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WTF is #Modelminoritymutiny?: Solidarity, Embodiment, and Practice in Subverting Ascribed Asian American Racial Positioning

Pamela Ng
Scripps College

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WTF IS #MODELMINORITYMUTINY?: SOLIDARITY, EMBODIMENT, AND PRACTICE IN SUBVERTING ASCRIBED ASIAN AMERICAN RACIAL POSITIONING

By

PAMELA H. NG

SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

PROFESSOR WARREN LIU
PROFESSOR JIH-FEI CHENG

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Introduction

When I first came to college, I was most excited to hang out with the white people. After growing up in Alhambra, CA, a city that was predominantly Asian American, I entered the gates of Scripps College with a fascination for pasty skin, blue eyes, and blond hair. I was so ready. Four years later, I would say that I have faltered slightly on my path to truly immerse myself into the world of whiteness and white friendship, as I have only one white friend and have, in the past, been labelled as an angry Asian. But, it hasn't been easy and it still isn't. My focus has shifted slightly over the years: from hatred and confusion to distrust and resentment, my relationship to what I perceived whiteness to be came to a head when I learned about how "close" Asian Americans were to whiteness because of their perceived wealth, incredibly academic strength, and pale skin[1].

As someone who described herself as an atypical Asian more times than not in high school, I was most proud of how my personality subverted notions of silence that I had grown accustomed to associating with women in my community thanks to my mom. When I began to get into social justice, I began to resent this silence while I continued to affirm that it existed, in the way I believed it to be (not caring, docile, etc…). When I think about this interesting relationship I had with concepts of silence, I see how and why conversations about the model minority myth stagnate if left unchecked. Rather than looking at systems as a whole, most conversations about the model minority myth are

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[1] "The Complicity Cost of Racial Inclusion," August 24, 2014, accessed April 22, 2016, http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/8/asian-americans-racecomplicitymodelminority.html.

limited to why or why not something is true in this or that way. But how do these conversations continue to grow instead of grow flat?

To fully understand the model minority myth and ways to subvert it, this thesis two key things: first, it contextualizes the model minority myth within academic discourse before applying it to a real life case study; second, it presents an applicable project for Asian American studies, as a space dedicated to learning and Asian Americans, to apply theoretical frameworks into the community. In the following four chapters, I struggle with how the idea of #modelminoritymutiny[2], that is, subverting the model minority myth, can be unpacked and then internalized for greater social justice work. As my title implies, I attempt to address what this concept means in relation to Asian American positionality (as it is ascribed and adhered to), embodiment, and in solidarity to other communities.

Much of my praxis is shaped by ethnic studies and feminist frameworks that have moved me to see the values and pitfalls of navigating academia as a site for liberatory work. My work and analysis is skewed by my positionality as a second generation Chinese American. As such, many of the theories presented have been filtered through this experience and impacted in their placement throughout. As a scholar and an organizer, my four years here have been shaped by clumsy attempts of embodying and implementing learned radical theories and practices. As such, the narrative of my thesis puts theory and embodiment in tension with one another in order to process what it means to subvert the model minority myth today. My first two chapters exemplify this

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[2] Soya Jung. "The Racial Justice Movement Needs a Model Minority Mutiny," October 14, 2014, accessed April 22, 2016, http://www.racefiles.com/2014/10/13/model-minority-mutiny/.

process of struggle, and I look to both academic scholarship and popular articles for both variety of thought, timeliness, and accessibility. The formation of my syllabus was heavily impacted and influenced by the courses I have taken in the past four years that have offered me a plethora of structures and material to pull from. The transparency of its delivery is inspired completely from decolonizing methodologies[3] that seek to break down education frameworks of the colonizer and the colonized.

Chapter one: what does #modelminoritymutiny mean and entail?

When discussing Asian American[4] issues, the most prominent that comes up, in the forefront or as an intersection, is the model minority myth. First appearing in a 1968 New York Times article by sociologist William Peterson, the ideology of the model minority instills a narrative of success and assimilation for Asian Americans that continually paints the entire community -- despite how heterogeneous it is-- as doing "just fine" even to this day[5]. It is this false narrative that is usually the main point of tension for discussing the harm that the model minority myth creates for Asian Americans[6]. As a tool that both essentializes and erases, the success that this ideology attaches to the community has material effects that prevent Asian Americans from being

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[3] Linda Tuhiwai C. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 3rd ed. (Dunedin: Univ. of Otago Press [u.a.], 1999).
[4] For more about the limitations of the term, "Asian American", please see…
[5] Wu, Frank H. *Yellow: Race in America beyond black and white*. Basic Books, 2003
[6] Lee, Esther Yu-Hsi. "The Damaging Effects Of The 'Model Minority' Myth." ThinkProgress. July 18, 2015. Accessed April 22, 2016.
http://thinkprogress.org/immigration/2015/07/18/3680412/model-minority-myth/.

taken seriously on issues such as education access, mental health, and workers rights[7]. Its

iterations, which crop up in a multitude of mainstream media platforms, play into tropes

that act as backhanded compliments to the Asian American community and further align

Asian Americans with conservative agendas despite the multiplicities, and histories of

progressive resistance, that exist within its population. Most importantly, however, the

model minority myth acts as an oppressive tool against *all* people of color[8], most

specifically affecting the Black community.

