shows how the country acts as the strongest outlier in the pool of sampled regions (see figure 1), registering an above 50% tolerance rate despite a high level of religiosity (Bernal, 2013, para. 12).

However, regardless of how the aforementioned views are uplifting, the results bring into question how acceptance is understood in a country that is predominantly Catholic. In fact, in a recent study, Filipino Catholics reached 76.18 million out of the country's estimated population of 96.8 million (Uy, 2013). This statistics then bring into the question how and what kind of tolerance is demonstrated in the graph above. Hence, in this section, I will briefly provide an overview of the nature of the Roman Catholic faith in the Philippines and I will argue that it provides a paradoxical way of reading the intersections of religion and sexuality; this is due to the fact that although the Catholic church promotes discourses of love and acceptance, it also provides a long list of narratives that portray homosexuality as 'sinful' and 'immoral'. Also, I will discuss how the Catholic Church tends to medicalize homosexuality; hence, perpetuating the idea that the Catholic Filipino gay man is deviant. Then, I will close this section by arguing that the Roman Catholic Church's portrayal of homosexuality as an ailment and immoral further problematizes the relationship of the church and Filipino gay men in the Philippines.

Less Tolerance for Homosexuality in More Religious Countries
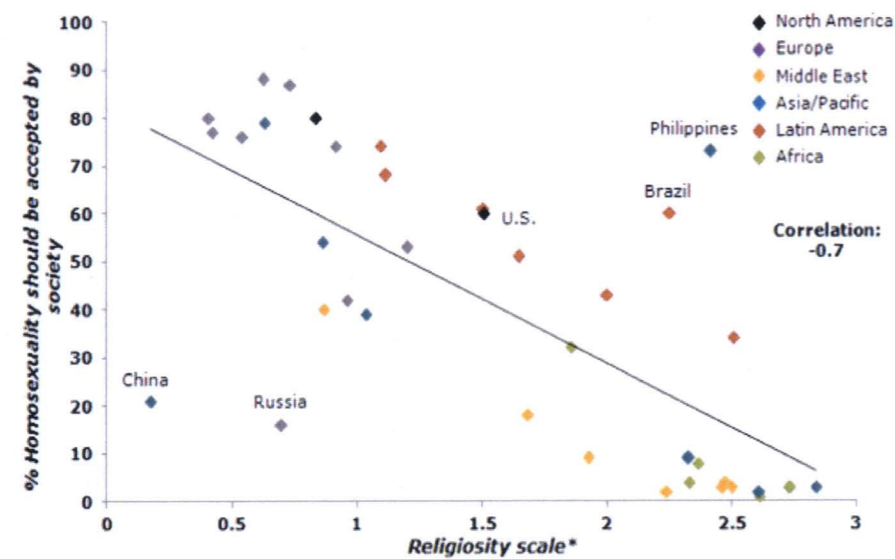
Figure 1. Correlation of Religiosity and society's views on homosexual acceptance
(Buena Bernal, May 11,2014)

In general, individual's and society's understanding of the intersection between homosexuality and spirituality is not generally explicit and is expressed using a complex paradigm. In fact, most often than not, the basic issue is framed in terms of the relationship between institutionalized religion and homosexuality, that is, the position or policy of a given denomination or religious group on same-sex relation, its theological stance of the topic (often viewed as an ethical concern), and its formal sanctions against those who may choose to engage in same-sex behavior, in defiance of established religious norms (Boisvert, 2007, p. 32). For instance, the Roman Catholic tradition, like Christians everywhere, has a variety of ways of evaluating homosexuality (Jung, 2007, p. 191; Brom, 2004). In fact, according to Patricia Jung (2007), "though Rome has spoken extensively about homosexuality in recent decades, many moral theologians, pastors, and ordinary lay Catholics are engaged in a public and vigorous debate about the Vatican's teachings on this matter (p. 191).

In theory, all Catholics believe that loyalty and fidelity to the church's living tradition require adherence to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church (Jung, 2007). In this sense, Catholics understand the church's teachings to be authoritative; however, this authority's weight is malleable and relative. Moreover, all faithful Catholics agree that these teachings warrant their respect and are, in some sense, morally formative (Jung, 2007). However, interpretations of these teachings vary. For some faithful Catholics, following the teachings means humble submission and silent obedience; others may in good conscience disagree and engage in public conversation about a particularly controversial matter (Jung, 2007, pp. 191-192).

For instance, the Roman Catholic Church's view on homosexuality has sparked various views throughout the years (Martin, 2013; Boisvert, 2007), and has recently gained more popularity, especially alongside the rise of equal rights movements. In its articulation of homosexuality, the Catholic Church uses discourses that are consistent with the teachings of the church about love and

acceptance; however, the church also employs discourses of sinfulness and homosexuality as immoral, such as the one demonstrated in the beginning of this section. As a further example, Robert H. Brom, the Bishop of San Diego, points out:

> Every human being is called to receive a gift of divine sonship, to become a child of God by grace. However, to receive this gift, we must reject sin, including homosexual behavior— that is, acts intended to arouse or stimulate a sexual response regarding a person of the same sex. The Catholic Church teaches that such acts are always violations of divine and natural law.
>
> Homosexual desires, however, are not in themselves sinful. People are subject to a wide variety of sinful desires over which they have little direct control, but these do not become sinful until a person acts upon them, either by acting out the desire or by encouraging the desire and deliberately engaging in fantasies about acting it out. People tempted by homosexual desires, like people tempted by improper heterosexual desires, are not sinning until they act upon those desires in some manner. (Brom 2004, para. 1-2).

This definition encapsulates how the Roman Catholic Church views and polices homosexuality and homosexual desires. However, it is important to note that homosexual members are not necessarily excommunicated from the Church; nonetheless, their homosexuality is contained by the enforcement of rules and teachings that perpetuate narratives and discourses that promote 'living a sin-free lifestyle' (Jung, 2007). In line with this, the Catholic Church promotes the idea of life-long chastity and sexual denial to homosexual believers. They believe that by doing so, gay believers recognize the will of God by associating this suffering in the way Christ bear his cross (Jung. 2007. p. 192).

On this background, we can contextualize the current milieu of the Philippine gay scene. One can infer that although the country is relatively more tolerant when it comes to homosexuals and homosexuality, the influence of the teachings of the

Roman Catholic Church (and or organized religion) can still be felt (Martin, 2013). In fact, this influence has certain implications for the way Catholic Filipino gay men position themselves in the social order. For instance, in an effort to encourage Catholic Filipino gay men to come out of the closet and to be 'honest' with God and themselves, Archbishops Paciano Aniceto and Oscar Cruz of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) promote the narrative that identifies homosexuality as a medical condition (Dizon, 2011).

According to Cruz, "homosexuality is [a] kind of sexual *misidentity* caused by some hormonal imbalance... It is a sexual inclination. [A product of biology]...we are born as boys and girls, there is no third sex, end of story. But because of hormonal imbalance, some girls have the tendency to become boys and some boys have the tendency to become girls" (Dizon, 2011). Statements like this are not unusual, for medicalization is how the Roman Catholic Church in Philippines has dealt with issues of homosexuality (Martin, 2013; Dizon, 2011). In her book *Straight to Jesus*, Tanya Erzen (2006, p. 38) mentions that through the help of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, Frank Worthen began a weekly meeting to help men that are dealing with homosexuality overcome their homosexual desires. However, Erzen stresses that unlike men attending the US counterpart, Love in Action, Filipino men who came to *Bagong Pag-asa* (translated as *New Hope*) were married but engaging in homosexual behavior. Frank, in these sessions, has concluded that homosexuality in the Philippines is linked to deep cultural feelings of fear. Moreover, he asserts that "shame is greater, they don't even have words to talk about homosexuality. They only have dirty words, street words, because they don't talk about this" (Erzen, 2006, p. 38).

Hence, marking homosexuality as deviant and medicalizing it have been the tactic of the Catholic church to discipline and contain the homosexual desires of Catholic Filipino gay men. Moreover, their usage of discourses that equate homosexuality as a form of sin and an immoral act is countered and covered by the veil that promotes discourses of acceptance, forgiveness, and love. For instance, statements like 'god loves *baklas* (gays)' are perpetuated in daily dialogues. In fact, the Church becomes a key instrument in propagating these kinds of discourses and does this so subtly that these statements are normalized in everyday life. This implicit power of the church to reinforce normative values can be traced back to Michel Foucault's concept of the identification of deviance through disciplinary power.

The identification of deviance, according to Michel Foucault, can be explained using the concept of disciplinary power. Foucault (1984, p. 188) states that the primary function of disciplinary power is to train rather than to select and to impose or, to train in order to impose a certain belief and select more. This means that disciplinary power tends to condition individuals to act a certain way and hence, if one digresses from this 'normal' way of doing things, he is then deemed as deviant and or abnormal. Moreover, Foucault asserts that this technology of power produces 'reality' through hierarchical observation, normalizing judgments, and examination. These instruments, according to Foucault are relevant in the establishment of norms and the imposition of these norms to a particular group and the individuals within that group. As a result, individuals will internalize these dynamics of power and norm formation, and will continually follow these norms in order to be perceived as normal by the group that they belong to. However, it is important to note that as in Orsi's argument presented in the beginning of this paper, individuals have various reactions toward these internalized and established norms. Nonetheless, one can argue that conforming to norms is then considered good and non-conforming to them, is considered bad.

Thus, applying this to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, we can say that the Church has identified the deviant group, homosexual men, by juxtaposing them to the heteronormative nature of biblical stories and through the existing gender order that permeates in their everyday experiences. Moreover, the Church then goes on to further problematize homosexuality by transforming it into a medical issue. Discourses that equate homosexuality to sin and immorality are used but softened with a promise that through the help of the Church and following the Church's teachings, homosexual men can still live as dignified Catholics. However, through the revolution of knowledge, exposure to new ideas and education, and also through the promotion of liberal views and values, Catholic Filipino gay men tend to question the Church's teachings and have found new ways in practicing their sexuality within the context of the faith that they are accustomed to (Martin, 2013; Rodgers, 2013).

Madasaling Bakla: Contextualizing the Catholic Filipino Gay Man

In the contemporary day and age, people tend to search for paradigms that define what and who they are; frameworks that guide and evaluate the life they lead and the quality of their personhood. Thus, it is not surprising that some individuals turn to religious institutions and traditions in order to better understand their lives, the choices they make, and the implications of these choices to the society they live in. However, it becomes problematic when individuals find certain contradictions that contest their way of life when pitted against the teachings of the religion they belong to. In fact, what happens when an essential part of your individuality is constantly branded as 'sinful' and 'unnatural'? What happens when the religious discourse of love and acceptance is tainted with words of biting hate and exclusion? (Boisvert, 2007, p. 43). Needless to say, Catholic Filipino gay men personify this dilemma, that although one might expect them to renounce Catholicism, many Catholic Filipino gay men practice their sexuality still, most often than not, within the constraints of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church that allows them to practice their sexuality with caution and prohibition. Also, I will provide some examples of how Catholic gay men are portrayed in Philippine media.

Madasaling Bakla- a phrase that roughly means 'gay man who loves to pray'. Filipinos use this statement colloquially in describing Catholic Filipino gay men. This phrase has become the definition of the plethora of Filipino gay men that goes to church to either *pray the gay away* or for finding the love of their lives. This image of the praying Catholic homosexual is also prevalent in Filipino mainstream media (see figure 2). The image below is a screenshot from the 2013 television show, *My Husband's lover*.
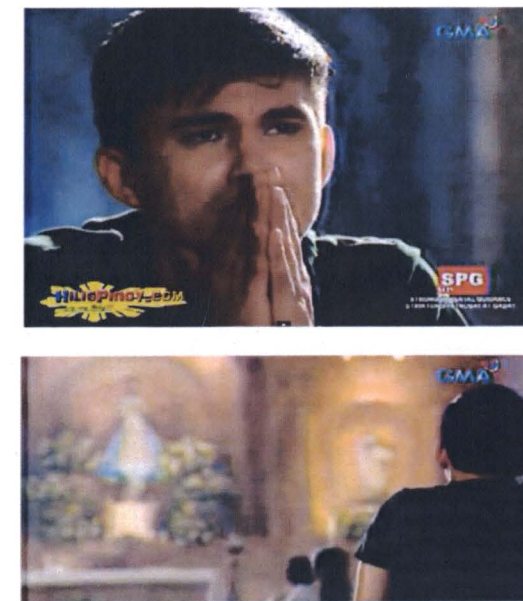
Figure 2. Screenshot from the Filipino TV show *My Husband's Lover*

In the image, Vincent (the man in the picture) is seen inside the Church, trying his best to *pray the gay away*. Throughout the series, Vincent's character (a closeted married Catholic homosexual man) is demonstrated to pray a lot- first to push his homosexuality away, then for his family's acceptance of his sexuality, and finally, for him and his lover to reunite. Hence, his character gives audiences an image of the struggles of the Filipino gay man; moreover, his characterization also shows the complexities of how a Catholic gay man articulate himself in a social setting that deems his sexuality as deviant, sinful, and immoral. In fact, during the time of airing, the lead actors are restricted from kissing each other for scenes that require 'affection' and 'intimate' closeness. Also, some Catholic priests condemn the production of the show for its explicit showcasing and apparent 'romanticizing' of same-sex relationships (Palumbarit, 2013). This is not surprising for we live in the age wherein Filipinos

currently find themselves in the midst of two forces pulling them in opposite directions - one of challenging the norms and aged beliefs, of being more open to same-sex relationships. And another, of the Catholic Church that is now, concurrent with the passage of the controversial Reproductive Health Bill that empowers women through access to reproductive health care, and the recognition of *Ang Ladlad* (which means "those who have come out of the closet", a political party for LGBT Filipinos, as a legitimate political party), more than ever, desperately asserting its influence on a nation that is beginning to think for itself (Martin, 2013, para. 12).

However, although the revolution and transformation of Filipinos' mindset in regards to certain political issues, specifically those that surround homosexuality, is uplifting, we cannot totally discard the influence of religion on one's sexuality. According to Donald Boisvert (2007) Sex and spirit, or sex and faith are related, or the idea that puts sexuality and one's belief system in a symbiotic and related position. This statement can be best understood if we look at the different discourses made by established religions and queer people themselves. Most often, the two sides are not compatible in terms of perspectives, level of mutual understanding, and or even respect.

In fact, a number of Catholic Filipino gay men have left the Catholic Church for they believe that the Catholic Church's stand on homosexuality is wrong (Rodgers, 2013). However, these men still adhere to the teachings of god and the Church. Nonetheless, they tend to phrase it differently. For instance, Raymond Alikpala, author of *God and Men: A Life in the Closet*, states,

> "I still consider myself a Christian, and my faith in God is stronger and more real than ever. However, I do not identify as a Catholic anymore, although on the surface, for convenience, because I am in the Philippines, I cannot help but be engaged in Catholic practices. Yet my faith is in a God that is much bigger than the Catholic Church, a God who embraces with love and compassion the whole beauty and gamut of her creation, a

> God who created us all gay, straight, transgender, queer, intersex, and everyone and everything else in between, and looks upon all of us and sees the good in all of creation (Rodgers, 2013, para. 18-19).

In his statement, Alikpala acknowledges that although he does not identify as Catholic anymore, it is hard to totally exclude himself from the ubiquity of the influence of Roman Catholic teachings and practices. In fact, in his personal blog, he provides a narrative that shows he exchanges banters with his old friend that has tried to talk him out of his homosexuality and his 'sinful' lifestyle using a couple of bible verses (Alikpala, 2012).

Hence, as presented in this section, the Catholic Filipino gay man confronts and lives his sexuality in a way that is affected and shaped by the norms set by the Roman Catholic Church. Although some gay men, like Raymond Alikpala, have left the Catholic church and have arguably reformulate the understanding of its teachings, they are still bounded by them for they have been socialized all their lives and are surrounded by these ideologies through the years. Furthermore, it is also important to note the significance of understanding human relations and behaviors in understanding religious belief and sexuality. Thus, in doing this, we can understand the ways in which a person decides to be 'religious' and 'sexual' and or both, at the same time (Boisvert, 2007, p. 32).

Looking Beyond: Analysis, Implications, and Reflection

In contemporary times, homosexuals experience relatively freer lives. This is evident in the proliferation of equal rights movements, anti-hate crime laws, and the emergent and strengthening support of same-sex marriage in the US and other parts of the globe. However, institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church tend to act as antithesis to all of these. This is due to the fact that, as presented in this paper, the Church tends to practice and enforce views that use guilt, discrimination, and reductionism in their teachings. For, regardless of the how they put it, the Catholic Church reinforces the narrative that no other sexual orientation is

acceptable but heterosexuality and that not identifying as one is an *ailment* and a disgrace that needs to be corrected by the means of prayers and renouncing of sins. Furthermore, the belief of the Church in prayers and the sacraments as ways to *cure* homosexuality is arguably a reductionist way of evaluating things, for it undermines the complexities of our humanity and the effects of the webs of social relationships that make up an individual. However, denying the existence and implications of the values and norms perpetuated and promoted by the Roman Catholic Church is futile, for they exist and they affect the lives of Filipino gay men. These values are perpetuated through the rampant approving depiction of homosexual bashing and bullying in the media, the mindless usage of gay slurs in social settings, the physical harm afflicted to homosexuals in communities, the restriction of gay themed television shows and homoerotic scenes, and the teachings of other powerful organizations that continue to stigmatize homosexuality by calling it a sin- an abomination that needs to be *corrected* and or *cured.*

The aforementioned phenomena reinforce the dominant ideologies that consider heterosexuality as normal and homosexuality as deviant. This is problematic for it perpetuates the stigmas and stereotypes based on and motivated by one's sexual orientation. Moreover, it is important to note that due to its pervasive presence in the Philippines, the Catholic Church mobilizes these ideologies and also acts as an agent of power that operates both implicitly and explicitly in the realms of the visible and the invisible. For instance, the Church's power is personified through the use of explicit teachings and doctrines that visibly demonstrate its views on homosexuality as *sin* and as a *deviant* behavior that needs to be corrected. Conversely, it is implicit and invisible because it relies on years of socialization and the Catholic Filipino gay man's existing faith in religion and God that both come from the unknown and the unseen.

Furthermore, it is also important to note that once these forms of powers sap into the system and affect the construction of norms and social facts, homosexual individuals will then feel subjugated and

marginalized; conversely, they may also feel rebellious and motivated to resist the power of the church. Hence, some of them leave the Catholic Church but do not necessarily abandon its teachings. Thus, they may find themselves living and performing, consciously and or subconsciously, their sexuality around the norms, values, and teaching of the Roman Catholic Church; which in turn creates a sexuality that is performed cautiously and carefully as if trying not to offend authority, as opposed to being performed freely in a way that the individual feels right.

Conclusion

Religious institutions are important sectors in the production of knowledge and norms. Sectors so powerful, that we should never underestimate their capacities nor undermine their abilities to shape the society we live in. They are the sectors of society wherein ideologies are tested and practiced; otherness is emphasized, and norms are manufactured, reconstructed, and perpetuated.

In the case of understanding the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Catholic Filipino gay men, as analyzed in this paper, the Catholic Church has identified the deviant-homosexual men. This deviant can then be examined, disciplined, and regulated through the means of problematizing his condition and using the Church's teachings and discourses in order to correct his *ailment.* Moreover, I also look at how the Catholic Filipino gay men are represented in the media, which shows how they employ discourses that still adhere to the norms and values of the Church. Also, I have provided certain examples on how individuals tend to withdraw from the Church but still find themselves not completely abandoning the rituals, traditions, and practices of the Catholic faith.

Thus, especially in the case of the Philippines, one cannot completely segregate sexuality and religion. For some forms of sexualities are better understood when juxtaposed with the existing dominant religious institution, such as the Roman Catholic Church. However, in the time of Filipino

ideological change (Martin, 2013), institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church tend to resist and reject the notions of acceptance and sexual diversity. Instead, they use guilt and aloofness in order to *fix* an identified *other* through the means of celibacy, sex-deprivation, and prayers. This attitude brings a very important point: in the age of social movements and change, an age when equality is constantly sought, implementing programs and ideologies that seek to undermine, subjugate, and marginalize a specific group by means of changing their characteristics to fit the norms of a certain society seem to be a drastic step backwards. Moreover, such attitude becomes an agent that refuels, mobilizes, and perpetuates discrimination, hatred, and stigmas against these marginalized communities, specifically, Catholic Filipino gay men.

At the end of the day, Catholic Filipino gay men still tend to practice their sexuality within the teachings of the Church, teachings that subtly impose prohibitions on how to perform their gender. However, due to the changes in ideologies and beliefs, these same men tend to challenge these teachings by demanding re-appropriation and reinterpretation of the scripture that may shape and reshape the ideologies and public opinions with regards to the issue of homosexuality in the predominantly Catholic, Philippines (Rodgers, 2013). They hope that through this, the Church will become an ally to promote respect for individual rights and acknowledge the existence of rich diversity; and if this happens, maybe through the mobilization of this re-appropriated and reinterpreted knowledge and discourse, the world will become a better place.

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Breaching *Mizu Shobai*: The Geisha Spirit on the High School Playground

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Introduction

Teenagers involved in compensated dating with older men (*enjo kosai*) have revelled in the shock value that their choices have triggered, and invoked panic in Japanese society since 1992. However, the construct and historical sanctioning of the "floating world" of adult entertainment (*mizu shobai*) has laid a framework for this inevitable niche. From the beginning of *mizu shobai*, the commoditisation of women's company (and, at times, but not always, her sex), was sustained in a way that worked in the Japanese cultural context. *Enjo kosai*, though shocking due to the under-age of those involved, is literally translated as the commoditisation of dating, and emulates the socially accepted relationships that are based on a financial transaction, and which are found within the institution of *mizu shobai*. Teenagers are not permitted in the socially sanctioned bounds of *mizu shobai* (a region demarcated for the purpose of adult night-life), but their commodity is comparable to what their "elder sisters" trade. Society is targeting blame at the girls for transgressing these bounds and selling what is only permissible for sale in the legitimated arena, restricted to those over 18. I argue that the institution of *mizu shobai* should be critiqued, and held at least partially accountable for this phenomenon. *Enjo kosai* represents a consequential outcome of *mizu shobai*, an industry which has thrived for centuries. The industry has created a niche for the teenagers, and a potentially detrimental male dependence on paid women. In essence, the supply and demand sides of the industry which have been carefully groomed for sustainability have resulted in some undesirable repercussions.

This paper focuses on the contexts of *mizu shobai* where the sale of sex is ambiguous, and not a given

service (it may be accessible, but not from all *mizu shobai* women, and not in all cases). There are many other establishments in *mizu shobai* that sell more overt expressions of sex, but this extends the reach of this paper. Additionally, host clubs which target a female clientele are increasing in popularity, but this paper limits its scope to the establishments where men are clients, and women are commodifying some aspect of themselves.

This paper will first review the literature on *mizu shobai*, and the contested discussions within. I will then outline the historical trajectory of *mizu shobai* as a demarcated region in Japanese society and as a place sanctioned and even constructed as necessary. Its longevity and evolution explain how this new phenomenon of teenagers commodifying their sexuality was ripe for emergence. I then demonstrate how *enjo kosai* is related to the institution of *mizu shobai* and how the commoditisation of female companionship is a lineage of a trade which has been emulated and adapted throughout history, pioneered by the geisha, the "traditional elder sisters" of the contemporary hostesses. I conclude with analyzing how the demand side of the transaction has also been detrimentally affected – thereby producing clientele for *enjo kosai*.

Literature Review

Mizu shobai is a broad and elusive component of Japanese culture which has been constructed around the work and play "needs" of men; a social space set apart and designated for temporary escape from the pressures and decorum of the day-to-day. The literal translation is the "water business", elsewhere euphemistically referred to as the "floating world" (Dalby, 1983) and defined as "the broadly based service and entertainment industry within which the

more specifically male-oriented establishments of the nightlife are set" (Allison, 1994, p. 33). Securing a steady supply of women to meet the demands of this industry relies upon occupational glorification - a glamorous work-image especially propagated by the media and supplemented by proportionally higher wages than other female labour (Tabuto, 2009; Kamise, 2013). Intertwined with this glorification is a certain level of occupational stigma (Kamise, 2013) which serves to maintain the confined parameters of *mizu shobai*, as prescribed by Japanese societal norms. Women who work in *mizu shobai* are delineated as *mizu shobai* women (Dalby, 1983; Allison, 1994), and confined to this role in society, whereas their customers freely go between *mizu shobai* and their daily life. While the literature uses various terms to discuss *mizu shobai* in English, I prefer to use the Japanese term, because it encompasses what would be evoked through both English terms of "nightlife" and the "sex industry".

Once a topic considered unworthy of academic perusal (Allison, 1994, p. xi), it is increasingly being written about by Japanese and international scholars alike. It is framed and critiqued in varying ways. Most scholars have focused their research and analysis on the various sections of the very broad "floating world" of *mizu shobai*, rather than on the institution as a whole. Cited by nearly all of this literature is Anne Allison's ethnography and analysis of a hostess club in Tokyo in the mid-1990s. Her work laid a ground-breaking framework which utilized a structural functionalist perspective of the company-entertaining in the hostess clubs, and asked the question, "Who does it fix, for whom, and to what end?" (p.5). Through this guiding question, Allison critiqued this historically tolerated societal norm, analyzed the parts of the system, and proposed some outcomes of long-term patronage.

Anne Allison focuses on the intentional sexlessness of the hostess club environment, and how this specifically meets the company's agenda. The pricier the club, the pricier the hostess, and thus the more "sexually desirable" (meaning, essentially unavailable). Keeping her "sexually interesting" and not "possessed by any one member" maintains "collective bonding" (1994, p. 20). Caroline Norma

heavily criticizes Allison's portrayal of the hostess club, arguing that where Allison claims hostessing is "mere sexual titillation" (p. 509), Norma's position states that the work in hostess clubs is prostitution, and she uses contested imagery of victim and perpetrator throughout her work. Yumiko Kamise does not liberally use the term *prostitution* and rather distinguishes categories of sexual services as "light" and "indirect" (sexual conversation) or "heavy" and "direct" (sexual gratification) (p. 43). Authors such as Norma are liberal with their use of the word *prostitution* whereas others will speak of prostitution as a minimal aspect of *mizu shobai* – stressing that prostitution is not necessarily included in *mizu shobai*, but rather that *mizu shobai* provides an atmosphere of sexual titillation (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 151-2). According to the current Anti-Prostitution Law established in 1956, forced and street prostitution are illegal. While prostitution is prohibited, if it does occur, it is assumed to be "conducted by prostitutes privately, not under a shop owner's supervision" (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 152) and generally sexual services purchased from women over 18 years are not punished (Kamise, 2013, p. 43).

Indeed, all countries have histories of prostitution, but as Donald Richie says, the Japanese have been able to capitalize on it in unique ways. In discussing *mizu shobai*, he argues:

> It should not be seen as finding the Japanese phenomenon in any way unique. Rather, as always, Japan's way is the common one - but made more efficient, more effective, and much more visible…No one has better than Japan shown how a natural instinct may be turned into a well-run business. (Richie, 2001, p. 193)

In taking a broad conception of prostitution, Norma included hostesses as prostitutes and in her work, consistently described them as victims of sexual abuse. There are cases of hostesses being tricked and being forced to perform fellatio, but the dominant narrative relayed of the hostess industry remains one of appeal, glamour, fame, and wealth. Certainly there is still stigma experienced. It has been argued that part of the agenda behind the

glamorization (that is, the focus on the glamour of the job and not some of the unpleasant realities) has been to secure a supply of women for the industry. Overall there is consensus that geisha, hostesses, and "women of pleasure" comprise the *mizu shobai* women. Riikka Matala (2010) drew a connection between geisha and contemporary jobs (focusing on coffee girls or "maids" who work in café establishments where role-play is a primary allure for customers). However, Matala also divides geisha from *mizu shobai*, relegating them to a subculture and entity of their own (2010, p. 48). That may be so, but I argue that their conversational skills were borrowed and transferred into the modern day *mizu shobai*. The liminal space that Matala describes where the customers came to meet geisha is echoed in the no-man's land description of *mizu shobai* (p. 48) – set apart from society. Yumiko Kamise's analysis of the research showed that although the media portrays hostess work as favourable, there is societal disdain for it (2013, p. 42). This is contradictory to Allison's study (1994) which argued that hostess work was not overtly stigmatized. The title of an article about hostessing in the New York Times (Tabuchi, 2009): "young Japanese women vie for a once-scorned job", explicates this change in attitude. Hiroko Tabuchi cites a survey of 1,154 high school girls, where of the 40 most popular professions, hostessing occupied the twelfth spot.[1]

Several scholars argue that the companies benefited most from the company-play in the hostess clubs. The environment in which workers relax and business relations are strengthened serves the interests of the companies, ultimately bonding the worker to his work and thus away from other aspects of his life, making the most efficient, loyal employee possible. A female executive notes that "it is not for fun or because [those who finance the evening] enjoy the company of the individuals involved. It's deliberate and carefully designed, with its own form and process" (Lafayette De Mente, 2003, p. 52). Scholars argue that the relationship between the company and *mizu shobai* was not serendipitous but

rather strategically arranged to benefit both, but most of all, the company and those at the top of the *mizu shobai* hierarchy, whom the revenues ultimately trickle towards. That is the only way to explain the massive revenues spent by companies at the height of the trend, which in the 1990s, was estimated to be 5 percent of company expenditures, or up to $6000 per employee per year (Allison, 1994, pp. 9-10). Greg Naito has described three objectives of after-hours company entertaining: the socialization of bonding between workers (2008, p. 17), the masculinization of the office workplace (by purposefully excluding women from this extension of the work day), and bonding the worker to his company (p. 18). *Mizu shobai* is said to be a "control mechanism for male employees that are skilfully utilized by the corporate world in Japan which appears to serve the interests of no-one yet is perpetuated by everyone" (pp. 18-19). Naito predicts that the "connection between hostess clubs and business will continue to be a strong one" (p. 19). As one hostess comments, "clubs are necessary for conducting business in Japan. Even with the trend toward developing business connections on the golf course instead of in bars, the club business will never die" (Louis, 1992, p. 35). In her chapter *Family and Home* (1994), Allison argues that active participation in club life tends to alienate a man from his wife, and reinforces her role and necessity in the context of the home and childrearing.

Hostess clubs have been noted as a place for the recreational release from work. In Allison's interviews regarding societal views of the clubs, her informants said that "a man can't relax at home." He cannot "remove the spirit of tiredness" as it is perceived that the home is the same place as the source of his responsibilities. At home, *sarariman* (literally "salary man", or company workers) cannot "reveal themselves and be frank" (Allison, 1994, p. 117). A 2005 report by the Gender Equality Centre of the Fukushima Prefectural Government revealed that two-thirds of Japanese men between the ages of 30 and 40 "think they need the sex industry to do business" in Japan (as cited in Norma, 2011, p. 509). The survey of the Research Committee of Men on Prostitution (1998) found men in their 30s

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[1] This survey was carried out in 2009 by the Culture Studies Institute in Tokyo.

to be the "most active in prostitution" (defining prostitution as "any sexual experience with money"), and that this age group is also the most frequent customers of *enjo kosai* (literally translated as compensated dating, usually involving underage girls) (Ueno, 2003, p. 322). Chizuko Ueno hypothesizes that this is related to the current propensity to stay single; nearly 40% of men in their 30s are unmarried. There is a legitimated "need" to buy female care.

Since 1997, when the media exploded with news of *enjo kosai*, most of the literature has either focused on the travesty of teen prostitution, or critiqued the "moral panic" that was society's response. There is little literature that links *enjo kosai* as an unfortunate, albeit unsurprising progression of the institutionalized practice of commercializing female companionship. Chizuko Ueno (2003) and Laura Miller (2004) have linked *enjo kosai* teens as younger sisters of these other *mizu shobai* women.

The surveys from the late 1990s revealed that 3.3-6.9% of female high school students had engaged with *enjo kosai* (Moffett, 1996, p. 1; Cullinane, 2007, p. 275). A national survey conducted by the Japanese Association for Sex Education in 1999 found, however, that 15.6% of high school girls had used telephone clubs (Cullinane, 2007, p. 275), where women join for free and men pay a fee, to connect with women via telephone and then meet in person for a compensated date (Morrison, 198, p. 478).

Several factors are proposed as having led to the emergence of *enjo kosai*. Among these were the open attitudes toward sex in Japan (Morrison, 1998, p. 472), prostitution as an "accepted reality" in Japan (Morrison, 1998, p. 474), and the emergence of telephone clubs as an accessible venue for teenagers (Ueno, 2003, p 319; Morrison, 1998, p. 478). Other proposed factors include teenagers' earlier age of sexual experiences (Ueno, 2003, p. 319) and curiosity and resistance to taboos surrounding the topic of sex in the middle-class family (Ueno, p. 320). Ueno labels the phenomenon of *enjo kosai* as an act of rebellion and agency against parents' efforts to control teenagers' bodies under the structure of

the "patriarchal modern family" and "hypocritical sexual norms" (p. 321). Where many have focused on the materialistic reasons behind the involvement with *enjo kosai*, Ueno focuses also on the strategic transgression of societal norms through sexual agency. A 1996 survey classifies the push-factors of teenagers' involvement in *enjo kosai* into "two categories: one for the traumatic reasons, the other for pleasure and utilitarian purposes" (Ueno, 2003, p. 320). I propose two additional push-factors: the institutionalized stability of the commodity of female companionship itself, and *mizu shobai* as both a thriving industry (not lacking in supply or demand) and an institution constructed as necessary in the Japanese context.

While the media was furious and shocked about *enjo kosai* because of the significant age gap between teenager and client, the fury was unleashed on the girls and not the men "because of the assumption of naturalized male desire" (Ueno, 2003, p. 320). Teenagers' "unbridled sexuality (individualism, consumption, and promiscuity) is viewed as a symptom of the ailing Japanese family" said to be brought on by the "breakdown of the extended family and traditional Japanese gender roles" (Cullinane, 2007, pp. 264-5). Some scholars such as Riikka Matala (2010) argue that women make a choice for *mizu shobai*-type work, thereby expressing agency while pushing against gendered norms. This argument requires an acrobatic reconciliation of the inherent conflict between the idea of agency and the fact that *mizu shobai* women are still expected to act as subservient and demure, their necessity constructed in relation to men's desires. Certainly choice is involved, and they are earning more than they could elsewhere – up to five times more than the average female part-time wage (Kamise, 2013, p.44). As Matala remarks, "they are actively making choices about their lives by behaving and not behaving according to the gender expectations" (p. 47). But are they rather just emulating another gender expectation that was constructed in the notion of the historical *mizu shobai* woman, thus recreating gender norms, and contributing to the sustenance of a mega-institution which ultimately benefits those at the top (Ueno, 2003)?

Historical Background

Mizu shobai began as a necessitated entity in history, with the division (at times a loose one) between women of pleasure and geisha, and has evolved into a vast array of commodities to be purchased within the delineated areas where the expression of sexual desires is sanctioned. Geisha were the pioneers who forged a way into the parties of the "women of pleasure" or "sex professionals" (*yujo*) and their customers in the 1660s, introducing a new kind of entertainment, one that required a broader skill set than the *yujo* relied upon (Dalby, 1983, p. 55). In the 1600s, male entertainers entered the scene as the first geisha. In the 1700s, female geisha outnumbered the male geisha, until the male counterparts disappeared from the business. Geisha were increasingly requested at parties because their skills of singing, dancing, *shamisen* (a traditional stringed instrument), articulate conversation, and worldly knowledge overshadowed the singular speciality of the *yujo* (Dalby, 1983, pp. 12, 56). There were many different types of geisha, and some would sleep with their customers, while others would not. "The question of geisha and prostitution has always been complicated. Considerable administrative effort was expended on trying to preserve a distinction between the two groups of women" (Dalby, 1983, pp. 55-57).