Learning about this ideology was formative for myself and others interested in

racial politics. Understanding the harm that it did for many (myself included) who didn't

fit this narrative of success, was empowering as well as angering. It wasn't until later in

my college career, when I began to be more involved with coalitional work and

community spaces, that I began to pay more attention to how the model minority myth's

narrative of success was often used to pit communities of color against one another. I

began to recognize the positionality that Asian Americans (in its most essentialized form)

held as the scapegoat for white supremacy in addressing concerns from progressive

movements led by Black communities, and to complicate and unpack what it meant for

Asian Americans to continuously be told that we have a lot of privilege[9].

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[7] "Critical Issues Facing Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders." The White House. Accessed April 22, 2016. https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/aapi/data/critical-issues.
[8] For a critical discussion of the term, "People of color" please see article by Jared Sexton, "People of Color Blindness," that discusses the pitfalls of people of color as an umbrella term when considering the state of violence that exists specifically towards the black community.
[9] "On Asian American Privilege," January 23, 2014, accessed April 21, 2016, http://www.racefiles.com/2014/01/23/on-asian-american-privilege/.

With this understanding came frustration, as I found myself both wondering where all the Asian Americans on my college campus were during #BlackLivesMatter protests on our campus, and bemoaning the fact that histories of resistance in Asian America are often times erased or overlooked in mainstream representations of social movements. My frustration led me to question why, if so many young Asian Americans on my college campus were aware of the harmful effects of the model minority myth, they were not actively supporting Black folks and the important conversations that they were starting across the nation about police brutality and anti-blackness. Was it part of a larger issue of internalization of the model minority myth? Was it because privilege prevented from fully recognizing issues of social justice? If so, in what ways were these things nuanced? And, most importantly, what did that mean for the relationship between Asian Americans and anti-blackness[10]? While there were plenty of door signs claiming #modelminoritymutiny across the colleges, I continued to question what that meant and could mean for young Asian Americans like myself.

Asian American positionality is furthered through hegemonic norms that are propagated by modern technology and media representation, which ultimately uphold the current system of neoliberal capitalism in the United States and globally[11]. Discussion of the model minority myth in popular culture platforms, which are entrenched in ideas of identity politics and individualized narratives, need to be critiqued heavily with consideration to how racism exists in today's liberal society. These discussions on the

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[10] Michael J Dumas. "Against the Dark: Antiblackness in Education Policy and Discourse." *Theory Into Practice* 55, no. 1 (2016): 11-19.
[11] Jodi Melamed. "The spirit of neoliberalism from racial liberalism to neoliberal multiculturalism." *Social text* 24, no. 4 89 (2006): 1-24.

harm of the model minority myth *must* be viewed in relation to its anti-black roots in order for it to be truly subverted and dismantled both on a large scale and on an interpersonal level; and, even further, movement towards a praxis that subverts anti-blackness requires an analysis of how anti-blackness manifests within Asian American communities both independently and in relationship to white supremacy.

In this chapter, I highlight how the past and present positioning of Asian Americans has been founded upon a relationship between labor, citizenship, and anti-blackness. I will look at these relationships, first, on a more general, theoretical and historical structure, before tying back to the individual lived and performed experience[12]. The chapter will be divided into three major components in order to provide a necessary theoretical framework for thinking through what Asian American solidarity and activism looks like with consideration to the model minority myth. First, I will historicize the model minority myth as an iteration of racial triangulation, a positioning that ultimately works in tandem with white supremacy and antiblackness[13]. Second, I will relate the impacts of representation with the technologizing of Asian bodies on a global scale, by pulling from the field of techno-orientalism and tying it to systems of labor[14]. Finally, I will address the lived experience that results from these structures of oppression and division, and engage with how representation and global systems of labor impact are embodied in the community. The goal of this chapter is to provide a foundation for

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[12] Judith Butler. "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory." *Theatre journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519-531.

[13] Claire Jean Kim. "The racial triangulation of Asian Americans." *Politics & Society* 27, no. 1 (1999): 105-138.

[14] Hough, Kenneth, Jason Crum, Victor Bascara, Warren Liu, Seo-Young Chu, Abigail De Kosnik, Jinny Huh et al. *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media.* Rutgers University Press, 2015.

understanding current conversations surrounding Asian American solidarity and activism (see chapter 2), before moving towards action that can be taken (see chapter 3) within the institutions that we occupy. This trajectory illuminates the tensions that arise between understanding and embodiment of theoretical frameworks, that are part of the process of #modelminoritymutiny.

Racial triangulation and the model minority myth

Originally pertaining to Japanese Americans, Peterson's New York Times article, "Success Story, Japanese American Style," stresses the "success" of Japanese Americans despite the discrimination that they've faced; suggested that this success was due to Japanese "alien" culture that gave them the proper work ethic to excel in the United States' capitalist system; and pointed to the Japanese Americans' "success story" as a model for other communities of color, specifically the Black community, to replicate[15]. Filled with orientalist and anti-black language, the article uses Japanese Americans as a scapegoat for addressing issues that Black people were adamantly organizing around during that time.

The concentration on success that is defined by productivity and participation in economy ignores the inherent histories of struggle specifically opposing white supremacy that created and sustained Asian American communities throughout time; and also led to the mass participation of Asian Americans in coalitional liberation work in the 60's and

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[15] William Peterson's article compares the Black communities who "know no other homeland, who [are] as thoroughly American as any Daughter of the American Revolution" to "the Japanese, [who have] climbed over the highest barrier our racists were able to fashion in part because of their meaningful links with an alien culture.