The establishment of the geisha as a specialized profession (subculture or lifestyle) commodified a type of specialized female company, initially marketed to elite men. This specialized company was something that a wife could not provide, specifically because of her constructed and necessary role. Both categories of women were constructed as equally necessary to the needs of men. A man's home and children were cared for by his wife, while his business relations, relaxation and un-winding were facilitated by the *mizu shobai* woman:

> The role of wife in Japan places a woman in the center of the home. She is not expected to socialize with her husband's colleagues, and indeed, she leaves that vitally important activity completely to her spouse. In the social sphere, the geisha (or their modern

counterparts, the bar hostesses) take over. (Dalby, 1983, p. 169)

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly where this began; however, 1585 brought the first pleasure quarter (Oharazeki, 2010, p. 24) which was seen on one hand as a place for expressing sexual desire (which was as "natural as eating or needing shelter") and on the other hand, it was a "necessary evil" to cater to the "natural desires" of men (Iga, 1968, p. 129), a necessary lubricant for society. In general, acting on sexual desires was not taboo, but men had more freedom than women (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 152).

The 1960s was a period of rapid economic growth, during which the practice of company entertaining increased in popularity (Norma, 2011, p. 515). The numbers of geisha began to dwindle as hostesses became more popular for the role of facilitating the evening – the hostess industry was less expensive for the clients, and less of a life-style commitment for the women. The realm of *mizu shobai* and the *mizu shobai* women who relieved the clients of any pressures of hosting became closely interrelated with company entertaining, and considered necessary to the conducting of business: business relations and relaxing.

Liza Dalby describes the activities found in this space designated for pleasure in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

> Of the numerous hours men spent in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters, however, relatively few were devoted to sex. Most of the time was engaged in partying – sociable banter, poetry, preening, singing, dancing, eating, drinking. The lure…was the romance, elegance, and excitement of that one place in feudal society where money, charm, and wit made more of an impression than rigidly defined social class. (Dalby 1983, pp. 55-6)

This description still holds relatively accurate to today's *mizu shobai*. In Allison's 1994 account of the hostess club, instead of the rigidity of class, the *sarariman* are given reprieve from the rigidity of their work world and ranking – where the formality between those superior and inferior dissipates for the

night, and things said in drunkenness are "forgotten and no obligations remain" (Naito, 2008, p. 16). It is an escape from the mundane and rigid, into the relaxing and exciting nightlife where one can let loose (be *sukebei*) (Allison, 1994, p. 117).

Legal history

Brothels were closed during the U.S. Occupation, effective in 1948, abolishing the legal framework that had permitted licensed prostitution in Japan. 1956 marked the Japanese government's switch from the acknowledgment of prostitution as a business to its prohibition (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 150). However, while under this new law, "prostitution was pronounced as evil, [it was] yet still in practice at *kafue* (bars), *machiai* (meetings places), and *ryoriya* (restaurants)" (Iga, 1968, p. 127). Japanese prostitution developed "from legal brothels to disguised forms of operation" and was relegated to a "respectable place" in society (Iga, 1968, p. 127). "The government justified…prostitution as a tool to alleviate stress in society" (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 149) - thus *mizu shobai* was sanctioned and necessitated from the top echelon of society. A 1949 survey reported that 70 percent of all respondents (80 percent of the males and 60 percent of the females) expressed their opinion that "licensed houses are necessary to provide satisfaction to the single man, to prevent sex crimes, and to provide variety for the married male" (Iga, 1968, p.132).

Teenage Prostitution

Buying sex from a teenager is illegal under the Child Prostitution Law and Juvenile Protection and Development Ordinance (enacted in 1999). However, under the Penal Code (enacted in 1907), the age of consent is thirteen (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 168-9), thus inadvertently creating a legal loophole, especially for willing teenagers seeking an opportunity. Tsubasa Wakabayashi suggested that if the law were amended to consider teenagers as agents of choice rather than as victims, it might actually be successful in restricting *enjo kosai*. Those under eighteen are thought to be "lacking autonomy and needing protection", and the Child Prostitution

Law seeks to protect these youth in accordance, yet their volition is apparent in their choice to arrange these compensated dates. Under the Prostitution Prevention Law (enacted in 1956), both client and sex worker are protected if their agreement is based upon "their own sexual freedom" (2003, pp. 172-173). As consenting youth, these teens seem to fall into a gap between both laws.

The industry has been sturdily constructed, and strongly sanctioned. The geisha parties derived from the *yujo* parties. Geisha entertaining was democratized in the 1960s, resulting in a larger demand, and thus hostesses entered the scene, hostesses being the cheaper 'younger sisters' of the geisha. The industry thrived, and new "products" came onto the market. *Mizu shobai* is a massive industry. This paper does not discuss at length the main profiteers of the industry (most notably the *yakuza*, Japan's mafia), other than the companies who had a mutually profitable relationship with the industry in the 1990s. It is clear, because of the expenditure of the companies, that *mizu shobai* contributes greatly to the company's priorities. That it has been sustained over the centuries demonstrates that it must be benefitting powerful people. Protected by law, sustained throughout history, and endorsed by society, it enjoys a place of privilege. Today, the current clientele appear to be from all walks of society. The focus is more on relaxing, having a good time – an emphasis on the entertainment of adult entertainment. I argue that there are two unintended products of this socially necessitated and sanctioned sex industry. Firstly, the broad and accepted availability of companionship-for-sale has created a realm of fantasy and pretend-intimacy, void of emotional risk and responsibility, which is appealing to some men, and can play out in harmful ways. Secondly, I argue that *enjo kosai* filled a niche that was inadvertently created by *mizu shobai*. *Enjo kosai* has emerged in part because its commodity was pre-constructed. Although it is not being allowed within the bounds of *mizu shobai*, it has become a by-product of the institution. *Mizu shobai* should thus be held partially responsible for this phenomenon.

There are obvious ways in which *enjo kosai* is derived from the other categories in *mizu shobai*. Proven as a stable industry, new forms of commodity have a tried and true market in which to launch. *Enjo kosai* is one of the newer commodities in the expansive and varied sex market of Japan. Many consider it a transgressive emergence, outside of the sanctioned types of commodity in *mizu shobai*; I consider it an unintended progression of the trans-centurial industry. While *enjo kosai* is not officially included as *mizu shobai*, patterns of commodification are evident, similar to how hostesses have emulated aspects of their 'elder sisters' who have gone before, copying them and making cheaper, more accessible versions as circumstances have changed. Matala (2010) attributes two of the differences between geisha and hostesses to the cost of services, and the level of commitment to the career – being a geisha was a lifestyle, a choice that would be made to devote her life to this work, whereas hostesses would experience more division between personal and work life. Scholars have linked the various types of women in the industry using analogies of sisterhood. Geisha are called the "traditional sisters" of the hostesses. This fits with the kin relations that the geisha world was built on, where a geisha fit in the world in relation to her *okaasan* (literally, mother, but referred to the mother of the geisha house) and her older and younger 'sister', where the elder sister would mentor the younger. Matala also refers to geisha culture being the "mother culture" of hostesses and coffee girls (2010, p. 50). Each of these types of *mizu shobai* women "sell fantasy" (Matala, 2010, p. 48), and "fulfill sexual desires and fantasies…through providing sexual communication" (Kamise, 2013, p. 44). Hostesses' younger sisters, *enjo kosai*, are "now being roped into the same paid-sex game" (Fitzpatrick, n.d., p. 1). Teenagers who do *enjo kosai* "essentially replace the much more expensive bar hostess, who likewise puts up with fumbled gropes and juvenile utterances but for a much higher price" (Miller, 2004, p. 239).

These teenagers are aware that their youth is desirable; "a currency with a time limit – they need to spend it before it expires" (Moffett, 1996, p. 1).

Their sexual attractiveness is affirmed "by setting a price for their bodies" (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 160). The very ploy of the media to conjure up public alarm has highlighted the phenomenon: attaching a sexualized person to high school girls, thereby increasing the fetishization of the school girl uniform, appealing to a certain sector of men, and resulting in the assumption that a uniformed school girl is likely to engaged in *enjo kosai* (Fitzpatrick, n.d., p. 1; Ueno, 2003, p. 322).

The hostessing industry has demonstrated that self-commodification can be glamorous and profitable. The findings of a 2008 internet survey showed that 20% of women rated hostessing as a most desirable job (Kamise, 2013, p. 44). The media portray the hostess club as an "attractive workplace" (Kamise, p. 42). A New York Times' exposé about hostesses (Tabuchi, 2009) emphasized the glamour. *Enjo kosai* as a lucrative endeavour is relatively similar to being a self-employed hostess; however, there is an inherent tension, as Dalby referred to hostesses as "a commodity in the bar", the "opposite of an independent businesswoman" (Dalby, p. 187).

Another structural-functional factor; a systemic pull-factor of *mizu shobai* work, is that the average gendered pay-grade of women to men (in 2002) was 66.4% (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 152). Hostessing pays up to five times more than the average female part-time wage (Kamise, 2013, p. 44) – securing the supply for the demand, advertising it as "a good way for young women to earn money" (Kamise, p. 44). The glamorizing advertising strategies are accessible to teenagers (Morrison, 1998, p. 479). What has been presented and advertised as an appealing place to work has inevitably attracted "unwanted" young entrepreneurs.

In many ways, *enjo kosai* transgresses the constructed order of *mizu shobai* and thus is disallowed from the legitimated status of being within the bounds of *mizu shobai*. The most glaring transgression, of course, is the age factor. Under the Juvenile Protection and Development Ordinance, it is illegal to "buy a body" (*kaishun*) of a person under 18 years of age (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 168). The other disallowing factors are less legal in nature, and

more socially transgressive of the norms inherent and integral to the institution. For one, their work is not "fixed in a certain place nor controlled by anybody" (Wakabayashi, p. 155). One of the key facets of *mizu shobai* is that it is fixed in a location, separated from society. Technological establishments such as the telephone clubs have created a way for both parties to glide between "worlds". *Enjo kosai* teenagers are entrepreneurial: "self-determined, independent women with no pimps nor managers" (Ueno, 2003, p. 323). Andrew Morrison defines the traditional *mizu shobai* transactions as occurring between the man and the *mizu shobai* establishment, bypassing the woman, where the woman is a vehicle (1998, p. 492). However, *enjo kosai* is a transaction occurring between the man and the teenager. Miller further states that these teenagers "usurp male privilege" (2004, p. 236) in conducting their own business, while traditionally, the woman would wait passively until the transaction was formalized.

In their interactions with the clientele, the teenagers use honest (and at times denigrating) communication. This stands in total contrast to the unconditional ego-stroking and pretence experienced in the hostess clubs (Miller, 2004, p. 237). In the teenagers' perspectives, they feel that they are exploiting the men (Miller, p 239). Perhaps the public's discomfort with *enjo kosai* partially lies within the teens' major transgression of the proscription to live for themselves, snubbing the prescription to, as young women, live for their parents. Many of the *mizu shobai* women serve as a function for the men, even in their pretending to be dutiful, and in this way the teenagers' expression of personal agency is more evident. Ueno hypothesizes that "one reason why *enjo kosai* caused such deep embarrassment and anger among Japanese men was because they could not allow their women to use their own bodies at their disposal" (2003, p. 319), or make their own sexual choices. Said in another way:

> Ignoring the diversity of sexual experience that marked rural women in the prewar era, observers in the 1990s expressed dismay at the overt manner in which school girls flouted supposedly timeless gender norms by donning provocative clothing and adopting postures

and mannerisms usually reserved for men. (Cullinane, 2007, p. 269)

While the commodities are similar, *enjo kosai* transgresses social norms and is thus disallowed from being inside the formal bounds of *mizu shobai.*

Harry Schaumburg writes of pretend-intimacy that "fantasy seems to be much safer than risking emotions in unpredictable relationships and suffering the pain that real intimacy can cause…Acceptance is unconditional. Rejection is not possible" (1997, p. 30). Relationships in *mizu shobai* reflect this: in hostess scenarios, as a company expense, the man is able to have a risk- and responsibility-free encounter, because a paid woman would never threaten his insecurities. The wives interviewed in Allison's ethnography speak of the *sarariman*'s life with compassion (p. 104): that his life is full of responsibility and he needs time for himself where his self-esteem is replenished, without taking anything emotionally from him. Moreover, for *sarariman* who have been groomed by their companies and have become accustomed to relating to paid women, it makes it difficult to be able to relate sexually to women outside of that contractual relationship. They have become accustomed to having their masculinity reassured through compliments. If played out long-term, this may result in the difficulty of putting themselves into risky (albeit real-life) relationships, because of the familiarity and comfort with there being no risk of rejection. This dependence can create a perpetuated clientele for the *mizu shobai* industry, and, in extreme cases, potential clients for the younger versions of the *mizu shobai* women. Ueno describes how men in their 30s comprise the primary demographic of *enjo kosai* clientele because these contractual relationships are risk-free and conducive to a "fragile sense of masculinity" (2003, p. 322). The institution of *mizu shobai* can eventually lead to problematic products of false intimacy. Allison writes that "what men are given, get used to, and eventually come to expect are women who massage their ego and assure them of their masculine worth". The hostess satisfies *jikokenjiyoku* (the desire to expose oneself and have this self-exposure well-received) (Allison, 1994, pp. 24-25). By paying, he is

guaranteed that she will "project an image" of him that is "pleasing and potent" – where every word he says will be "listened to, accepted, and praised". This service "replaces something in the man that becomes depleted in the other spheres of his life – mainly home and work, where the weight and obligations of his various roles (husband, father, worker) take their toll" (Yoda, 1981 as cited in Allison, 1994, p. 22).

While this is not explicitly mentioned as part of the geisha skill-set, the most important roles of a geisha actually involve the skill to talk to a man as if he were "a big leader and to be a so-called mother confessor, who has the ability to understand and hold any secrets that are shared with her" (Versterinen, 2001, p. 76, as cited in Matala, 2010, p. 48.). There is an aspect of emotional stroking and ego-feeding. Dalby writes that "whether she sleeps with a man or not, [a geisha] has a certain sexual allure and can be an object of fantasy" (1983, p. 171). Matala describes coffee girls as an "updated version of the work" of hostesses and geisha. In these cafés, coffee girls often dressed as maids sell fantasy by "mak[ing] their customers feel like a leader, calling them master, and they are ready to offer motherly care, even feeding them their meal" (2010, p. 48).

The role of the hostess is to "fulfill sexual desires and fantasies" through providing "sexual communication" (Kamise, 2013, p.44) with the added perk of there being no lingering obligations beyond what was prearranged. The realm of *mizu shobai* has been referred to as a "Japanese-constructed fantasy world" (Morrison, 1998, p. 475), and "a scene of desire and fantasy… a site for a desired and imagined subjectivity as men come to recognize themselves in the images created for them by paid hostesses" (Allison, p. 1994, pp. 25-6). The fetishization of uniformed schoolgirls is another form of fantasy. A study showed that two of the most common fantasies *enjo kosai* customers are role-playing "as a lover involved in fictitious love" and non-sexual role-playing "as a father in order to simulate the relationship between a father and daughter" (Wakabayashi, 2003, p. 161).

In discussions of Japanese youth subcultures, teenagers are said to want to avoid adulthood and responsibility. One way that youth avoid all of this are by employing themselves in "cute" jobs such as the coffee girls in Homeworld (which simultaneously reinforce the patriarchal relationship norms of the *mizu shobai*) [2] and another is by taking their future into their own hands, living for the moment, making money for themselves, expressing their sexuality, and taking a new dominant stance over men. *Enjo kosai* is one consequential outcome of *mizu shobai* and their clients are produced through the second outcome: men whose masculinity is perceived to be fragile and requiring companionship that would not threaten his fragile masculinity. For future study, delving further into the notion of "false intimacy" introduced by Schaumberg and how it relates to Ueno's term "fragile masculinity" would be beneficial, as the scope of this paper was able to only briefly connect his work in the context of *mizu shobai*. Furthermore, there is a barrage of Japanese literature on the topic, and I was only able to access the English articles. Much more could be accomplished in a bilingual study.

Conclusion

The male need for sex has been constructed and reified as necessary and unquestioned. Historically, "sex with wives was for procreation, while sex with women of pleasure was for recreation" (Dalby, 1983, p. 55). Society has acknowledged *mizu shobai* as a necessary evil – necessary to the workings of Japanese society. *Mizu shobai* has been established as one of the "proper contexts" for the natural sexual desires to be expressed. The clientele was once confined to the elite, then was democratized to include the *sarariman*, now is even further democratized as adult night-time play-time: a "fantasy world". Both Allison and Ueno critique the paid relationships as having the propensity to develop a "fragile sense of masculinity" – a masculinity that becomes only capable of expressing

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[2] The Homeworld website is found at http://www.cafe-athome.com. Accessed June 19, 2014.

itself within the confines of a paid framework – where ego-stroking is risk-free.

Enjo kosai teens represent a derivative of their predecessors, where the opportunity was created for them by the evolving, fluid, *mizu shobai* which was maintained by sanction; highly adaptive with the changing times, norms, economy, trends and tastes of its patrons. The hostess life, on the surface, appears glamorous. Money can be made here. The coffee girls appear *kawaii* (innocent, playful, and cute). However, as the effect of being accustomed to relating to paid women has played out in the image of the *sarariman*, the effect of establishing commoditized companionship as a norm has played out in a socially undesirable mode: underage dates with older men, where sex is at times also sold. It is a two-sided coin. It can be harmful to form a dependence on relating to women who are paid to be adoring (as it can make it harder for the man to relate to un-paid women in dating or marriage contexts outside of *mizu shobai*). Likewise, it can be harmful to have an industry where women's companionship is sold as a glamorized and lucrative commodity, as there will always be new niches of all sorts of clientele with all sorts of tastes, and there will also be a steady supply of women. Unfortunately, some will be underage and will find a way to capitalize on the industry as we see with the case of *enjo kosai. Mizu shobai* should be accountable for accepting some of the blame – we can't completely blame the girls.