70's[16]. The fact that these vast histories of resistance and militancy are completely, and intentionally, erased is troubling and needs to be considered critically. How history is understood impacts how present day issues and movements are considered and valued[17]. When Asian Americans lack awareness of the Asian American movement and Asian American participation in true progressive organizing, it becomes easy buy into the narratives that conservatives are instilling that evoke the model minority myth's illustration of the docile and complacent Asian body[18]. As such, it's obvious that Peterson's article is long lasting and multi-layered; and it deserves analysis on how it is reflective of a historical positioning of Asian Americans that has occurred since the mid-1800's, which Claire Kim refers to as racial triangulation[19]:

> "Racial triangulation occurs by means of two types of simultaneous, linked processes: (1) processes of "relative valorization," whereby dominant group A (Whites) valorizes subordinate group B (Asian Americans) relative to subordinate group C (Blacks) on cultural and/or racial grounds in order to dominate both groups, but especially the latter, and (2) processes of "civic ostracism," whereby dominant group A (Whites) constructs subordinate group B (Asian Americans) as immutably foreign and unassimilable with Whites on cultural and/or racial grounds in order to ostracize them from body politic and civic membership [...]."

These two processes of racial triangulation are common to see in contemporary media: when people of color demand for more resources, etc... Asian Americans are the first group valorized in order to discount the need for these resources[20]; however, when Asian

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[16]Glenn Omatsu. "The 'Four Prisons' and the Movements of Liberation."*Contemporary Asian America: a multidisciplinary reader* (2000).

[17] See next chapter

[18] Robert G. Lee. *Orientals: Asian Americans in popular culture*. Temple University Press, 1999.

[19]Claire Jean Kim. "The racial triangulation of Asian Americans." *Politics & Society* 27, no. 1 (1999): 105-138. . The triangulation spawned as a result of labor.

[20] This is very prominent in conversations about affirmative action in college campuses. The most recent would be the debate on SCA-5 in California.

Americans are discussed independently from other people of color, or described, much of the language continues to perpetuate a sense of foreignness, or "alienness", that posits Asian Americans as outsider bodies despite generations of history and community formation in the US[21].

When applied to the multitude of experiences and issues that people of color face, this positioning can then help to contextualize how the coining of the model minority is implicated in a larger, complex system of wedge politics that Peterson's article embodies in a textbook fashion. It also helps to understand how, and why, such ideologies can be wholeheartedly examined as explicit threats to intentional and powerful mobilization of people of color communities. History, under a White supremacist agenda, has continuously and actively benefited from the perception of an apolitical, silent Asian American; and, neoliberal capitalism maintains these divisions within communities of color in order to continue to operate and thrive. In many ways, the maintenance of these racist and dehumanizing attitudes is primarily for the benefit of profit driven labor that benefits an elite that is, at its core, anti-black and inclusionary. Recognizing how this is harmful to the material reality of Asian Americans as a vast community, and how this is used explicitly to perpetuate anti-black norms, helps to begin unlearning the anti-blackness that exists in Asian American communities and move, instead, towards subverting systems of oppression and capitalism.

So what is stopping us? What is it that prevents Asian Americans from recognizing this history and then joining the masses demanding justice? The rise of

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[21] Smith, Andrea. "Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy: Rethinking women of color organizing." *Transformations: Feminist Pathways to Global Change* (2015): 264.

identity politics came with the rise of transnational corporations and the fall of socialism

in the 1980's[22]. This "corporate offense" began with a paralleled rising call for neoliberal

actions[23] that would tactfully divide communities of color who were radically challenging

power through mass mobilization and strategic organizing that directly threatened the

legitimacy of corporations[24]. Identity politics is defined to be a specific politic that

concentrates on facets of identity as rallying points for organizing. In the article, "The

Challenge of Identity Politics", Prakash Karat directly critiques this methodology and

proposes an alternative class-based point for organizing:

> "Identity politics masks the fact that even if some types of oppression
> based on race and gender are solved or reforms are brought in, it does not mean
> an end to exploitation as long as the capitalist order remains untouched. Identity
> politics refuses to recognise the class character of the State. It posits the State as
> neutral and autonomous."[25]

Karat argues that identity politics "fragments" society, and focuses on participation and

competition within oppressive systems for resources and representation, rather than

overthrowing the capitalist state. While I agree that there are specific aspects of identity

politics that should be critiqued--especially when it is used as a point of organizing for

representation instead of reallocation[26]--there are ways to blend aspects of identity

politics, in addition to a class analysis, to move towards larger liberatory praxis.

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[22] Prakash Karat. "The Challenge of Identity Politics." January 2011. Accessed April 22, 2016.
http://www.cpim.org/marxist/201101-identity-politics-prakash.pdf.
[23] Melamed, Jodi. "The spirit of neoliberalism from racial liberalism to neoliberal multiculturalism."
Social text 24, no. 4 89 (2006): 1-24.
[24] Omatsu, Glenn. "The 'Four Prisons' and the Movements of Liberation."*Contemporary Asian
America: a multidisciplinary reader* (2000).
[25] Karat, "The Challenge of Identity Politics"
[26] Fraser, Nancy. "From redistribution to recognition? Dilemmas of justice in a "post-socialist" age."
Feminism and politics (1998): 430-460.
      "Representation" vs "reallocation" implies a desire to fight for a seat at the table rather than
completely undoing the table.

Overthrow of current systems through class analysis, alone, ignores the different ways in which oppression manifests and is experienced, and how power is strategically distributed to oppressed communities precisely to divide them. However, it is impossible not to acknowledge how class is often utilized as a dividing force within people of color communities to ignore and discount the experiences of low income, working class people. The model minority myth, for example, utilizes a false narrative of affluence in order to continue erasing the experiences of working class Asian Americans. This kind of class-based illusion continues to propagate Asian Americans as perfect entities for conservative agendas, instead of focusing on the network of workers who would actually benefit most from a progressive movement.

Critiquing identity politics should not be a means of discounting or discrediting the work of ethnic/identity based movements that have incorporated a holistic understanding of neoliberal capitalist systems, but instead recenter the working class that exist within these communities. What Prakash calls attention to, is the way which identity becomes a sole basis for movement and action and can completely ignore the intersections of class with other facets of oppression, thus re-creating hierarchies and decentralizing from the individuals most vulnerable within a community. In talking about the model minority myth as a manifestation of a divisive tactic both internal and external to the Asian American and multiracial spaces, respectively, what needs to be a considered about identity politics is that, oftentimes, it leads to conversations that are more rooted in trying to *prove* Asian American oppression rather than moving towards unlearning the

internalization of antiblack models of seeking liberation[27]. While the latter placates a progressive stride towards better representation for Asian Americans, which can arguably have positive material results, this positivity comes with a glass ceiling that only mirrors the triangulation that has occurred throughout time[28].

(Techno)Orientalism and representation

But why is representation so important? And how are Asian American bodies, specifically, impacted by representation in both popular culture and mainstream media? One way to think through these questions is to identify how Asian Americans have been represented up until now, and put a name to the ideology that they continue to enforce. Edward Said describes Orientalism as "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" -- a close relationship that is based within "cultural enterprise" and an unequal power balance that places the West as dominant[29]. This relationship between power and culture is supported through visual signifiers and exoticism that allow the West to explore people of color communities to their pleasure while maintaining an imbalanced relationship that, overall, benefits themselves more than the communities which they then perpetuate to be "the other"[30]. In contrast to orientalism, Techno-Orientalism places Asian American experience onto a global scale of labor and capital in a technologized, almost futuristic

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[27] I'm oppressed, too!
[28] Even then, the representation is skewed towards a specific Asian American body and narrative
[29] Edward W. Said. "Orientalism: western conceptions of the Orient. 1978."*Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin* (1995).
[30] Ibid.

14

world, that continues to see Asian bodies as alien and/or technological[31]. These visual representations write Asian bodies, on a global scale, as having traits of passivity and stoicism, thus allowing them to be superhuman machines of labor. Techno-Orientalism asserts that Asian bodies[32] have become dehumanized through the conflation of workers and the technology that they produce or comes from their associated countries. This makes sense when thinking about how diasporic, transnational movement based on labor is at the core of Asian American racialization historically, and allows for us to view how Asian American foreignness and mobility is contingent upon larger, political relationships and reactions to labor and global capitalist economy[33]. And with the current age we live in, where information dispersion and communication occurs instantly because of the technology we have, the way visuality and racialization connect is only heightened.

Representation in the media is one of the most sinister ways in which hegemonic norms are furthered and proliferated. Liberal ideologies have instilled a new type of hegemonic discourse that allows for a more subversive racism that departs from the blatancy that is often historically associated with acts of racism[34]. While representation of Asian Americans on the screen are no longer outrightly racist (Fu Manchu, Breakfast at Tiffany's), essences of historical tropes and orientalist mentalities continue to inform how Asian Americans are perceived on a daily basis -- especially as it pertains to their ability

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[31] Hough, Kenneth, Jason Crum, Victor Bascara, Warren Liu, Seo-Young Chu, Abigail De Kosnik, Jinny Huh et al. *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media*. Rutgers University Press, 2015.
[32] Arguably applicable primarily to light skinned, East Asian bodies
[33] Sau-ling C Wong. "Denationalization reconsidered: Asian American cultural criticism at a theoretical crossroads." *Amerasia Journal* 21, no. 1-2 (1995): 1-27.
[34] Capodilupo, C. M., Nadal, K. L., Corman, L., Hamit, S., Lyons, O. B., & Weinberg, A. "The manifestation of gender microaggressions." *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamic, and impact*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2010

to participate in "productive", capitalistic ways, thus justifying discriminatory treatment[35]
. Like most stories about robots taking over the world, Asian labor occupies a

positionality of clinical, nonemotional, threat that allows for Asian bodies to be seen as

disposable despite having taken up positions of high regard and utilization[36]. This clinical

depiction even extends to how futuristic landscapes, often evoking images of a futuristic

Asia, are seen as totalitarian, nonemotional, and oppressive[37]. These extremes are how the

model minority myth operates within representation, as all "positive" traits associated

with Asian American success are attributed to technological (and thus disposable)

personalities and values that are threats to the status quo (a perfect example of relative

valorization and civic ostracism[38]).

The implications of these subversive tropes and representations as a whole, which

often do little to complicate Asian American positionality, show why increased

representation in traditionally white spaces for Asian Americans is limiting and fully

non-liberatory if not engaged with critically -- especially with consideration to how

media, in particular, acts as a mechanism for further upholding hegemonic norms more

often than not. Of course, this doesn't mean that there shouldn't be strives towards

increased numbers of Asian Americans on TV, or film; but, that these representations do

little for the betterment of people of color as a whole if they do not dismantle ideologies,

such as the model minority myth, and call for systematic change.