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The Promise of Proportional Representation: On Political Disengagement, Electoral Reform, and Neoliberalism

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I. Introduction: Perspectives on Political Disengagement

All the voters belong to the most diverse groups. But to the ballot box they are not members of a group but citizens. . . Distrust increases the distance that separates them. If we want to fight against atomization, we must try to understand it first.1

- Jean-Paul Sartre, Elections: A Trap for Fools

That there is a growing 'crisis of democracy' is likely news to few. Increasingly, modern democracy, both in Canada and abroad, is characterized by political apathy and disengagement from the traditional political process (Milner, 2005). Accordingly, voter turnout across the advanced democratic states has declined steadily from the early 1980s (a decline emphatically attributed to decreases in youth turnout), giving increasing lie to the claim that governments can and do legitimately represent the publics they purport to serve (Howe, 2011; Milner, 2005).

In Canada, in a push for electoral reform, proportional representation (PR) has been framed by some as a powerful instrument in re-engaging the electorate with politics, and revitalizing state governance by re-injecting meaning into so-called 'representative' democracy. The theory follows that, under PR, political parties observe a greater incentive to attend to the interests of citizens in all ridings, instead of simply focusing efforts on those 'swing' ridings where votes are more highly valued (Milner, 2004; Karp and Banducci, 2011). In

addition, parties, no longer beholden to the 'median' voter in order to generate broad support, under PR might instead focus on meeting voters' more specific interests, and therefore holding party representatives more easily accountable (Cusack, et al, 2007). In these ways, PR is predicted to catalyze an increase in citknowledge as parties wage widespread educational campaigns to mobilize support, and individuals may identify parties that are more closely aligned with their own particular political interests.

And yet, election statistics show that across many of those states governed through a system of PR, voter turnout has seen decline as well (Milner, 2005). In this regard, Milner (2004) identifies two causes for the decline among youth, the primary source of this change: one, that of a declining sense of civic duty and, two, that of declining political knowledge. He argues:

> The two are closely related: a decline in the sense of civic duty means that young people are less inclined to seek the information needed to vote meaningfully. Since we do not know how to boost civic duty, we must concentrate our efforts on the political knowledge (ibid, p. 28).

Milner (2004) thus advocates an emphasis on increasing political knowledge as a means to return voter turnout to its pre-1980s levels; a transition to a system of PR is an essential component of his proposal.

On the other hand however, in addressing the issue of a weakening sense of civic duty, Howe (2011) argues that a rise in individualistic attitudes, and a relational decline in social cohesion, helps account for growing political disengagement. For Howe, such individualism is attributable to an

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1Sartre, J. (2013). Elections: A trap for fools. In Aronson, R. & Van Der Hoven, A. (eds.) *We have only this life to live: The selected essays of Jean-Paul Sartre 1939-1975.* New York: New York Book Review.

adolescent culture operating in relative isolation from 'adult society,' in the so-called "age of adolescence," which emphasizes peer, over adult, influence. This relative isolation of adolescence, he argues, leads to the "validation and reinforcement of the attitudes and attendant behaviours" (ibid, p. 252) of political inattentiveness and individualism 'inherent' in adolescence. Howe's assertion regarding rising individualism however, while helpful in explaining disengagement, relies heavily on psychological evaluations of adolescent tendencies that do not adequately address the socio-historical context of such 'inherent' characteristics. Rather, this article asserts that such individualistic attitudes are symptomatic of subjectivities under a neoliberal paradigm, one which assumes as 'True' that humans, by nature, are wholly and inherently self-interested.

Milner's position noted above vis-à-vis PR is therefore understood as a myopic concern with the correlation found between political knowledge and turnout. This article advances the notion that Milner misunderstands the meaning behind the common assertion that "all politicians are the same" when he reduces it to an expression of the inability of young voters to "make the basic distinctions necessary for meaningful choice" (2004: 26). Such assertions should, instead, be understood as indicative of the perspective that politicians are only 'human,' which, from within the neoliberal paradigm, is understood as self-interested, and 'rational.' Such an understanding of human nature is one essential to the cultural maintenance of advanced capitalist society, which exists upon a foundation of exploitation for personal profit. Furthermore, it is predicted to be particularly apparent in those individuals whose primary socialization has taken place following the retrenchment of the welfare state and the rise of neoliberalism.

Although electoral reform is not the only recommendation Milner proposes (he also prescribes the introduction of public programs designed to increase civic and media literacy), his emphasis on the lack of political knowledge among youth focuses attention on but a symptom of a larger crisis that is intimately related to the decline in civic duty: that is,

the decline of public-spiritedness, and the atomization of the individual.

Public-spirited citizenship is "a citizenship of responsibilities as well as of rights" (Dean, 2003, p.1). A culture instilled with an ideal sense of public-spiritedness is one in which our necessary interdependence is widely appreciated, thus invoking in its people a binding sense of duty to the social body. Here, the individual is not merely an island unto herself, but inextricably enmeshed with the lives and livelihoods of others – past, present, and future. In contrast, we find the atomization of the individual wherein the acceptable range of consideration is constricted and persons are disconnected from any sense of debt or responsibility to their community and beyond. Every accomplishment is a personal achievement, and every failure a personal failing: the wider social and cultural group in this context has little to no bearing. Such a disposition has been entrenched alongside the expansion of neoliberal policy. A conception of human nature as self-interested and rational is a key narrative of this understanding, and it is within this context that we must seek to understand the rise of political apathy and disconnectedness, in order to assess the merit of any proposed resolution.

Thus, we ask: does PR truly present to us a satisfying solution to our current political woes? How effective can it be in encouraging public-spirited engagement in the political process? Will the atomizing forces of capital prove immune to any potential change prompted by electoral reform? To understand the potential of PR in instituting meaningful change, a coherent conceptualization of the atomized individual in advanced liberal democracies must first be attended to. Following this, an analysis of the socio-historical origins of PR, and a brief case study of New Zealand's electoral transition from first-past-the-post (FPTP) styled elections to PR will enable us to address such reform within a Canadian context. The following discussion will return to the argument for PR, from a socio-historical understanding of the rise of individualism, with the objective of reassessing the merits of electoral reform in addressing our current crisis of democracy.

II. Neoliberal Individualism

"Neoliberalism as a matter of government policy has assumed the self-directing, self-contained liberal subject to be a fact of nature" (Dean, 2003, p. 165).

Milner and Howe, like many other political science scholars, advance their arguments from a market perspective of the electoral process wherein the individual elector is a rational actor whose decision to vote lies in accordance with a strategic decision to vote lies in accordance with a strategic cost-benefit analysis of various potential outcomes (Milner, 2002; Wattenberg, 2002). Nonetheless, a recent shift in political science literature toward analyzing electoral processes based on the influence of group dynamics may be observed (Abrams et al.; 2010, Fedderson, 2004). For example, the theory of informal social networks proposed by Abrams et al. (2010), which seeks to account for the influence of social groups in electoral decision-making. Such conceptualizations however are but more so-called 'rational-choice' models of understanding that continue to divorce actors from the cultural context of their decision-making. While these models may help in providing a micro-understanding of the forces that push individuals to engage politically within their specific milieux, they consistently fail to acknowledge the 'rational' actor as a social construction. Furthermore, in assuming the reality of an inherently self-interested, rational human nature, such approaches further validate this persistent meme. Instead, to move forward in meaningfully addressing any democratic deficit, the political (non)action of the individual must be understood from within a socio-historical context.

In her book, *Capitalism and Citizenship*, Dean (2003) characterizes contemporary culture under neoliberalism by the tendency of individuals "to act 'as if' they were autonomous, or, to forget that behind empirical separation lies real interdependence" (p. 29). While the previous authors have built their work on the assumption that humans are inherently self-interested, Dean constructs her argument around the notion that humans "are indeterminate in a particular way, or, in a way which needs the completion of culture" (ibid, p. 13). In other words, because they are born

premature and may become fully functional only through their interactions with others, humans are *inherently social*. The tendency towards individualism, then, is a social construction encouraged by capitalist culture, one that masks and minimizes cultural indebtedness and interdependence. The meme of inherent, self-interested rationality is further reinforced and perpetuated by its own logic: if everyone else is concerned solely with their own self-interests, then I am at a disadvantage if I do not prioritize my own 'personal' interests above all. As Dean remarks, in a culture bereft of a strong sense of community and social welfare, "self-reliance is demanded under threat of future impoverishment" (ibid, p. 162). The tendency towards individualism is revealed as a function of our severed connections to the social body.

Research conducted by Eliasoph (1998) into the discursive manifestation of politics in American culture is indicative of the depth to which individualistic attitudes have pervaded the culture in contemporary liberal democracies.

For her research, Eliasoph immersed herself in volunteer, activist, and recreational groups to study the transmission of political ideas in everyday life. Observing and interviewing with a range of individuals from a variety of groups, Eliasoph sought an understanding of how and why American citizens engage, or dis-engage, with the political. A key conclusion, Eliasoph's participants are remarkable in their determined personalization of all things political in, what Eliasoph observes, a reversal of Mills' sociological imagination (ibid, p. 150). Such an attitude is indicative, for Eliasoph (and, she argues, for Mills) of an acceptance of the so-called "cold, hard facts of reality." For Eliasoph, it is the "devaluation of talk itself. . . connecting the overly individualized, personal approach to the assumption that there is a world of neutral dead facts out there, unconnected to us" (ibid, p. 152). Because individuals do not talk about the issues without personalizing them, the 'social' sources of social issues do not emerge in dialogue with others, and the self-perceived ability of the average citizen to conscientiously engage in social change is

diminished.Eliasoph (1998) further concludes that the public debate on social issues is "dishonoured" in American society, framed misleadingly as singularly self-serving and thus undeserving of wider attention. Discussion of social issues is warranted only when its relation to self-interest is pronounced and the 'integrity' of the discussion is thus preserved. The underlying assumption is the inherent self-interest of rational human actors - any pretense of public-spiritedness is therefore simply a theatrical call for attention. This phenomenon constrains the development of public-spiritedness in favour of self-interest in a self-fulfilling prophecy: individuals are constrained in their ability to publicly address social issues without reproducing the impression of self-interest. This then mitigates against the generation of solidarity in the call for collective action therefore further entrenching the notion that all rational actors are inherently self-serving. If a sense of powerlessness to change anything beyond the 'personal' is such a dominating aspect of modern life, is it any wonder that individuals no longer find themselves turning to their franchise for meaningful change?

In his introduction to *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey (2005) pronounces the years 1978-80 as "a revolutionary turning-point in the world's social and economic history" (p. 1), remarking upon the liberalization of China's economy, the beginnings of global retrenchment of the welfare state, the initial deregulation of industry, and the disempowerment of labour. Such transformation has surely influenced the socialization of individuals born into the world following these changes. Table 1 below describes the decline in voter turnout in three of the largest majoritarian democratic systems in the world: Canada, the U.K., and the United States. Data here represent turnout from 1970 to the present and highlight the first election in which those born at the beginning of the rise of economic neoliberalism were eligible to vote (estimated roughly to occur around 1998). A clear pattern of demarcation reveals itself. Of the three countries sampled, an average drop of 14 percentage points is observed from pre-1980s levels to that achieved in the first eligible election for the 1980 cohort. Although average turnout also declines in the intermediary period, the change is relatively insignificant (an average drop of only 2.7 points), and turnout post-1998, once individuals born within the regime of neoliberalism begin reaching the age of majority, has remained at a significantly diminished rate.

Here, Dean (2003) may help us understand the convergence of capitalist society under neoliberalism and growing political disengagement as the decline of public-spiritedness. As argued previously, contemporary culture under capitalism actively obfuscates the sense of cultural indebtedness and interdependence that constitute the necessary foundation for human existence. This phenomenon results in what Dean, borrowing from Arendt, terms 'worldlessness.' In her articulation of Arendt, Dean asserts that worldlessness today is characterized increasingly by dereification, or "the dissolution of world to process" (ibid, p. 33).

She argues:

> Process. . . is a capitalist-induced reduction of the human world to an endless cycle of production and consumption which leaves nothing worldly (durable or tangible) behind; a reduction which deprives humans of a shared and reliable reality and which renders us forgetful of our capacities and responsibilities (ibid, p. 33-34)

This 'forgetfulness' has characterized, in particular, those born into our world following the rise of neoliberalism, which functions in part to internalize within individuals a sense of atomized autonomy. Such attributions have resulted in the cynical labeling of this group of individuals as "generation me" (Twenge, 2007). While Howe (2010), as mentioned, maintains that the individualistic character of this generation is largely the consequence of the increased significance and isolation of adolescence, other authors have targeted post-scarcity, the proliferation of entertainment media, and the influence of the previous 60s generation (Nevitte, 1996; Twenge, 2007; Wattenberg, 2002). All these theories however ignore the substantial influence of the current neoliberal regime in engendering narcissistic individualism and the function it plays in maintaining capitalist exploitation in a globalized economy. Without recognition of the significant cultural changes the rise of neoliberalism has wrought, such interpretations provide a weak and narrow understanding of our current circumstances.

This article submits that an understanding of rising individualism as a function of the neoliberal agenda provides a more comprehensive understanding, and it is this approach that will inform the following discussion on PR as an instrument of political engagement. The contention remains that, though many of those states governed by a system of PR are also experiencing declines overall, they nonetheless have persistently higher election turnouts than those seen in the majoritarian systems. Milner's argument, shared by many others, thus proposes that certain aspects of the PR system are naturally conducive to higher participation rates. In order to assess whether PR may help combat the deficit of public-spiritedness, we move forward in the next section to delineate this characteristic in its socio-historical context.

III. Proportional Representation in Context

Within the recently established context of industrialization, urbanization, and (near) universal suffrage in the early stages of the twentieth century, the democracies of the world found themselves facing a trilemma (Cusack et al., 2010). In order to sustain the possibility of amassing meaningful political support, political leaders were faced with three options: 1) maintain the majoritarian system, but be forced to appeal to a wider variety of interests; 2) maintain the majoritarian system, but reduce electoral competition through either party coalition or consolidation; or 3) switch to PR.

To help explain the major historical divergence of electoral systems into those which transitioned to PR and those remaining majoritarian, Cusack et al. (2010) distinguish the 'PR adopters' by their particular structure of economic organization. Following this conception, early PR adopters were 'protocorporatist' states characterized by collectively organized economic interests that developed locally and/or regionally in a cooperative operation built on a tradition of consensus-based negotiation. Representation at the national level therefore operated more or less proportionally to the degree that economic interests remained geographically defined until urbanization and the nationalization of industry and regulatory politics rendered the majoritarian system of governance increasingly disproportionate. Consensus-based negotiation, centred around the preservation of group-specific interests, was then carried on under a system of PR which re-established the previous proportionality.

Table 1
A Comparison of Voter Turnout in Canada, the UK, and the U.S.A. 1970 - 2013

	Canada	United Kingdom	U.S.A.
Avg. Voter Turnout between 1970-80	73.30 %	75.70 %	69.92 %
Avg. Voter Turnout between 1981-97	72.13 %	74.47 %	65.09 %
Voter Turnout in first election eligible for 1980 cohort	64.10 %	59.38 %	51.55 %
Avg. Voter Turnout after first eligible election to present	62.18 %	62.17%	56.35 %

Notes: 1. Adapted from http://www.idea.int.xt Copyright by International IDEA. Reprinted with permission.
2. Data for Canada adapted from
http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=ele&dir=turn&document=index&lang=e Copyright Elections Canada. Reprinted with Permission.

In these PR-adopting states, the guild tradition, absent or long since diminished in the staunchly majoritarian states, had fostered the development of investment in "co-specific assets," characterized by export-oriented, industry-specific technical skills (Cusack, et al, 2007) that depended on coordination with the owning class. Where labour maintained a monopoly on skills training (in the form of industrial unionization), but did not demand control over its supply, this development compelled the cooperation of both industry and labour interests under the circumstances that

> Investments in skills by both companies and workers where the return to companies depended on the acceptance by unions of a cooperative framework and the return to workers depended on collective bargaining and on effective social security (ibid, p. 374).

Those states that remained majoritarian, on the other hand, were characterized by craft unionization which was necessarily concerned with controlling the supply of its skills and, consequently, harboured interests in direct opposition to that of employers (Cusack, et al, 2007). Under such circumstances, the owning class lacked any incentive to engage in cooperative negotiations with labour. This translated to the political realm as a desire among political elites to maintain a majoritarian electoral system in order to maximize electoral support in defense against labour. In contrast, among the PR adopters, efficient cooperation between labour and industry demanded equal representation in the legislature, which both sides were readily able to agree to.

Any consideration of electoral reform must remain cognizant of these specific historical circumstances leading up to the introduction of PR in the early adopters. Nonetheless, an examination of a more recent reform may be more indicative of its potential in Canada. Does the consistently higher turnout found in early PR adopters reflect a purely structural effect of the electoral system? Or, is turnout better understood as a function of the historical socio-economic organization of the early adopters as outlined above? With his research into the experience of politicians with legislative governance under PR in New Zealand and in

Scotland, Lundberg (2012) concludes that politics in these more recent adopters still largely remains an "adversarial business." Noting the struggle of such countries to shed the cultural remnants of governance under a majoritarian system, Lundberg highlights that "PR. . . does not, by itself, create co-operation" (p. 623). Lundberg's finding is consistent with the thesis shared by Cusack, et al. (2010), which maintains that the consensus-based negotiation characteristic of early PR adopters is but the legacy of the particular, and longstanding, organization of their economies. What Lundberg also suggests, however, is that the distinct circumstances of New Zealand's experience, notably the recurrence of minority governments, with their attending incentives for consensus building, has in fact facilitated a slow transition to a style more characteristic of the ideal PR model. Whether the political cultures of these late adopters will converge with those of earlier ones, however, remains unknown, and whether such convergence will accompany a rise in political mobilization remains equally uncertain.

IV. Proportional Representation and New Zealand

For a deeper understanding of the effects of PR, we turn now to a more in-depth examination of New Zealand, which has the distinction of being the first English-speaking country in the world to adopt an electoral system of PR based on party lists. In terms that could easily be attributed to the Canadian political climate today, Nagel (2004) describes the circumstances leading up to the 1993 referendum on electoral reform:

> Contrary to New Zealanders' majoritarian ideology, it became apparent that the electoral system manufactured parliamentary majorities and that governments' electoral bases were only pluritarian and sometimes not even that" (p. 122)

Such inherent deficiencies of FPTP-type electoral systems were particularly emphasized in New Zealand following a dramatic program of economic liberalization implemented in the 1980s, absent of due public consultation. The hope placed in

electoral reform, then, was that PR would help rectify issues pertaining to such deficiencies, described, at least in part, by Nagel (2004) as the "underrepresentation of minorities, disproportional allocation of seats in favour of larger parties, and pluritarian outcomes" (123).[2] The proportional allocation of seats would therefore correct the worst of such deficiencies as the proportion of votes 'wasted' on non-elected candidates is reduced, and citizens are therefore assumed to observe a greater incentive to participate at the same time parties are compelled to mobilize them (Karp and Banducci, 1999, p. 363).