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[35] Hough, *Techno-Orientalism*
[36] Cervantes, Roy. "Asian Americans in the New American labor and immigrant rights movements: an interview with Kent Wong, director of the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education." *Asian American Policy Review* 16 (2007): 9-18.
[37] Hough, *Techno-Orientalism*
[38] Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans"

The relationship between techno-orientalism and racial triangulation shows how global economies have continued to impact the way Asian Americans are shaped in relationship to Black communities and whiteness. People of color are often conflated with the labor that is associated with their communities, thus allowing for the continuous cycle of dehumanizing and exploitative treatment under capitalism. It is difficult to understand how intertwined these multitude of experiences are because of how differently they manifest; however, more often than not, they are heavily impacted in relationship to one another. Specific to the Asian American community, a glance at how Chinese American community was formed through labor can help to see one of the relationships between Asian Americans and the legacy of slavery. In her article "Outlawing "Coolies": Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation" , Moon Ho Jung discusses this relationship between "coolies" and the abolishment of slavery in the United States:

> " ..."coolies" occupied the legal and cultural borderland between slavery and freedom, signifying and enabling critical transitions in U.S. history. [...] What was, in effect, the last slave trade law would lead to a litany of immigration laws ostensibly targeting "coolies" (and prostitutes) in the name of "immigrants" and freedom, including the Page Law of 1875 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. And the perceived existence of coolieism and other forms of bondage -- and the moral imperative to prohibit slavery--infected and rationalized U.S. expansionism abroad [...]."[39]

Jung pinpoints the way Chinese labor within the system of "coolieism" was a tool in many debates that led to a shift in the United States from a narrative of slavery and exploitation to that of a "nation of immigrants" during the age of U.S. emancipation[40].

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[39] Jung, Moon-Ho. "Outlawing" Coolies": Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation." *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2005): 677-701.
[40] Ibid.

This led to the creation of immigration laws that sought to limit all entries of Chinese laborers significantly and regardless of their means of migration[41], and showcased the United States government "turning their back" on slavery as a formal system[42].

Nonetheless, the material reality for Chinese American and Black communities was not wholly accounted for nor translated in these shows of moral superiority and obligation. Once again, the desire for upholding a system of capitalism becomes the driving force for shifting the positionality of people of color communities. In the case of U.S. emancipation, the need to stop the formalized system of slavery led the the system of coolieism to be used as both an offensive and defensive reaction by both proslavery and antislavery politicians alike[43]. When translating this into ideas of representation and techno-orientalism, we can see how the discussion of Asian labor -- contextualized from the experience of Chinese laborers in the 1800's -- becomes a dehumanized and technologized tool for furthering and blurring the conditions of working class Asians, Black communities, and people of color as a whole.

Embodiment

Contextualizing the model minority myth through the theory of racial triangulation -- and the impacts of representation in relation to techno-orientalism -- help to understand how Asian Americans fit into the larger structures of oppression that the U.S. operates within. These positionings allow for the simultaneous upholding of current capitalist systems, while propagating agendas that continue to divide communities of

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[41] Many "coolies" were coerced into contracts
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

color. But, in the micro-level of understanding, how do ideologies of the model minority play out in the daily lived experience? And, with consideration to the way that gender intersects with material realities for our communities, how are representations impacting patriarchal manifestations in the community? I ask these questions in order to see how the model minority myth intersects with the "identity" aspect of politics, and to propose ways to move towards a politics of identity that is relational and intersectional[44].

Judith Butler, a renowned feminist scholar, uses Simone de Beauvoir famous assertion that, "one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman," to apply how different acts work in the social construction of "woman" as a performed identity. Butler argument of performativity as a means of identity construction -- which is wholly based on hegemonic norms[45] and biopolitical forces[46] that construct the ideal notion of respective genders and gender performances -- places gender identity as something that is achieved through ritual practices that are repeated until the individual "becomes" what society deems to be normative[47]. This kind of intervention is essential in breaking down feminist discourse that essentializes what womanhood is, and complicates ideas of a collective force that recreates oppressive gender binaries. Butler argues:

> "Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished[...]"

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[44] Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color." *Stanford law review* (1991): 1241-1299.

[45] Goldberg, Harmony. "Antonio Gramsci: a brief introduction to his concepts of hegemony, war of position, and the historic bloc." 1 - 31.

[46] Rabinow, Paul, and Nikolas Rose. "Biopower today." *BioSocieties* 1, no. 02 (2006): 195-217.

[47] Butler, "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory"

Butler, in their analysis of power, acknowledges the multiplicities of empowerment and entrapment that gender norms and essentialized performances can evoke. However, in order for power to be in the hands of women (in its most heterogeneous sense), there must be active resistance to narratives of a "given" experience.

When applying Butler's ideas of performativity to the lived reality of many Asian Americans, we can see how the model minority myth can end up shaping the discourse of how Asian Americans should be living, being, and performing that creates a monolithic idea to easily subscribe to. But what are the consequences for racial formation within the community[48]? In a material sense, this ends up creating divisions within Asian America -- particularly for South, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islanders, where the image of the essentialized Asian body (primarily East Asian and light skinned) translates differently and whose manifestations of orientalism and xenophobia operate differently -- and brings up questions on how to fund and allocate resources in the community[49]. If we are to focus this on gender, specifically, we can look at how masculinity and femininity have created gendered stereotypes in Asian America that are rooted in colonial and imperialist histories; all of which the treatment of Asian Americans as bodies of labor are tied to[50]. This intersection between racialization and gender is exemplified very often in media representation of Asian Americans, whether it be in hypermasculinity or hypersexualization of members of the community[51].

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[48] Kim, "The Racial Formation of Asian Americans"
[49] Yen L. Espiritu. *Asian American panethnicity: Bridging institutions and identities.* Temple University Press, 1993.
[50] There is much work about the hypersexualization of Asian American women, and the feminization of Asian American men. For more on this, please look to the scholar Celine Parrenas Shimizu.
[51] Lee, Robert G. *Orientals: Asian Americans in popular culture.* Temple University Press, 1999.