And yet, voter turnout post-implementation of PR in New Zealand, has followed the same declining trend affecting most other liberal democracies since the turn of the century. From an average turnout rate of 89.8% in 1980-90, to 88.3% in the first election under PR in 1996, turnout subsequently hit a record low of 74.2% in the most recent election in 2011.[3]

This failure of PR to restore turnout is accounted for by Nagel (2004) as a consequence of changing campaign strategies that have shifted focus to party representation in media over personal communication with the electorate. Citing a study by Vowles (2002), Nagel maintains that weaker ties connecting parties to constituents, in direct contrast to that predicted by PR models, were the primary cause of the reform's inability to reverse the decline in voter turnout. Vowles' (2002) study however, key to Nagel's contention, was able only to generalize the *frequency* of reported contact established between the study's sample and a political campaign, with no indication of the *depth* of interaction. A decrease in contacts is therefore a weak indicator of party-constituent relations, and Nagel's hypothesis, in

turn, thus presents a weak interpretation of this phenomenon. Does the neoliberal atomization of the individual provide us with a more robust account of this failure of PR to restore voter turnout?

Conclusions by Banducci et al. (1999) using panel study data collected between 1993-96 suggest that, post-implementation, public attitudes toward politicians as unresponsive and untrustworthy saw little change. Although they temper their claims by noting that trust in government "may be a function of the longer-term performance of the new parliament, and thus not affected in the time frame examined" (ibid, p. 552), their conclusions suggest that the "roots of distrust of government lie in something other than the rules used to translate votes into seats" (ibid).

An examination of the decline of voter turnout in New Zealand identifies the election of 1984 with the highest turnout rate of the past sixty years – a peak which no election since has come within 3 percentage points of meeting. Immediately prior to this, turnout had in fact been rising steadily from a nadir of 83% in 1975.[4] An analysis of New Zealand's economic policy during this period is illuminating, as global recession in the late 1960s and early 1970s was especially damaging to New Zealand's heavily export-dependent economy. Following a program of increased public spending to combat unemployment initiated by Robert Muldoon's National government, "the New Zealand economy was. . . by the early 1980s, one of the most protected and controlled in the 'developed world" (Challies and Murray, p. 234). Then, in a stark reversal, immediately following the election of 1984, the newly elected Labour government began, in neglect of public consultation, a "wrenching process of market liberalisation" (Nagel, 126). When the National Party resumed its dominance in 1990, the neoliberal policies only continued with vigor and,

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2 In reference to Canada, he includes the additional deficiency that FPTP exaggerates regional political differences (Nagel, 2004, p. 142)

3 International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2011b). Voter turnout data for New Zealand. Retrieved from http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?id=171

4 International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2011b). Voter turnout data for New Zealand. Retrieved from http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?id=171

despite the injection of PR into the electoral system in 1996, turnout continued its decline.

It may be argued that the increases in turnout leading up to 1984 were merely indicative of the electorates' desperation, in a time of urgency, to reassure themselves of any semblance of hope, but that circumstances are much different today is arguable. The overriding difference, perhaps, is that there is no longer *any* option that provides hope of meaningful change – that all politicians now really *are* the same. Or, that the politicians *themselves* no longer see the possibility for public-spirited action. Instead, the political elite, like the electorate, engage the world and each other as rational, self-interested atoms. In describing modern politics, Dean (2003) argues that:

> Electorates are perceived by politicians to be calculating, egoistic, nomadic voters, ready to switch from one party to another as self-interest dictates. This perception is evinced in a timid government orientation expressed in the pursuit of policy objectives through manipulative, rather than educative, means (p. 1).

Politicians and citizens thus engage in a feedback loop of self-interested rationality. Such terms, themselves, connote a disconnect between the individual and her ability to engage in so-called 'public' affairs: instead of trying to garner the support of groups of individuals toward common social goals, politicians merely seek to accumulate the *votes* of 'citizens.' In this way, individuals are not engaged as stakeholders in a system of interdependent social relations, but as mere instruments.

V. Proportional Representation in Canada and Addressing Meaningful Action

While PR may not provide a tidy resolution to the growing lack of political engagement, at least in the short run, there is still merit to be found in a transition. That PR affords political minorities a voice in the legislature denied them by majoritarian systems should not be taken lightly. As the case of New Zealand shows, it is one aspect of the promise

of PR that holds true, and any program capable of initiating progress with respect to increasing diversity of representation in the public sphere is worthy of consideration.

Any further entrenchment of free trade and neoliberalism in Canada, however, (perhaps in the form of the looming ratification of free trade agreements with China and the EU) may jeopardize the likelihood of achieving electoral reform in favour of PR. Additionally, as Cusack, et al. (2007) argue, there is a persistent tendency towards the reproduction of majoritarian electoral systems where a tradition of consensus-based negotiation is not already established. Because PR systems are, by definition, redistributive, a party in power, so long as they are able to appeal to the median-voter, will observe an incentive to maintain a majoritarian system. Following their theory, even when more left-leaning parties come into power, by virtue of their need to maintain broad appeal, electoral reform that favours redistribution is rarely ever seriously considered.

Any notion of a transition in Canada should also be tempered by the observation attributed to Lundberg (2012) that existing political divisions can either foster or limit the consensus-based negotiation that PR ideally requires. Lundberg notes, in comparing Scotland and New Zealand, the enhanced difficulty of consensus-building in the former nation-state. Where two significant cleavages of class and of the centre-periphery (developing out of Scotland's position within the UK) are present in the Scottish example, the case of New Zealand exhibits merely the former tension. This suggests, therefore, that the existence of multiple cleavages may serve to limit the efficiency of the PR model where avenues toward consensus are continually obstructed by one division or another. In Canada, a similar division is noted in the case of Quebec and the Anglo-Franco cleavage, but whether any political hindrance emerging out of this schism would further alienate voters from politics remains up for debate. Nevertheless, the future of Scotland's case will undoubtedly prove informative, and, in the meantime, we may find a much more compelling

subject in the examination of the very *possibility* of provoking any real and significant change.

Nagel's (2004) analysis in the case of New Zealand illustrates that, while there are certain structural patterns built into the reform movement, "the infrequent triumphs of radical reform depend on *contingent* factors–human agency and historical circumstances" (p. 123). Of particular interest in the case of New Zealand is the success of reform in the face of a considerably aggressive counter-campaign financed by the corporate sector (Nagel 2004). In contrast to the model maintained by Cusack, et al. (2010), typical of the early adopters, the adoption of PR in New Zealand appears to have been less characterized by partisan self-interest and more by a sense of public-spiritedness as the public rallied against elite interests. Record low turnout in the most recent election, however, does not signal a recapitulation.

Understanding the decline in political mobilization as a consequence of a capitalism that must actively engage in oppression and atomization to survive is therefore, I argue, a prerequisite to meaningfully addressing our democratic deficit. That solidarity is a threat to the capitalist regime, which currently thrives on inequality and accumulation by dispossession, is without question. Meaningful change, which will only ever be accomplished through collective action, must be fought for then, at every step, against the atomizing forces of capitalism.

That the social institutions of liberal democracy have in some way been shaped by the reign of capital and, in turn, serve to reproduce its memes, places a distinct emphasis on the significance of our social interactions in combating atomisation. We cannot expect that mere structural changes will engender a proliferation of the worldly dispositions necessary for the opening-up of a public-spiritedness.

To this end, a narrow conception of human nature, solely characterized by a self-interested rationality, must be exposed as the divisive, viral meme it is. When we engage with others as atoms, we reproduce and reaffirm the assumption that we

exist, 'in reality,' as atoms. We must first learn then, to recognize the human subject behind the Other and recreate the cultural image of human nature as one that substantiates our interdependence and social natures. In doing so, we break down the divisions fortified by atomization. Our crisis of democracy will only ever be resolved through a constant struggle against this pervasive framework of understanding. In this way, the individual, conscious of her or his social nature, becomes the fount of meaningful action against the indifferent world of capital.

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Juarez Femicides: Causes, Challenges, and the Hope for Change

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Introduction

Over the past two decades northern Mexico and the city of Juarez in particular have come under international scrutiny over human rights abuses against women. During this time hundreds of Juarense women have been found murdered on the city's outskirts leading one writer to call the large number of unabated murders "femicide" (Russel & Harmes qtd in Mueller et al 127). Many of the cases remain unsolved (Kahn). This paper is motivated by the story of Lilia Alejandra Garcia Andrade and countless stories like hers,

> Lilia Alejandra Garcia Andrade was last seen at 7:30PM on February 14, 2001, by her coworkers as she worked in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The seventeen-year-old mother of two crossed this same unlit, empty field every day to catch a bus home after work. That night she never arrived. Her mother reported her missing the next day. Her physically and sexually assaulted body was found in the lot one week later; she had been strangled to death. Those responsible for Lilia's death have not been arrested. (Volk & Schlotterbeck 121)

Lilia's story is heart-breaking, but perhaps more heart-breaking is the fact that hundreds women in northern Mexico have lived through a similar story. Since 1993 more than 600 women, most of them young, have been murdered—with at minimum a third showing signs of sexual assault (Morales & Bejarano 421; Amnesty International). Lilia's story is a symptom of a larger issue in northern Mexico; it reveals a culture where violence against women is a norm.

This raises several questions. What has made and continues to make this type of violence possible? When did it begin? Who are the perpetuators of this violence? Equally important, is this the only form of violence women face in Ciudad Juarez? To answer these questions, and to open the potential for effective, transformative action, I will examine local understandings of gender and sexuality in Ciudad Juarez, and analyze some of Mexico's economic history. In so doing, I argue the emergence of particular economic policies contributed to a population size too large for Juarez government to manage. Furthermore, I suggest that the maquiladoras industry's employment of women over men challenged a gender ideology binary of women as private and men as public in Mexico. The ideology constructs a narrative of 'public women' as sexualized bodies and consequently lays blame on women for being in public. I suggest the combination of particular economic policies, the maquiladora industry, and a particular gender ideology has been key building blocks in enabling Juarez's femicide problem.

This paper will consist of three key sections. The first section will discuss the role of geography and economic policies in Mexico's development as a nation and how it has shaped Juarez's femicide problem. The following section will discuss local understandings of gender roles. Particular attention will be given to how these power structures have challenged gender roles in northern Mexico. Thirdly, an examination of responses by popular culture and antifemicide groups will take place. Attention will be given to the challenges faced and posed by these groups. This will be followed by a brief foray into some worthwhile responses and concluding thoughts.

Prior to moving into the bulk of this paper some definitions must be offered. Galtung defines violence as "the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is" (167). That is, violence takes place when what should be the mental and physical experience

for a human being is not the reality. Gender violence is the "physical and psychological harm that is inflicted on individuals on the basis of their gender or sexual orientation" (Corona & Dominguez-Ruvalcaba 4).

The Building Blocks to Femicide in Ciudad Juarez

Northern Mexico's femicide problem must be understood as part of a broader historical trend related to Mexico's attempt to develop economically. These efforts to development have had unintended consequences for which the city of Juarez was ill prepared.

Mexico does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it exists in a field of international relations where the country is both influenced and an influencer. For this reason acknowledging Mexico's relationship and geographic proximity to the U.S. is prudent. The following economic policies were created in partnership with the U.S. and will be discussed.

The Maquiladoras and the role of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) are fairly recent economic initiatives that has provided a consistent flow of people moving towards northern Mexico for work. While Mexico has been part of NAFTA since the early 1990s, Mexico and the U.S. had held an economic relationship for many years prior. The first agreement to control the movement of cheap labour from Mexico to the U.S. was the Bracero Program, which lasted from 1942 and 1964 (Vogel 4). It regulated the flow of Mexican migrant workers to the U.S. and served to offset the loss of workers drafted for World War II. When it ended hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers were expelled from the U.S., creating a massive pool of unemployed workers on the Mexican side of the border (Morales et al 8). The unemployed totaled 185,000 (8). Soon after this President Diaz Ortiz, influenced by U.S. "dollar diplomacy," enacted the Border Industrialization Program. The program was meant in part to address the problem of unemployment along northern Mexico's border. It established the beginnings of the Maquiladora system in northern Mexico which provided cheap labour for much of

the U.S.'s manufacturing industry (Vogel, 6; Morales et al, 6). Overtime, the program would evolve and expand into NAFTA in the 1990s. As a result of NAFTA, the number of maquiladoras and jobs located rose dramatically and, consequently, so did Juarez's population (MacArthur, 2001).

However, before NAFTA could influence the economic structures of Mexico, the global economic crisis of the 1970s caused Mexico to default on its national debt, which led international bodies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) to step in to assist Mexico. In partnership with the WB and IMF, the U.S. government agreed to take on Mexico's debt in exchange for adopting the IMF's Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). The SAP centered on liberalizing markets, privatizing land and other public resources, and cut backs on social spending. The implementation of the IMF's SAP, and the subsequent implementation of NAFTA, have had dire effects on Mexico's development and economy. Julie Erfani notes,

> Instead of shrinking illicit commerce, the regional integration of Mexico and Spain into global markets has accelerated the rise of smuggling, trafficking, intellectual piracy, counterfeiting, money laundering, official corruption, and organized crime. (71)

The unintended consequences created through the implementation of NAFTAs policy went beyond exacerbating societal problems. As will be discussed later, these policies also served to reinforce asymmetrical power relations between Mexico and the U.S. whereby the U.S. had a greater say in how economic policies between the two would look. Equally noteworthy in this discussion, the Bracero program, BIP, and the implementation of the IMF's SAP were central to creating a steady supply of workers in Juarez.

Examining these respective programs lays a foundation for understanding the presence of workers in Juarez. However, the implementation of NAFTA saw a significant change in the region and complicated things further. NAFTA was touted by local politicians as key to Mexico's economic

development and nation-building (Ortiz, 159). It was predicated on regional economic integration and it provided the United States and Canada with access to a ready supply of cheap laborers in a country with fewer environmental and labor regulations. This fit well within the capitalist logic of maximizing a firm's profit.

Between 1987 and 2000 nearly 4,000 maquiladoras were built and about one million jobs were created (MacArthur, 2001). Despite the creation of new employment opportunities through the maquiladoras many men did not find work right away; rather women were seen as the primary source of labor. Indeed, Volk and Schlotterbeck note "maquila-based growth was predicated on a highly gendered economic formula that cast women as...producers charged with bringing modernity to Mexico through their labor..." (127). The characteristics of an ideal maquiladora worker did not correspond with "male" characteristics; instead employers desired workers who were "docile, undemanding, nimble-fingered, nonunion and nonmilitant" (Sklair 172). That is, characteristics that were seen as predominantly "female". Thus, many women emerged as breadwinners for their families in a society where men were supposed to be the breadwinners.

Furthermore, many people were unable to find employment and this high supply of labourers ready to replace previous workers kept wages low. Indeed, Wright notes, the maquiladoras depended on "low-waged women workers, who live[d] in impoverished neighborhoods that lack many basic services, such as drainage, potable water and electricity" (Wright, 285). This is part of what Morales et al note meant when they write, "maquiladoras generate risks that Mexican cities like Juarez are ill-equipped to deal with" (8). The maquiladoras attract more potential labourers and consequently lead a city to grow in population. In Juarez's case, the population grew at a rate that its government could not keep up with.

On top of this, the hiring of women over men produced the conditions for gendered violence. Volk and Schlotterbeck explain,

> ...[T]he replacement of male with female workers challenged existing patriarchal structures and generated a deep well of male resentment and female vulnerability. In fact maquiladora industrialization ultimately created a gendered and racialized political economy and shaped the city's geography in ways that facilitated, absorbed, and perhaps, promoted femicide. (127)

While it may be a 'stretch' to suggest that maquiladora industrialization promoted femicide, it has certainly been a building block contributing the issue of gendered violence in Juarez. Acknowledging the historical development of industrialization in northern Mexico and the dominant economic logic guiding these processes provides some context and understanding for Juarez's societal woes. This still however does not explain what has allowed this form of violence to continue. How is it that so many women have been murdered?

Part of this can be explained by the Mexican government's justice system, which has failed to adequately find an end to these murders. Journalist Diana Washington Valdez states, "not one of the true murderers [involved in] this long decade of serial sex crimes has been jailed" (qtd in Volk and Schlotterbeck 121). Valdez says 'true murderers' because there have been men who have been arrested, but questions remain as to the veracity of the charges and evidence provided for the arrests (Balli). Celia Balli notes that despite the arrests the "murders continue unabated" (Balli). In the face of little government action to prevent and punish this violence, perpetrators have freedom to act with little fear of the consequences of their actions. The Mexican government has certainly played a role in this issue, however to place the sole blame on it is simplistic. A government is of course made up of people with views on gender roles. These views manifest themselves in policy making and public discourse. Therefore, questions pertaining to the nature of Juarez's patriarchal structure and what the

dominant gender ideology found in Juarez must be pursued.

Gender Ideology in northern Mexico

When it comes to gender ideology French and Bliss are apt to note, "Femininity and masculinity must be understood as relational categories, that is as categories that are constructed at the same time and in relation to each other..." (10). Mexican author Octavio Paz offers an informative perspective. His description of Mexican national character is summarized as the following,

> ...[Mexican men are seen] as false, egoistic, and violent, and the ideal manliness as never to "crack," never to back down, and never to open oneself—neither in a literal or in a figurative sense. Woman is perceived as inferior to man precisely because she is open—or opened. Life is seen as a battle, and stoicism is a central virtue. A man should face dangers and pain with indifference. Life is to hurt, punish, and offend—or to be hurt, punished, or offended. Society is composed of the strong and the weak—the strong are the "*chingones.*" This leads men to feel contempt for women, but also for femininity in men. The origins lie...in the colonial history—in the conquistadors' rape of Indian women, and in the more symbolic rape of Indian civilization. The Mexican complex is to be sons and daughters of the violent man and the raped woman. (qtd in Prieur 220)

From this summary certain gender binaries such as violent/passive and strong/weak arise. It is clear that power rests, literally and figuratively, in the hands of men. While Paz's description divulges some important information regarding gender identities in Mexico, there is one that has been left out: the binary of public/private. To understand how gendered binaries operate within Mexico, I will describe two cases of 'public women' in Mexico. First, I will explore the case of the suffrage movement during the first half of the 20th Century in Mexico. Second, I will analyze in greater depth contemporary anti-femicide protests in Juarez. Together these examples situate the anti-femicide

group's struggles within the broader historical processes involved in Mexico.

In the mid 1930s women such as Communist Party militant Choncha Michel pushed for greater rights to be afforded to Mexican women. Women saw a victory in 1937 when President Lazaro Cardenas had Congress change the Mexican constitution to grant women the right to vote and to run in an election (Olcott 2). Despite this victory, women faced resistance and concern over this empowerment and would not vote in a federal election until 1958 (2). Olcott notes, men on both sides of the "woman question" struggled to see how "women" and "politics" could be practiced without creating social ills (4). That is, there was a concern over "whether women would redefine Mexican politics or political involvement would alter women's nature" (4). Would women feminize politics, or would their involvement masculinize them? These concerns highlight the logic inherent in this discourse. If men inhabited the realm of "politics" then women would have to inhabit the private realm. Women entering the public realm of "politics" challenged the gendered norms of the time. It simultaneously threatened the idea of male masculinity and threatened to masculinize women. The idea of what it meant to be a woman in Mexico centered on notions of "self-sacrifice, modesty, piety, and domesticity" (46). This description fits as the appropriate binary to Octavio Paz's description of Mexican men. In summary, Mexican women were expected to be women of "piety and domesticity" (46). Their predominant place of importance was found in the private realm of the family. To step outside of these norms by entering the public realm would put a woman at risk of being perceived as morally 'loose,' abandoning her family, and perhaps even a "public woman". That is, a prostitute. As a result of these binaries women find themselves in a system of relations where men and women share an unequal amount of power; men rest on the highest rung of power and women find themselves on a significantly lower rung. Examining Mexico's suffrage movement provides a helpful background for the problems anti-femicide protestors have faced in Juarez.

The shift in the maquiladora industry to hiring young women instead of men significantly challenged the gender narrative of public/private. For example, Balli notes, "In many cases, because unemployment rates for men were higher, women even took on the role of breadwinner in their families." For many of these women, who had come from rural parts of Mexico, employment in Juarez also afforded them a new found independence from family and relational ties. They could go shopping or dancing at a local club (Balli). But this freedom came at a social cost for the women of Juarez. Melissa Wright notes that during the U.S. prohibition, the city was famous for the "women in its public streets, squares, and markets, who sold sex as 'public women'" (Wright, Necropolitics 713). Then in the early 1970s, the continuous flow of people in search of work saw the consolidation of "two prosperous urban economies," one being the sex industry and other being the maquiladora industry (Wright, From Protests 373). Thus, women who went out in public to get to work (as all people had to) inherited a sexualized label of the 'public woman' in Juarez. Building on the work of Tabuenca Córdoba and Nathan, Melissa Wright explains,

> The public association of *obrera* (worker) with *ramera* (whore) was something that factory workers faced constantly, as women who walked the streets on their way to work and women who walked the streets as part of their work added to the city's fame as a city of public women (see e.g. Nathan 2002). Often portrayed as evidence of the social disintegration of the Mexican family, factory workers were the very people responsible for Mexico's reputation as a hub of global manufacturing (Tabuenca Córdoba, 1995-96). (cited in Necropolitics 713)

This explanation serves to provide an understanding for how and why local government officials have been able to justify the lack of justice or action taken to address the Juarez femicides. Under this logic it is the fault of the women themselves for transgressing the societal norms so vital to maintaining the healthy society. Sadly but not surprisingly blaming and shaming the very

women who are in the most precarious of situations becomes the dominant narrative.

It should be noted the Juarez femicides have not been perpetuated solely by men who were strangers to the women. Indeed, Luevano notes "two-thirds of the Juárez-Chihuahua femicides are a result of domestic violence" (74). Brickman's suggestion that acts of violence are "Social statements [which] embody central themes and tensions of the civilization" is fitting in this situation given the fact that these public women have challenged themes central to Mexican gender ideals (16).

A reflection on the responses to femicide in popular culture and feminist rights groups can also provide a venue of a fuller understanding of the gendered ideals of men and women in Juarez.

Responses to Femicides in Popular Culture and "Antifemicide" Groups

Dying Slowly and Desert Blood - Different Perspectives on the Same Issue:

Writer and photographer Julián Cardona is an observer who has taken note of the Juarez Femicides, publishing a powerful photo essay titled, "Morir despacio: Una Mirada dentro de las plantas maquiladoras en la frontera de los Estados Unidos/México" (translated as Dying Slowly: A look inside the maquiladoras on the U.S.-Mexico Border). Through his photo essay Cardona analyzes the lives of women working in the maquiladora industry and their lives are formed on assembly lines (Volk & Schlotterbeck 132). It begins with an image titled, "A Young Girl at Work," and it depicts a very young woman looking upward while working at her station (132). The photo essay ends with another picture of a much younger woman than the first photo; in it her back is turned to the camera while standing next to an empty chair. This picture is titled, "A Young Girl and Her Future" (132). Using these pictures with their titles and subtitles, Cardona argues that these young women "give their lives," to make a "*world class product*" (qtd in Volk & Schlotterbeck 132). Another argument made by Cardona can be found it the second photo of the essay. It shows women putting on make-up in their

preparation of the maquiladora's annual beauty pageant. However, Volk and Schlotterbeck are apt to note that the argument can only be seen in the Spanish title of the photo titled, "Trabajadores se visten y maquillan para participar en el concurso de belleza Señorita RCA". They state, "In Spanish, '*maquillar*' is to put on makeup. Yet, to the extent that Cardona's essay is about maquila's it is hard to avoid his subtle argument that, while female workers are assembling '*world class products*,' they themselves are being made, reassembled" (135). Cardona's intention is to highlight the inherent problems of the maquiladora industry and their ties to femicide in Juarez. To this extent he is effective, but in his attempt to represent these women as innocent he reinforces notions of female docility, which has been central to the maquiladora industry operations (136; Sklair, 172). It also serves to reinforce the Mexican-Catholic binary of whore/virgin (136). In sum, Cardona rightly condemns the role the maquiladoras have played in the femicides, but he fails to condemn the gendered norms that serve to perpetuate the very violence he seeks to condemn. In an effort to challenge these traditional binaries Alicia Gaspar de Alba published her novel titled, "Desert Blood".

She is among a number of artists, be they poets, visual artists, songwriters or singers, or documentary filmmakers who seek to challenge the masculinist interpretations of the Juarez femicides (144). She writes a story of a woman named Ivon Villa who becomes a detective in El Paso after someone close to her is kidnapped and murdered and shortly after has her teenage sister kidnapped as well. Her critique of the Juarez femicides center around the question, "who was allowing these crimes to happen?" (qtd in Volk & Schlotterbeck 145). Throughout the story, rather than portraying the common masculinist virgin/whore dichotomy, she writes of women who are strong and resistant (146). These women, however, are not perfect; they are prone to making mistakes, and at times they are foolish (146). A key theme of de Alba's novel is the agency the female characters practice in the face of threats to their lives. To this extent, de Alba complicates the notion of

what it means to be a woman in Juarez, and in doing so she humanizes them.

Antifemicide Protests:

While these artists have brought attention to the Juarez femicides through their respective forms of art, others have sought to do so using a different form of expression: protests. Between 1995 and 2005, Wright notes that Juarez and Chihuahua City were well known for their "antifemicide" protests led by women (Wright, Femicide 212). The movement, among other things, has sought to place pressure on Mexican politicians to pursue justice against the femicides. The movement, a coalition of various organizations, has not gone without its own issues. Wright notes activists face threats and harassment for their work (213). Furthermore, the movement has had to deal with "political disagreements and competition of resources" challenging the coalition's unity (213). However, signs of division are not synonymous with failure; rather they are "part of the on going materialization of social movements" (213). That is, movement is in "constant transformation" (Rojas qtd in Femicide 213). Acknowledging it as such points to the dynamic nature of social movements.

Despite the apparent trend towards conflict among these organizations, some groups have been able to work together to mount pressure on Mexican politicians. Melissa Wright manages to focus on one group called the *Mujeres de Negro* who "succeeded in pulling together a wide and diverse coalition of groups" (Wright, Paradoxes 278). However, in the face of a united stance the group is unable to escape the local discourse regarding public women. At the core of the protestors movement lays a paradox. By stepping out into public to protest for greater justice they are ignored by those politicians because their public presence makes them "public women," and thereby illegitimate. The issue of legitimacy is a key challenge the *Mujeres de Negro* face. Thus, in order to legitimize their public presence the coalition casts itself as mothers looking for their missing daughters. In other words, they cast themselves as private women who come out publicly only because they are doing what a good mother should do. In doing so,

the coalition reinforces the narrative of women's domain existing in the private realm and not the public.

This strategy is not accidental. It has come about as a response to the local government's blaming strategy. On this Wright explains,

> [The] 'blame the victim' strategy is a transparent effort on the part of regional elites and the police to deflect criticism of their responsibility vis-a-vis the violence as they, instead, blame the women who attracted trouble by venturing into the street, by wearing short skirts, by dancing, by not being at home. (281)

Thus, daughters must be portrayed as being innocent, pure victims. But this too is problematic as Debbie Nathan explains,

> Between a rock and a hard place, families are thus loath to deal with the fact that many beloved daughters do go to cantinas, and many do communicate sexuality through their clothing. Yet to acknowledge this is to imply that one's child is a slut undeserving of redress. It's a cruel conundrum that has forced activists in Juarez to use a public rhetoric in which victims are all church-going, girlish innocents. (qtd in Paradoxes, 284)

Despite these challenges the *Mujeres de Negro* did receive a response from Mexican President, at the time Vicente Fox, who declared he would use all his power to capture the criminals, and challenged Chihuahua's governor to address the femicide issue (Vargas cited in Paradoxes 282). While some could argue it was an empty promise, that the Mexican President offered a response points to the fact that the group was heard.

Still, this strategy does carry a great risk with it. Many of the women in *Mujeres de Negro* are middle-class educated women with feminist backgrounds, but young women kidnapped tend to come from poor, uneducated backgrounds. Thus, when presenting themselves as private women— mothers—looking for their children they risk being challenged and exposed as deceptive and fake.

The issues the *Mujeres de Negro* and other coalitions experience externally though the public discourses they must engage in, or internally where political disagreements tend to be common, serve to show the various trials women in northern Mexico face in order to be heard. To assume, however, that *Mujeres de Negro's* work is in vain is to fail to understand the context in which they live in. In the early 2000s unemployment was rising as Juarez was losing at least a quarter of its manufacturing sector to international competitors such as China (288). Because of this, Mexican officials have been sensitive to trying to attract foreign investment to compete against these other markets, but they are also sensitive to the image created by a public protest: resistant women, resistant workers. To this extent, public protests can be seen as threats to economic development.

The *Mujeres de Negro* is an example of how coalitions with varying ideologies can work together and garner some success. They demonstrate the difficult decisions coalitions must make when strategizing, decisions that at times may be contradictory to a larger end goal.

Suggestions For Effective Change

There are other responses that have been offered to issues pertaining to femicide. For example, Staudt and Coronado stress the need for the city of Juarez and Chihuahua to fund battered women's shelters. These are relatively new in the city. The first was established in 2004 (176). They also suggest taking violence against women into account in public safety policy, public health policy and civic coalitions that include both human rights activists and more business minded people (177).

In the Maquiladora industry owners of their respective factories should invest in increasing security through surveillance in and around the work place. Furthermore, investing in self-defense training classes for their employees, while not addressing the macro issues, could empower women in the face of an attack (Staudt & Coronado 177).

Finally, the dominant gender discourses must be strategically and skillfully challenged. A feminist activist in Juarez, Esther Chávez Cano, is one individual who has been doing just that. Together with a group of Juarense women, Cano helped establish the first and, at the time, "only rape crisis and sexual assault center in Juarez" (Wright, Manifesto, 552). It was called "Casa Amiga: Centro de Crisis". As an activist, Cano pushed a different discourse, one that challenges the notion that the countless women murdered and women in general share the trait of disposability. She stated, "We are fighting the idea that women aren't worth anything," and elaborated, "A woman goes to work so she can support her family. She works hard for the company, but when she is killed, people say she was a prostitute that isn't worth anything." (qtd in Manifesto, 563). Cano and the leaders of the Casa Amiga believe "the roots of femicide lie in a vision of Juarez women as worth less than what they offer to their families and to the workplace" (Wright, Manifesto, 563). Challenging the idea of disposability can pressure politicians and maquiladora mangers to take action and demonstrate that they value women.

Conclusion

The femicides in Juarez have spanned just over two decades. An examination of the geographical and historical processes involved in Juarez provides a helpful understanding of the materials that have made the Juarez femicides possible. The development of the maquiladora industry over last three decades in particular has played a contributing role. By taking this into account and studying Mexico's gender ideals in a broad national sense, and more narrowly in Juarez, it becomes clear the maquiladora industry has served development of the maquiladora industry has served to undermine gendered ideals in the area. These same ideals have simultaneously served as a means for justifying the lack of action taken against criminals.

Responses to the femicides have varied in approach. In popular culture Julian Cardona's critique of the maquiladora industry is fair, but his reinforcement of the classical Mexican gender binary is problematic. Others like Alicia Gaspar de Alba have creatively represented women who demonstrate strength, agency, and creativity in the face of societal dangers and pressures. Antifemicide groups like the *Mujeres de Negro* have shown that unity, despite diverse political opinions, is possible.

Problems continue to abound in the northern city of Mexico. The problems indeed remain complicated within the layers of Mexico's economic, political, sexual, and social history. Complexity however should not undermine engagement; rather, acknowledging the complexity surrounding the femicides of Juarez serves to better inform and prepare individuals. By deconstructing the social structures seen in Mexico's gendered ideology and economic policies the opportunity for addressing these problems arises. After all, societies are not static organisms. If ideologies and policies are shaped and constructed by men and women, the possibility and hope remains for future men and women to reconstruct them.

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Planned Home Births & Midwifery: Benefits & Legal Considerations of an Alternative Birthing Decision

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Introduction

When children come into our lives, their innocence can change the way we perceive the world. Becoming a parent and building a family is a significant decision one may make in their life. Having a child comes with extreme responsibilities, but also many rewards. In Western societies today, children have become highly valued as the birth rates within these nations have declined (Högbacka, 2008, p.318). Before entering into parenthood, individuals often engage in careful planning to determine whether they are ready to take on this new endeavour (Högbacka, 2008, p.319). Many wish to work towards the societal concept of the good, responsible parent by providing their child with everything they need to succeed (Robson, 2010, p.131). These decisions and responsibilities come to life the moment a child is conceived. Women must be able to take care of themselves as a way to ensure a healthy life for their baby. Making decisions about the birthing process is one of the first steps in taking on the role of being a responsible parent. Birthing decisions have greatly altered in western societies today. Historically, births at home were most commonplace. It was the job of the midwife to promote the good health of women and their babies. Midwives played an important role in helping parents ease into this life changing experience. Looking back on England as well as Canada's past, these individuals were highly sought after and central to the birthing process (Thomas, 2009, p.115; Burtch, 1994, p.4). However, today, the majority of women in western nations opt to give birth among professionals in a hospital setting. The promotion of the biomedical model in society makes this option seem most promising and safe for both the baby and the mother. Seeking to give birth at home has become viewed as a reckless and unsafe

practice. Over the past few centuries, as pregnancy has become more medicalized, the role of the midwife has declined. Nonetheless, evidence has come to show that planned home births actually have positive outcomes for women. Midwives provide a sense of support and caring that often does not exist among medical professionals (O'Brien et al., 2011, p.214). The lack of recognition and consistency for these individuals in law makes the practice of midwifery controversial. In our constantly-evolving society, the use of midwives in the home should be recognized as a legitimate source for a positive birthing experience. There is a need to take a step back from the biomedical views that dominate society; doing so would allow women to make more informed birthing decisions and enable them to control their own bodies and overall health.

Planned Home Births & Midwives

Presently, the idea of planned home births is met with much skepticism and the role of the midwife is not well understood. Burtch (1994) broadly defines a midwife as any person who assists in a child's birth (p.6). This could include anyone from obstetricians or nurses to community midwives. However, they have traditionally been female attendants (Burtch, 1994, p.6). It was once the job of these women to ensure that the pregnancy and labour process was a positive experience. They would be at the side of the woman both before the arrival of the child, providing advice, and during the actual birth. One of their major roles has been to control the conditions around a woman during labour. This is often a stressful, extraordinary experience and the attendant is there to reduce anxieties. Thomas (2009) points out that midwives traditionally played a social role by reassuring the father and mother during the birth of their child (p.119). They worked

to make women feel calm and looked out for their wellbeing (Thomas, 2009, p.119). They would seek to provide a comfortable atmosphere for the mother so that the delivery could take place without any complications. Having this support system in place assisted women in easing into their new role as a mother. They had someone they could trust by their side who had the knowledge necessary to deliver a healthy newborn child.

The position of the midwife, in welcoming a new life into the world, came to be viewed as a significant role in society. During the 15th century, the profession was referred to as an office, art and mystery with religious meaning (Thomas, 2009, p.123). Midwives and their engagement in home births transformed into a prominent profession, which soon became viewed as male-oriented work (Thomas, 2009, p.123). Maternity and the position of women in relation to control of the birthing process came under scrutiny by the dominant society. It became questionable as to whether females were capable of handling the responsibilities associated with midwifery. During the Enlightenment Period and the Scientific Revolution of the 1690's, maternity became highly medicalized (Thomas, 2009, p.125). The effects of this era can be seen today where the majority of women choose to give birth in hospitals. These controlled, professional environments are deemed to be safe and the best choice for the child and the mother. It is far less common for women to give birth at home with the assistance of a midwife. Instead, the use of caregivers in a planned home birth often brings about criticism and questions against the choices of the parents. The dominance of the biomedical model means that there is failure to acknowledge the implications of taking on a medicalized approach to the birthing process. Just as with other controversial practices such as surrogacy, women's bodies have come to be viewed as vessels for holding offspring (Pande, 2010, p.970; Thomas, 2009, p.125). The birthing process has now moved away from the traditional use of midwives to the control of male professionals.