The hegemonic norms within Asian America create a push for a particular performativity and embodiment that ends up being harmful for the community internally and for solidarity work with other communities of color. To be aware of the actions that constitute what is deemed the "standard" narrative and experience and culture of an Asian American -- whether internalized or imposed -- gives power to the model minority myth and prevents from subverting from the positioning that we are in. When faced with how the model minority myth implicates a labored and antiblack positionality for Asian Americans, looking at the micro embodiment of a hegemonic Asian body and personality, and then tying it into a macro positioning of Asian Americans in history and in relationship to other communities, is important in breaking down monoliths and claiming an identity politic that is accountable and truly liberatory for all oppressed people.

Conclusion

The term "Asian American" was coined by Yuji Ichioka in the 1960's as a unifying terminology and to subvert the practice of being labeled as "Orientals", perpetual foreigners[52]. To call oneself Asian American was to be taking an explicitly political stance against mainstream discourse and practice. This history is not widely known, as Asian American is now a box to check off on census bureau documents and surveys, and is reflective of a large forgetting of significant political, subversive acts that Asian Americans had actively participated. The point of the term Asian American was to

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[52] Smith, "Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy"

unify previously segregated Asian communities, and to rally behind a shared experience

of racism, because to be united was more powerful than to be apart[53]. Now, with Asian

America having expanded to where it is today and the constant proliferation of ideas

rooted within the model minority myth, many have begun to question the legitimacy and

power of such a panethnic identity that, at times, can end up recreated hierarchies of

power and erasure. While there are nuances and contradictions that exist, the roots of this

term, as a unifying power against hegemonic norms, showcase the importance of an

"Asian American" contingent within larger frameworks for mass mobilization and

coalitional work.

 Conversations about solidarity, the pitfalls of identity politics, and how they fit

into an analysis of neoliberal capitalism as a violent threat to Black lives and other

communities of color, allow Asian Americans to reevaluate what it means to be

positioned in society based upon the model minority myth. While the ideology's harm is

often discussed in terms of "that isn't me" or "I'm not like that", placating *why* these

untrue narratives exist and how they fit into larger systems and, especially, in relation to

others is necessary for truly subverting it. Claiming #modelminoritymutiny is an explicit

political declaration, much like how Asian American once was, that seeks to abolish

expectations and norms of complacency, lack of solidarity, and silence that the model

minority myth instills to the public[54].

 What's missing in this chapter is a deeper understanding of the global impacts of

neoliberal capitalism on Asian bodies, and how antiblackness manifests independently

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[53] Omatsu, "The 'Four Prisons' and the Movements of Liberation"
[54] Jung, "The Racial Justice Movement Needs a Model Minority Mutiny."

from whiteness and white supremacy within Asian communities[55]. Additionally, further

elaboration upon the experiences of South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islanders

would have strengthened and diversified the analysis of antiblackness in Asian America.

While I don't explicitly discuss the nuanced ways which the model minority myth

operates for these specific communities, these conversations, and more, will be given

space for elaboration in the creative component of my thesis and in Chapter 3. In the

following chapter, analysis of the recent Peter Liang/Akai Gurley court case --

particularly the tensions that have risen in the Asian American community -- will

highlight how racial triangulation in the media continues in the present day. Looking at

this case shows the limitations of developing an identity politic that does not reflect the

extent of systemic oppression on all communities of color under capitalism, and also

leaves space to think through the gaps between discussing theoretical frameworks and the

embodiment of them.

Chapter two: The case of Peter Liang and Akai Gurley

#BlackLivesMatter[56] has put the issue of police brutality, the unjust and senseless

murder of Black bodies on a daily basis by police officers, at the forefront of many

discussions in the United States and globally. Despite the histories of police violence[57]

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[55] Angela P. Harris. "Economies of color." *Shades of difference: Why skin color matters* (2009): 1-6.

[56] Alicia Garza. "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement," Uncategorized, October 7, 2014, accessed April 22, 2016, http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/.
[57] Choy, Christine, and Renee Tajima-Pena. *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*. Filmakers Library, 1990.

and mass community action within Asian America, the conversation about Asian

Americans' "place" in the midst of solidarity with the #BlackLivesMatter movement --

and subsequent movements that it has catalyzed -- has been on the mind of people across

the board[58].

In this chapter I look at the Peter Liang/Akai Gurley[59] case to contextualize how

media representation has shaped discourse about Asian American activism, and to

address tensions existing within and against Asian Americans regarding anti-blackness

and Asian American positionality[60]. Building from the previous chapter, I address how

the embodied reality of anti-blackness and racial triangulation create vivid tensions and

divisions within Asian America, that make the achievement of #modelminoritymutiny

difficult. First, I will be looking at coverage of rallies and petitions supporting Liang,

particularly the slogan, "One death, two tragedies," that has been used by Liang's

supporters, to discuss how the case acts as an iteration of the model minority myth as a

form of racial triangulation (both internalized and imposed). Then, I will look at

responses by Asian Americans moving in solidarity with Gurley and his family, and the

reactions from both parties surrounding support and condemnation of Liang. Mainstream

media depiction of Peter Liang is reflective of much of the history and theory brought up

in the previous chapter, that is now complicated by the embodied experience. The

Liang/Gurley case shows how subversive ideologies like the model minority myth have

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[58] Kevin Cheng, *Where Are All the Asians in the Campus Racial-Justice Protests?*, (The Atlantic), December 8, 2015, http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/12/asian-americans-campus-protests/419301/.
[59] As of the deadline to this thesis, Peter Liang walks away with no jail time
[60] Most activism surrounding the Peter Liang case has occurred within the Chinese American community, which should bring to question, again, the hegemonic Asian American image that continues to pervade society.

become; but, it also pinpoints strategies Asian Americans have taken to subvert these

media manipulations and how they, and consumers, can hold mainstream media

accountable for these depictions.