The importance of birth to the existence of human beings caused pregnancy to become highly pathologized. Male experts took over the role that midwives had played for centuries before (Spoel & James, 2006, p.167). The focus on rationality and objectivity during the Scientific Revolution caused the male-dominated society of the 1600s to medicalize the entire practice. Thomas (2009) argues that men created a field where they could reduce issues such as "infanticide, maternal mortality and neo-natal death" (p.129). At the same time, women's bodies became reduced to parts. They were made to be objects under the control of male physicians. Any issues with their health or birth complications would be cured by men. Through this revolution, the male professional gained complete control over the birthing process (Burtch, 1994, p.11). Women no longer had the support that came with having a midwife by their side. Rather, they became alienated from the professionals who held power over their bodies. Unfortunately, this turn to a biomedical model has caused much dissatisfaction with the maternity experience. Many women report feeling as if they are on an assembly line, simply being moved in and out of hospitals (Burtch, 1994, p.105). The former intimacy and natural process of birth has been lost.

In addition to the power of men over women's bodies in the hospital setting, there is also control of female reproduction by the state. The law regulates many reproductive practices including insemination and surrogacy (Kelly, 2010, p.149; Busby & Vun, 2010, p.14). In Canada's past, the government has even employed sterilization to limit the pregnancies of what they deemed to be degenerate women (Grekul, 2008, p.249). Promoting the biomedical model and encouraging the use of hospitals over home births limits women in making their own decisions around their maternity experiences. They are unable to obtain the information and resources necessary if they seek to have a home birth. As a consequence, they are left to consider the legal implications their midwives may experience as well as the guilt they may feel if complications occur. As midwives are not legal in all provinces, there is a chance of criminal prosecution if a home birth goes wrong. If a mother or child is harmed in the process, a midwife may find themselves convicted of criminal negligence and sentenced to a life of imprisonment (Burtch, 1994, p.167). Furthermore, where midwifery is legalized, the practice is still not viewed as completely professional and legitimate (Wagner, 2004, p.74). The barriers created by the state cause women to view home births in a negative light. They fear the repercussions of making the wrong decision and, therefore, choose to resort to patriarchal institutions to safely give birth to their children.

Benefits of Home Birth

If women were enlightened around the benefits of midwifery, it is possible that they would more often choose to engage in home birth. Most individuals are unaware of the positive outcomes and may not even consider the option. Instead, hospital settings are viewed as the only feasible choice for giving birth in western societies. Those who do engage in planned home births may be viewed as radical or irresponsible. The wider society may question why they choose to use a midwife when they have resources readily available to them in hospitals. Regardless of the dominant perspectives, those women who do choose planned home births have reported very positive experiences. Their views demonstrate the need to explore various birthing options other than what the biomedical model surrounding pregnancy offers.

For any woman who is bearing a child, support is important and necessary. Over the course of nine months, their bodies change rapidly and they must be able to understand what measures need to be taken to deliver a healthy child. Advances in science have allowed a vast amount of information to be available to women today. However, the interactions with physicians, obstetricians or nurses can cause women to feel as if they are being put through a routine. Often, the goal of these professionals is to be as quick and efficient as possible. They seek to serve the needs of many patients as there is a significant demand on their assistance and expertise. Engagement in such appointments may leave women feeling distanced from the professionals around them. They are not able to establish a strong sense of support and connect with these individuals who have complete control over their bodies. This is contrary to the experiences of women who engage in planned home births. Most report feeling a strong sense of satisfaction when working with midwives as opposed to medical professionals (O'Brien et al., 2011, p.214). This is largely due to the fact that they provide a level of support that is not available through the dominant medical system. Midwives make regular visits to the women to check up on their overall health while providing advice and information. O'Brien et al. (2011) points out that, on average, women had five or more prenatal visits from their midwives during their pregnancy (p.210). This consistency in care with the same provider throughout the entire process allows rapport and trust to be built between the midwife and the woman (O'Brien at al., 2011, p.213). The women are also in an environment outside of institutions where they feel more comfortable and at ease. Midwives offer early care which allows women to be more informed about their pregnancy. They regularly attend classes, have fewer ultrasounds done and rely less on medicine (O'Brien et al., 2011, p.210). In turn, these women have more control over their own bodies and the decisions surrounding the birth of their child.

The use of midwives during the prenatal stage leads to satisfaction on the part of the mother, but the actual delivery has also been found to be a more positive experience when it occurs at home. Studies show that planned home births result in more vaginal deliveries in comparison to deliveries by obstetricians in the hospital setting (O'Brien et al., 2011, p.210). These births tend to be more of a natural process. In addition, there is a lower rate of perinatal death with the use of midwives (Janssen et al., 2009, p.378). Overall, the care of these providers yields more positive results than obstetricians. However, in regards to complications and overall health, the use of physicians in the hospital and midwives at home demonstrate similar findings (Janessen, 2009, p.379). Both of these care providers regularly assist in delivering healthy newborns with few serious issues. Nonetheless, the satisfaction level in terms of the mother's emotions and comfort is higher with planned home births (O'Brien et al., 2011, p.212). These women feel more at ease when

they are in a familiar environment and have a midwife by their side. They feel that the level of care provided by midwives is of a much higher standard than medical professionals found in hospitals (O'Brien et al., 2011, p.214). The benefits of planned home births and the use of midwives are evident. Women tend to be much more informed, understand their needs and what is occurring with their bodies. Unfortunately, this level of engagement in one's own pregnancy can be hindered by the state.

Regulating Birthing Decisions

Undoubtedly, there are many positives associated with engaging in a planned home birth. Internationally, many benefits have been found and there are no significant issues (O'Brien, 2011, p.212). In fact, the practice is well supported in many European nations. There is strong advocacy for midwifery in areas such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Burtch, 1994, p.191; Janssen et al., 2009, p.377). On the other hand, the United States has shown opposition to the practice (Janssen et al., 2009, p.377). Interestingly, it may be noted that American society has a private health care system that requires individuals to take on their own medical expenses. Those countries that show support for midwifery may do so as a result of a strained public health care system. The situation in Canada surrounding midwifery is a bit more ambiguous. The profession is currently legalized in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (Bourgeault, Benoit, Davis-Floyd, 2004, p.3). It is highly likely that the other provinces and territories will soon follow suit. Nonetheless, even with this legalization, there is still much reluctance for women to reach out to midwives. They are not viewed in a professional capacity. Planned home births and midwifery offer many positive outcomes, but the practice needs to be regulated by law, to some extent, for women to consider the option. However, the process of legalization itself is controversial to the ideas behind midwifery.

Practicing midwifery is based on the notion that births are to be natural. These caregivers seek to provide women with an environment that is calm and familiar. Wagner (2004) points out that in order for midwifery to be true to itself, it must be performed outside of institutions (p.73). This means that involvement with the state and hospitals is to be avoided. Doing so would keep the authenticity of the practice alive. Furthermore, it allows women to control their own bodies and make decisions outside of the control of patriarchal institutions. Midwifery and planned home births enable women to avoid being pathologized by male experts. They are given a level of care beyond the assembly line of hospitals and clinics. Nonetheless, if midwifery attempts to operate without any regulations, the entire practice is left vulnerable to criminal sanctions. Without being legalized, these caregivers fail to be protected by law. They can be subject to the conviction of a crime if any harm occurs to the baby or the mother (Burtch, 1994, p.159). Physicians are also held responsible for their actions, but it is rare that they are convicted of such crimes (Burtch, 1994, p.176). Instead, the law is unjustly applied in favour of male experts. Those who practice midwifery, which are generally females, do not possess the same level of protection. Furthermore, it is likely that civil action against midwives would be more successful than those against physicians (Burtch, 1994, p.178); the court of law has been more lenient towards physicians in comparison to other groups (Burtch, 1994, p.178). The issue of lack of legal protection for midwives and home births has been acknowledged in Canada. Following the death of a newborn, an inquest from the Attorney General of British Columbia suggested that midwifery be legalized and made into a professional practice (Burtch, 1994, p.175). Since this time, the legalization has occurred, but limitations continue to exist with the professionalization of midwifery. Although regulation by law may go against the ideologies of midwifery, it needs to be embraced so that women can have the option of planned home births.

Those who practice midwifery need to recognize the importance of allowing the profession to be made legal and regulated. Wagner (2004) argues that, although these caregivers seek to avoid institutions, working within the dominant medical system could be advantageous. It would keep the profession alive while improving the level of care midwives can offer women (p.78). Being viewed as a legitimate profession, midwives would be able to create and engage in better educational programs (Wagner, 2004, p.82). This would benefit women seeking planned home births as they would feel more comfortable with a knowledgeable caregiver. Furthermore, legal regulation would give midwives access to any necessary resources found within the medical system (Wagner, 2004, p.82). They could readily obtain medications, advice or other tools when needed. Women would be more likely to consider the alternative of planned home births if they knew that they could trust their midwives. Regulation through law would also mean that more information would be available about these caregivers so that women could engage in research on their own and come to a well-informed decision. Additionally, Benatar, Garrett, Howell and Palmer (2013) point out that promoting the use of midwives would save costs to the entire health care system. Presently, there is much strain on resources as many women undergo caesarean deliveries. Midwifery and planned home births offer a cheaper alternative to hospitals (p.1763). Not only will these women experience a greater sense of support, but they will also help prevent the rising costs of health care (Benatar et al., 2013, p.1763). Acceptance, on the part of midwives, of the regulation and legalization of the profession would enable women to seek planned home births more often.

The regulation of midwifery is important, but the state should be careful not to impede upon the birthing decisions of women. The practice itself cannot be regulated to the extent that midwives are forced to reduce their high standard of care. The professionalization needs to occur so that women trust their caregivers. However, this should occur with caution so that benefits of midwifery continue to hold strong. Any regulation should be to promote and encourage the current practice of midwifery and planned home births. The law should not, however, attempt to control the bodies of women. The purpose of such legalization is to give women more informed choices as opposed to further pathologizing them. Women and midwives must work together to ensure that planned home births remain a natural process that promotes knowledge, control and empowerment.

Conclusion

Making decisions around giving birth is a crucial time in any woman's life. Parents want to ensure that their child will be healthy and well cared for. In our current society, professionals in a hospital setting are the most widely used method for delivering a baby. This focus on the biomedical model has emerged out of science and the suppression of midwives in favour of male experts. Women need to be made aware of the benefits associated with planned home births and midwives. Instead of viewing the practice as irresponsible and reckless, women should be educated on the positive outcomes. Engaging in a planned home birth can result in a higher level of satisfaction as well as greater understanding and control over one's body. Additionally, the fear of complications can be diminished. However, before women are able to make such decisions, the practice of midwifery itself needs to be adequately regulated. Doing so would put individuals at ease if they were to make the decision to engage in a planned home birth. Through proper regulation, women can embrace the beauty of childbirth in a natural and comfortable setting. They will be able to welcome their newborn child into a familiar and supportive environment.

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Parental Leave Policy's Efficacy in Attaining the Goal of Gender Equality: A Comparative Analysis of the United States and Sweden

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, only men have been regarded as citizens of the state, as the prevailing ideology of patriarchy, which reifies male dominance and female subordination, has been ingrained into society with minimal opposition due to the dissemination of values and beliefs that manifested within hierarchical white, male-centred institutions.[1] This system of thought created a distinction between public and private spheres, and thus, formed a divide between two genders – the 'male sphere' as "the public world of work, of politics and of culture," and the 'female sphere' as "the private world of family, home, and nurturing support for the separate public activities of men."[2] Although the patriarchal underpinnings of this dichotomy may still be perceived as remaining persistent in contemporary societal norms and the legal systems, the contributions of feminism and the goals it aims to achieve has played a substantial role in challenging conventional gender order and norms; for instance, men and women's work and family roles are now often accepted as interchangeable.[3] Social policies directed towards families now have been reconceptualised to challenge the traditional gendered division of labour; for instance, the progressive approach to interpret social policy "assumes the obligation of both men and women to support themselves, as well as to jointly share in the responsibilities of parenthood."[4] Family, and parental leave policies in particular can now be seen as a phenomenon that encompasses the scope of both the public and private sphere.

Parental leave policies are at the centre of welfare state development and at the heart of countries' child and family policies. These policies are widely recognized as an essential element for attaining important social and economic goals, and intertwines many different, intersecting policy areas, including child well-being, family, gender equality, employment, and demography. Leave policies, therefore, give unique insight into a country's values, interests and priorities. My intent is not to assess the links between the length of parental leaves and the health benefits; there have already been extensive studies outlining the benefits of longer leave in association with improved health outcomes for women and children.[5] Rather, I intend to explore the relationship of the provisions of parental leave measures in relation to women's mobility through a comparative analysis between two countries. I will argue that the Nordic countries (notably Sweden) currently have the best model of parental leave that assures women greater power and mobility, as opposed to the lagging leave policies of the United States. Furthermore, for women to attain greater mobility and social equality, which can be mobilized

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[1] Joni Lovenduski, *Feminizing Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 27.
[2] Lucinda M. Finley, "Transcending Equality Theory: A Way Out of the Maternity and the Workplace Debate," *Columbia Law Review* 86, no. 6 (1986): 1118.
[3] Richard Delgado and Helen Leskovac, "Politics of Workplace Reforms: Recent Works on Parental Leave and a Father-Daughter Dialogue," *Rutgers Law Review* 40, no. 4 (1988): 1035.

[4] Gail Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 343.
[5] Francoise Core and Vassiliki Koutsogeorgopoulous, "Parental Leave: What and Where?," *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The OECD Observer* 195 (1995): 15.

through strong parental leave measures, I will also argue that men must play a greater role in the caretaking process.

The basis of women's mobility, specifically, will be determined by the assessment of gender equality. I will first briefly describe the concept of parental leave policies and the conceptualization of this policy measure through a gender lens. I will then undergo a critical examination on certain cases around the world and assess the ability of these policies in leveraging women's agency in society. I will first take a look at the United States, and analyze their leave measures, which can be viewed as lagging far behind most of the other Western industrial states' leave measures. I will also examine Sweden, one of the leading pioneers in parental leave policies. Although Nordic countries are the closest to the best model for gender equity, there are still additional policy provisions that can be made, which I will propose to best foster gender equality – primarily, providing a general framework that places the greater importance of fathers undertaking the caretaking role through parental leave, and ways to have them further integrated into parental leave.

1.1 EXAMINING PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES THROUGH A GENDER LENS

States and social policies have shown to be the impetus of the construction of social and gender norms. Brush argues that the governance of gender and the gender of governance points to the suggestion that "states and social policies potentially provide leverage for tipping the balance of power in 'private' (commercial, familial, or sexual) relationships."[6] The existence of power pervading in states and social policies, and apparatuses of rules and control can be utilized to reinforce and shape public policies that further mould social, economic, and political relations in society, which *can* affect men and women disproportionately. Hence, using a gender lens helps identify the social context and consequences of the topic in focus, which, in this case, is primarily on parental leave policies. Parental

leave policies are the pinnacle of welfare policies, as it gives families the much needed time to adjust to the entrance of a new child. Mothers must physically recover from pregnancy, labour, and childbirth, and parents need time to adjust to the new weight of parenthood. With a gender lens however, the efficacy and outcomes of the policies come into question, and the consequences from the governance of gender – such as the social, political, economic consequences – become highlighted. Henceforth, parental leave should be reconceptualised, and the aspect that this paper aims to focus on is the possible equitable revision of gender roles.

1.2 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

It is important to note that the varying historical roots and cultural beliefs from country to country on leave periods and parental time input for newborns and infants have implications for welfare measures. For instance, parental leave measures in Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) compared to the United States are not only grounded in material differences (for example, the conditions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) are short, unpaid, and subject to limited eligibility, while Nordic countries are longer, paid, and universal) but also based on the contrasting ideological differences (for instance, the Nordic welfare state stresses on the importance of children's well-being as the central core in its policy development, and thus, inheriting a "social/parental investment" approach, whereas the United States' welfare state is much less prominent than the Nordic model).[7] These cross-country differences between the Nordic countries and the United States reveal the historical roots of these policies but also their cultural differences. Whereas the United States has implemented country-wide parental leave only a few decades ago, almost all of the western countries outside of the United States, specifically in Europe, already introduced maternity leave policies more

than a century ago as a way to ensure the protection of the health of women and children.[8]

1.3 MEN AND PARENTAL LEAVE

The process of understanding the gender equality discourse in relation to parental leave is further complicated when the father's role in parental leave is taken into account. Unpaid leave can produce large effects on men, as most families cannot afford to bear the financial loss of having a father taking the time off for caretaking. This can serve to reaffirm traditional gender roles, as women are given paid compensation and the time to focus on the 'nurturing' and 'caretaking' roles, while men who take on a large role in their child's development are expected to manage the same responsibilities without the same compensation; as a result, they would place their job in higher regard, which provides them with little incentive to fully commit to the caretaking role. Although troublesome to heterosexual couples, it is crippling to gay couples (and particularly gay men), as certain state institutions do not necessarily acknowledge these family forms in their policies.[9] States that offer parental leave policies that advocate for both parents to spend time with their infants on the other hand offer not only the development of children's welfare, but also the advancement in gender equity goals, lessening the impact of patriarchal ideas of the roles that should be played.[10]

1.4 THE IMPACT OF FEMINISM

The rise of feminism and women's movements has also shaped the way parental leave policies are perceived and formed. In Sweden, linkages to the government was very limited prior to the 1960s, as the well-established representational system already created only a limited conveyor belt to state policies, such as unions to the party system, as well as

corporatist and parliamentary channels.[11] In the 1960s however, the system opened up to new demands, and as a result, Swedish feminists were able to form networks, such as Group 222, creating the "wage earner" approach, which "allowed them to coordinate across party and union lines to advance their feminist-humanist vision of a world in which men and women would be free simultaneously to be wage earners and parents."[12]

On the Canadian front, second wave feminism has made one of the largest impacts for opening up outlets for gender equality. In the 1960s, feminists were able to successfully establish organizations that pressured the federal government to recognize the principle of "equitable access."[13] Additionally, the women's movement not only provided an opening, but they developed a zone of "coalition politics," which provided a contributive environment "to the formation of an alliance of women's groups, trade unions, and child care experts behind a social democratic, feminist alternative."[14] These women's movements on different ends of the globe helped spur the feminist drive towards more equitable public policies, but more importantly, helped to advance the opportunity for more input and contribution into the fundamental values of parental leave policies. The next sections will focus on the modern day system of parental leave of two countries: the United States and Sweden.