In February of 2016, Chinese Americans in cities across the nation held rallies in

support of Chinese American New York Police Department (NYPD) Officer Peter Liang,

who was indicted for murdering Akai Gurley, a Black man, during a vertical patrol of a

Brooklyn housing project in 2014[61]. The indictment, which was the first in ten year of an

NYPD officer, brought outcries of unjust treatment and claims that Liang was merely a

"scapegoat"[62]. Amidst the rallies, a video titled, "22-year-old ABC[63] on Peter Liang," by

the popular culture blog, Fusion, began to spread across the internet featuring 22-year-old

Jess Fong, a Chinese American woman, speaking at a rally supporting Peter Liang[64]. In

this video, Wong utilizes a critical analysis of White supremacy in order to explain the

significance and relevance of supporting Liang, a Chinese American police officer who

had shot and killed Akai Gurley, a Black man. In the video, she states:

> "We are not asking for white privilege. We're not asking to be included in
> this cycle of systemic injustice. [...] We are angry because we are also hurt by the
> systemic injustices and the structural oppression and the racism that continues to
> pervade this country. I think as Asian Americans, we feel sorry -- deeply, deeply
> sorry for Akai Gurley and his family. We feel deeply sorry for the Black
> community. And we understand that Black lives matter. And we want to stand in
> full support of that as Asian American children. And Asian people in this country
> need to understand that we do not have white privilege. White privilege means

[61]Chris Fuchs and Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, *Thousands Rally After Conviction of Ex-Cop Peter Liang in Death of Akai Gurley*, (NBC News), February 20, 2016, http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/thousands-rally-after-conviction-ex-cop-peter-liang-death-akai-n522546.

[62] Frank Shyong. "Why This Cop's Conviction Brought Thousands of Asian Americans into New York's Streets," Los Angeles Times, April 13, 2016, accessed April 22, 2016, http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-liang-brooklyn-shooting-20160413-story.html.

[63] American Born Chinese

[64] "22-Year-Old ABC on Peter Liang," 2016, accessed April 22, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/fusionmedianetwork/videos/1338409436185031/.

they want to be put above the law. They have a sense of superiority and a supremacy that we DO NOT and SHOULD NOT want to associate ourselves with. So this protest is not about aligning ourselves with white privilege, this protest is us standing up and saying, "our system is wrong. The criminal justice system is wrong. It is unfair." Peter Liang took the fall for the sins of a country, and while he should be held accountable for the actions that he took, we believe that the sentencing that comes down in April needs to be proportionate to his action and not proportionate to the sins of a nation. We want all cops to be held accountable and we want this justice system to be transparent -- to be fair. We want white privilege to end, because this is not how democracy works. This is not what this country was founded upon."[65]

Her speech was translated into multiple Chinese news outlets and went viral in the Chinese American community as an example of the "true voice of second-generation Chinese Americans"[66]. In a follow up article with Fusion, Wong re-emphasized the need to have faith towards a "fair sentence" for Liang[67]. She also talked about her own experiences marching alongside Black activists in Baltimore, and the difficult conversations she has had with her mother regarding the problematic nature of slogans like AllLivesMatter and ChineseLivesMatter. When asked about whether or not she was going to attend another rally in support of Liang, she gave the divisions in the Asian American community as a reason for not attending.

When I first saw this video, I felt my stomach drop. The rhetoric she used, which called upon the unjust ways which white supremacy operates, completely delineated from the necessary accountability that would impact not just Chinese Americans or Asian Americans, but all communities who have faced police brutality, evokes much of the

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[65] "22-year-old ABC on Peter Liang"
[66] Isabelle Niu. "How the Peter Liang Conviction Sparked a Debate about White Privilege and America's 'model minority,'" April 14, 2016, accessed April 22, 2016, http://fusion.net/story/283166/peter-liang-asian-american-white-privilege/.
[67] Ibid.

language used in social justice circles[68]. After reading her follow up interview with

Fusion, I found myself struggling to follow the logic of her actions and beliefs. In many

ways, I agreed with Fong and many of the other Chinese Americans rallying for support

-- yes, if Liang was white, he really might not have been indicted. But how would asking

for a lesser sentence hold future cops, as members of society with high positions of

power, accountable? And even more, what does a "proportionate" sentencing look at

when the textbook definition of what Liang did was, indeed, second degree

manslaughter?

While Fong is quick to argue that Gurley's death was a "tragedy" that Liang

should be held accountable, she simultaneously places blame on the country while

instilling faith in the values that the country was founded upon. When Fong alludes to the

foundations of the nation and the desire for a real democracy and the founding values of

the nation, she fails to see the connections between white supremacy and white privilege,

that are at the very root of the formation of this country -- the system *is* one of white

supremacy. To transform a system that is "wrong", the solution is not to treat all police

officers the same; because police officers are who keeps the system in place. And while

white police officers do have white privilege, not all police officers are white -- but they

are still police officers. In their National article, Alex Tom[69] and Alix Mariko Webb[70]

write:

> "The fact remains that police officers who brutalize and kill people in this
> country—whether the officers are black, white, Asian, or Latino—are held above
> the law and treated to a legal double standard. That's why it had been a decade

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[68] And, with consideration to history, the Black community SHOULD be in the forefront
[69] Executive Director of Chinese Progressive Association, San Francisco
[70] Executive Director of Asian Americans United, Philadelphia

since the last conviction in New York, despite several such killings during that period."