2.1 THE UNITED STATES CASE: THE POLITICS AND CULTURE THAT HAS SHAPED THEIR PARENTAL LEAVE MEASURES

Policymaking is a highly complex, intricate process, involving a mix of "personal views, popular discourse, political bargaining, and the weighing of finite resources against uncertain policy outcomes."[15] The United States is one such example, in which the FMLA was subject to major

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[6] Lisa D. Brush, *Gender and Governance* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2003), 129.

[7] Judith Galtry and Paul Callister, "Assessing the Optimal Length of Parental Leave for Child and Parental Well-Being: How Can Research Inform Policy," *Journal of Family Issues* 26 (2005): 234.

[8] Jane Waldfogel, "Policies Toward Parental Leave and Child Care," *The Future of Children* 11, No. 1 (2001): 102.
[9] Margaret W. Sallee, "A Feminist Perspective on Parental Leave Policies," *Innovative Higher Education* 32, Issue 4 (2008): 182
[10] Galtry and Callister, *op. cit.*, 235.

[11] Rianne Mahon, "Child Care in Canada and Sweden: Policy and Politics," *Social Politics* 4, Issue 3 (1997): 406.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Galtry and Callister, *op. cit.*, 221.

trade-offs to gain the equal support of both Democrats and moderate Republicans.[16] Unfortunately the policy borne out of the FMLA is far behind the times compared to most Western industrial societies.[17] Even since the passage of the FMLA, critics have notably criticized the United States for its minimal legislation on parental leave policies. Compared to the Swedish "social democratic" welfare state, the more "liberal" United States welfare state to a certain extent can show the interesting differences in culture. Sweden and many other European countries have been widely publicly funded in their leave policies, with variances of the share of costs covered by the government.[18] The United States government on the other hand, view the use of child care for infants as a private decision, with the government providing little to no commitment in aiding with the costs of child care unless of mitigating circumstances.[19] Although leave policies vary among states, on the federal level, only 24-weeks of *unpaid* leave is granted under the FMLA, and is eligible only for those who qualify under the specific conditions; that is, those who have worked at least 1,250 hours in the prior year, and must work in a firm of at least 50 employees.[20] Due to the strict eligibility criteria, many parents are not covered by the FMLA especially impacting families who are already economically and socially marginalized.

2.2 THE IMPACT OF THE UNITED STATES' PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES ON FAMILIES

As addressed, due to the lack of compensation or pay during leave, workers who are even eligible for leave may not necessarily accept it, as given the limited finances of families with new children, taking leave without pay would be a costly option that is better to turn down. Furthermore, time away from the workforce can be attributed to "signaling"

effects, in which employees are perceived as less committed to their careers.21 With the culture in the United States particularly, there are higher career costs and risks in association with parental leave to care for children.22 This culture only reinforces the stigma within the psyches of the public that men must strictly remain in the public sphere and maintain their 'breadwinning' position, which is that of dominance and higher stature. Undertaking anything focused in the private sphere will otherwise lead to derision, as they would be in defiance of patriarchal gender roles – especially so in the United States where the gender division is upheld and the status quo is rigid and constricted.23 This leaves women being relegated to the traditional childrearing role within the private sphere, restricting their mobility in society. To do so otherwise for the sake of attaining agency, one must put the career in the highest priority first, as unpaid leave provides little to no incentive in stepping away from competitive and tenuous labour markets.

Thus, maintaining such archaic parental leave measures on a federal level leaves little hope for greater gender equality particularly in the United States, as the public and private split and the gender divide is still present under the veil of their parental leave policies – women are expected to perform under the private sphere, as the 'nurturer' and 'caretaker' (and that is if they are willing to step away from their careers with meagre compensation and uncertain security of their jobs), while men are conformed to prioritize and focus on their duties under the public sphere, and thus being far removed from the private sphere. Because the United States is such a deeply patriarchal society, the preconceived notions of gender and the status quo shape the governance of the state. And since the patriarchal state is so rigid, the governance of gender in society reproduces the status quo, and hence, constructs the endless cycle of maintaining a culture with little latitude for women's mobility – especially for those

who are already marginalized. The lagging policies that the United States uphold can only be seen as drastically different to the Nordic model of parental leave, which are much further advanced.

3.1 THE SWEDISH CASE: FOSTERING GENDER EQUALITY (*JAMSTALLDHET*) THROUGH PARENTAL LEAVE MEASURES

Now that this paper has analyzed parental leave measures in the United States, this paper aims to look at a much more progressive approach – the most renowned model being that of Sweden. Instead of conducting a comparison and contrast assessment, I will examine the top three key aspects that makes Sweden and most Nordic countries more successful in parental leave policies in comparison to most of the world, and more specifically, to the United States. But first, I will look at the amount of success Sweden has gained as the pioneers of gender equality through leave measures. Sweden has no doubt visibly done the most in implementing both mothers and fathers into economic and caretaking roles. Their goal for gender equality (*jamstalldhet*) was resolute and first clearly expressed in a 1968 report to the United Nations.[24] The concept of *jamstalldhet* in particular insists that men and women have "equal responsibilities in the areas of economic support of the family, housework, and child care."[25] Their view of the economic interest depicts an interesting distinction with the United States'. The Swedish economy, along with the financial stability of Swedish families is grounded heavily upon the "permanent attachment of mothers to the labour force."[26] Thus, gender equality becomes a central element to the concerns of the economy, as men are encouraged to be more active in the role of childrearing to give women the mobility in the labour force. The Swedish government's basis for extending maternity leave to men in 1974 states:

"The change from maternity leave to parental leave is an important sign that the father and mother share the responsibility for the care of the child ... It is an important step in a policy which aims through different measures in different areas to further greater equality, not only formally but in reality, between men and women in the home, work life and society."[27]

Furthermore, out of all of the other *paid* parental leave programs that are available to fathers in the six other countries (which are mostly in the Nordic region), Sweden's model has been observed to be the only one to directly base their foundation of their commitment to gender equality.[28]

3.2 THE THREE CENTRAL ELEMENTS THAT THRIVE UNDER THE SWEDISH MODEL

One of the three key elements that have fostered such a successful leave policy is compensation towards parental leave, as it strengthens generosity and gender equality. Parents are entitled to paid leave for 480 days, with 390 of the days paid at 80% of previous earnings, and the remaining at a standard, flat rate.[29] Paid leave crosses two ends of a path, as the generosity of large sum of compensation allows lower wage parents the financial security to accept the leave available to them (in contrast to the United States), fortifying the country's backbone in new families.[30] And in terms of gender equality, generous paid leave actually allows the higher wage parent the incentive to take parental leave without losing the family's main source of income.[31] The second key aspect is the non-transferability of parental leave between parents. Non-transferability helps control the balance of social and economic responsibilities for families; otherwise, fathers could

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[16] *Ibia.*

[17] *Ibia.*

[18] Waldfogel, op. cit., 105.

[19] *Ibia.,* 106.

[20] Galtry and Callister, op. cit., 233; Waldfogel, op. cit., 101.

[21] Galtry and Callister, *op. cit.,* 223.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] R.W. Connell, "Gender Politics for Men," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 17, No. 1/2 (1997): 65.

[24] Linda Haas, "Gender Equality and Social Policy: Implications of a Study of Parental Leave in Sweden," *Journal of Family Issues* 11 (1990): 402.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Sheila B. Kamerman, "Fatherhood and Social Policy," in *Fatherhood and Family Policy*, eds. M. Lamb and A. Sagi (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1983), 24.

[29] Galtry and Callister, *op. cit.,* 234.

[30] Rebecca Ray, Janet C. Gomick, and John Schmitt, "Parental Leave Policies in 21 Countries: Assessing Generosity and Gender Equality," *Center for Economic and Policy Research* (2008): 18.

[31] *Ibid.*

transfer their required portion of parental leave (or vice versa), thereby reducing the father's role in caretaking and also the mother's attachment to labour work.[32] Hence, in Sweden, there is a portion of family leave reserved for fathers (12 weeks to be particular), which are referred to as "daddy days/months."[33] The third key aspect is one that is unconventional and unique to contemporary leave policies: the application of parental leave in combination with committing to work part-time over several years – this way, not only does it allow more schedule flexibility balanced around the needs of families, but it additionally does not entail any of the sacrifices of job mobility that the United States model commonly faces.

The influence of the Swedish model is far-reaching and not just within its neighbouring countries. In the Canadian scene, Quebec leads the rest of the provinces in its family policy, as it has adopted policies which provide public support for parents attempting to bring together work and family life. This policy can be accredited to the Nordic welfare states, as Quebec's family policy is modelled after the Nordic model, as opposed to the Canadian model, which provides considerably less support for working parents.[34] The Swedish model along with its neighbouring countries has made a significant impact to the other countries around the world, and a model to follow.

One must also acknowledge on the contrary however that a longer period of leave may actually in fact, make it more difficult for individuals to reengage with the labour market, and thus become detached from their employer and the possible advances of their career. Furthermore, the fact that mainly women still take parental leaves instead of men can raise concerns on the basis that long parental leaves can "impede progress toward gender equity in the labour market" and "reinforce the

traditional gender division of labour in the home."[35] To address the more societal concern of gender inequality (as women still take the greater portion of parental leave), the solution I will provide aims to expand on the Swedish model but also intends to emphasize and stress the importance of the role of both parents in the childrearing process, and thus, introduce a clear "divisible" leave period that integrates the responsibility of both parents.

4.1 THE EQUALITY VERSUS DIFFERENCE PARADIGMS

The equality versus difference dichotomy has been synonymously perceived to be two opposite terms that can rarely ever be tied together. Often in gender and governance discourse, European countries hold the perception of women being different, as they are viewed as nurturers and caretakers of society. The United States on the other hand views women as equal and the same. To an extent, this also holds quite true to parental leave policies, as evident throughout this paper, Europeans value caretaking and child-development (acknowledging differences), and hence, their emphasis on longer parental leaves, whereas Americans put lesser emphasis on leave measures, and focus more on the individual's autonomy (acknowledging that women have the agency to be equal to men). As Scott defines the dichotomous pair, "if one opts for equality, one is forced to accept the notion that difference is antithetical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable."[36] However, I argue that in order to attain the true essence of equality one must also give attention to difference. This provision I put forth combines the consideration of difference with the focus on equality. To elaborate, parental leave must first be split into two divisions of leave policies: the distinction between childbearing leave and parental leave. Childbearing leave recognizes and acknowledges the needs of women who give birth,

and gives the opportunity of mothers to recover from the demands of pregnancy. This policy attempts to dispel the misconception that raising a newborn child is solely a mother's responsibility, as childbearing leave is solely to help assist the demands of women's pregnancy. Parental leave on the other hand, would be available to both parents, regardless of gender, to help bond with their new child. Hence, childbearing mothers are permitted to both branches of leave, as the two serve different functions. To otherwise grant all parents equal length of parental leave would be to ignore the differences and demands of pregnancy of a woman.

3.2 PARENTAL LEAVE – A STATISTICAL PORTRAIT

Certain groups of scholars believe that parental leave policies will always be disproportionately occupied by women, and, consequently, deepen the forms of gender inequality and also create new gender inequalities.[37] Specifically, these scholars argue that leave time reinforces gender divisions in care-giving at home, and worsen employers' incentives to discriminate against women.[38] In one survey, Calleman and Widerberg note that women that were interviewed prioritized parenthood over employment. Moreover, the concerns of gender division can be actualized, as women in every country take the majority of leave following childbirth.[39] In Sweden, where the parental leave policies are perceived as the most advanced, 98% of mothers and 18% of fathers took 60 or more days of parental leave (and 84% of mothers took 300 or more days of leave).[40] By analyzing these patterns, equalizing women's and men's employment situations perhaps can never be truly attained. However, it is the task of this paper to reject the

notion that parental leave policies deepen the gender divide. Although parental leave has been predominately taken up by women, provisions can be made to change that and dismantle the roles that are traditionally undertaken in parental leave.

3.3 SOLUTION: THE EMPHASIS ON MEN AND A CLEAR, DIVISIBLE MODEL

Haas's study shows the benefit of men being more involved with their children at an early age enhancing their involvement in their children's lives by becoming less absorbed in their occupational achievements.[41] Thus, the governance of gender can break through the rigid patriarchal gender norms by promoting participation of fathers in parental leave, and thereby, encouraging men to lessen their occupational involvement in order to better handle work and family roles. When men are able to become more active in parenting, then their challenge on gender norms could pressure institutions to change, so that individuals can combine employment and parenting (which includes challenging the perceptual conflict between the roles of 'breadwinner' and child 'caretaker'). Hence, the solution and framework I would like to propose is simple, but essential – both parents share the commitment and time for parental leave policies. This is essentially adopting the Swedish model of their shared, gender-neutral parental leave; however, much more provisions are needed to highly integrate men into the scheme in order to advance the goal of gender equality by eroding patriarchal gender straightjackets. As stated, implementing a combined leave would remove the burden of responsibility on one individual. One of the most common shortcomings that countless studies show in regards to parental leave policies in European countries are the long periods of parental leave, which can be potentially detrimental to the mobility of new parents' employment and economic outcomes.[42] Thus, in response, shared responsibility between the two parents solves the problem of the long leaves that may distance one individual from the labour

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[32] *Ibid.,* 19.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Kimberly Earles, "*Sheila B. Kamerman and Peter Moss (eds), The Politics of Parental Leave Policies: Children, Parenting, Gender and the Labour Market,*" International Sociology 27 (2012): 279.

[35] Waldfogel, *op. cit.,* 103.

[36] Joan W. Scott, "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism," in *Feminist Social Thought,* ed. Diana T. Meyers (New York: Routledge, 1997): 765.

[37] Rebecca Ray, Janet C. Gomick, and John Schmitt, "Who Cares? Assessing Generosity and Gender Equality in Parental Leave Policy Designs in 21 Countries," *Journal of European Social Policy* 20 (2010): 209.

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] Galtry and Callister, *op. cit.,* 232.

[40] Sweden National Social Insurance Board, "Statistics on father's use of parental leave in Sweden," 2001, www.rfv.se/english/stat/famba/pa.htm.

[41] Haas, *op. cit.,* 422.

[42] Galtry and Callister, *op. cit.,* 232.

force and public sphere, as commitments are split in half rather than on one member of the family.

These policies still need to be revised and better fleshed out, and thus, further critical provisions are to be laid out; my suggested framework that I put forth intends to build upon the foundations of the Swedish model. Bearing in mind the equality versus difference paradigm, a one-two month initial childbearing leave must be granted to pregnant women (which will be a part of the 16 months parental leave). After that period, the 15 months of potential leave must be divided fairly. Currently, as stated, men have only a maximum requirement of two "daddy months," which is clearly not enough to offset the childrearing responsibility weighed on to mothers. I have outlined many of the advantages of having men bear a greater responsibility in the caretaking role – from producing greater mobility for both genders to guaranteeing their financial security through compensation. Thus, in a 15-month period of parental leave (plus the 1 month minimum given in the childbearing leave phase), the leave can be divided into three portions: five months for the mother, five months for the father, and granting the flexibility of five months decided by the family (and this is all established given that they choose to extend their shared parental leave to the longest period of 16 months).

CONCLUSION

The challenge this paper have put to test early in the discussion is the question "can parental leave policies be used effectively to attain the goal of gender equality?" Evidently, certain models fail (the United States), and other models rise in success (Nordic countries), but nevertheless, parental leave policies have shown to make an impact on gender equality, and the Nordic countries specifically are well-regarded to positively influence the gender equality scale. Continuing along the lines of the Nordic countries, this paper has demonstrated the three key elements promoting gender equality that made Sweden's model successful: a gender-neutral, generous paid leave, non-transferability of the terms, and flexible scheduling through a possible part-time option. However, the basis of gender inequality still

lingers, as the role of parenthood is still dominated by women. Kamerman states that more support is needed for "fathers in their nurturing and caretaking roles and for mothers in their economic roles."[43] Hence, for parental leave to be more successful in eliminating gender-based role responsibilities, more fathers must undertake parental leave for longer periods of time. Sweden's model has currently been involved in tackling efforts for gender equality through their parental leave model, but further efforts need to be made in order to change the system in all western countries, as gendered perceptions are so deeply entrenched in our society, our institutions, and our beliefs.

I would like to acknowledge and stress that different societies have different cultural values, and hence are distinct. Caution must be placed in applying the practices of the general framework proposed (which is predominantly derived from the Swedish approach) to other industrial societies, as each society has its own distinct sociocultural values, and the adoption of a system may not necessarily undergo similar processes and results from country to country. For instance, my proposed model would be more difficult to implement in the United States where the power relations regarding welfare policies and gender equality remain in the hands of authorities and powerful institutions that only wish to maintain the status quo.

Furthermore, due to the limitation of space for this paper, I am unable to acknowledge and examine the many other perspectives and ideas into this discussion. For instance, challenges LGBT face in response to the norms of the family and gender order demands greater attention and insight. My proposed solution, nevertheless, covers many aspects and perspectives, and posits a parental leave model that provides the mobility of women in society and the workforce, and also the inclusion of men in the childrearing role. Undergoing this analysis through a gender lens, it can be understood that parental leave policies are indeed a social and political aspect that is worth devoting and investing time into, as there are indeed room for much needed improvements.

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[43] Kamerman, *op. cit.,* 24.

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