Essentially, what Tom and Webb stress is that police officers, as agents of the state with immense power, should be held accountable to their mistreatment of community members regardless of their background. Calling for Liang to get a lesser sentence, like his white counterparts, is not calling for white privilege; instead, it is calling for the continued, unjust treatment towards police officers as above the law (which upholds white supremacy and further perpetuates the continued devaluation and killing of Black lives).

However, Fong is not the only individual speaking in support Liang[71]. In fact, when searching 'Peter Liang' on google, the articles that appear talk about the rallying support for Liang (including the video with Fong) in the name of fighting anti-Asian discrimination. The "Save Peter Liang" facebook group remains active, and a website in the same name exists, as well. These spaces occupy, what I believe, to be a trajectory of understanding anti-Asian racism that does not place Asian Americans in relationship to other people of color communities, and sees identity politics as an insular and non-intersectional mode for movement and understanding racial positionality. While frustrating, they offer a moment for reflection on how Asian American political ideologies have disseminated throughout the community, and a stark gap between Asian American studies/academia to those spaces.

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[71] Facebook groups such as "Save Peter Liang" and the website savepeterliang.org

As mentioned prior, many supporters of Liang have called defined the case as, "one tragedy, two victims" in order to equate the experiences of racism between Liang and Gurley. In her Medium article, Annie Tan, the niece of Vincent Chin[72] writes:

> "The signs "One tragedy, two victims" held up by protesters do not apply here. Officer Liang may have been shortchanged by a police institution that did not train him properly and then abandoned him, but he is not a victim. His actions directly and unjustifiably caused the death of another."

Tan, who insists that her uncle's legacy aligns with Akai Gurley despite Liang and Chin being from the "same community"[73], highlights the key importance of allying against power rather than based upon identity. What Tan ultimately calls for is an analysis of power dynamics that arise when calling Liang a victim in a tragedy, rather than an agent of the system.

While I won't deny that Liang probably is a scapegoat, and that his conviction can be viewed as anti-asian racism, to compare equate his experience of racism and the experience of Black people does not work. What fascinates me a lot about Asian Americans' experience with racism is the need to fit cleanly into how race and racism is discussed in a Black-white racial paradigm. While there are certainly ways that experiences can resonate, the roots of anti-Asian racism -- which are intrinsically tied to the histories of war, imperialism, and labor and these linkages to orientalism -- are entirely different. What applies to one community because of x, y, and z, does not apply to another in the same way. This difference is not reason to resent one group or demand

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[72] Vincent Chin was a Chinese American man who was murdered by two men during the crash of the auto-industry in detroit in the 1980's. *See* Choy. *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*

[73] Annie Tan, "Peter Liang Was Justly Convicted. He's Not A Victim," *Huffington Post* (The Huffington Post), February 23, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/annie-tan/peter-liang-was-justly-convicted_b_9299860.html.

to be treated the same, but to instead look at the manifestation, the root cause, of these injustices and work to dismantle discrimination, as a whole, from there. The division in support and subsequent biased media representation showcase what kinds of Asian American activism is highlighted. By pitting #BlackLivesMatter and Gurley supporters against Liang supporters, the media creates a competition between two communities who have experienced discrimination in very different, material ways. In the case of Liang, despite his identity and the unfair criminal justice system that does little to actually rehabilitate its constituents, his positionality as a police officer does not give him the pass to evade accountability.

Conclusion

Analyzing the complexities of the Liang and Gurley case within the Asian American community allows us to see how activism, solidarity, and racial formation are impacted by the norms perpetuated from the model minority myth. The conversations and tensions that have erupted because of Liang's indictment should not be swept away, but instead centered. It is essential that we, as a community, hold one another accountable and truly delve into what it means to support a police officer, who killed an innocent man, in the name of community and Asian American "justice". With Liang facing no jail time for his actions, what will accountability from the community look like beyond the criminal justice system? And, looking further, will Chinese Americans, like Jess Fong, support the many others who fall victim to this broken system?

For Asian American studies scholars and activists, the case of Peter Liang and Akai Gurley showcase how theoretical and historical concepts, when embodied, seem to get lost in translation. Even more, it proves how ideas of the hegemonic Asian American body, in this case of Chinese Americans with no prior political involvement, instill priority media coverage and conversation in contrast to the representation given other active members of the umbrella. Media coverage of this case have highlighted how this kind of activism is uncalled for from the Chinese American community, alluding to the apolitical trope of the model minority myth[74].

In the next chapter, I present my creative component of my thesis: a course syllabus for a future Asian American studies class. This course will focus upon the idea and complexities of Asian American solidarity and racial formation within the context of practicing #modelminoritymutiny, while offering students an opportunity to gain and apply understanding of the model minority myth into analyses of power in organizing.

Chapter three: Creating space within Asian American studies

In the graduating class of 2016, I am the single Asian American studies major at the Claremont Colleges. As such, I've had a lot of time to reflect on what that means for the department, myself, and my peers; as well as how my thesis fits into the current political climate at the consortium for the Asian American community. This past year, I

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[74] Chris Fuchs and Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, *Thousands Rally After Conviction of Ex-Cop Peter Liang in Death of Akai Gurley*, (NBC News), February 20, 2016, http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/thousands-rally-after-conviction-ex-cop-peter-liang-de ath-akai-n522546.

watched my fellow classmates struggle to understand how Asian Americans fit into the larger student movement started by Claremont McKenna College Students of Color (CMCers of Color)[75] and Black students[76]. I was confided in, multiple times, and asked whether or not Asian Americans "had a say" in the conversations surrounding institutional racism, solidarity, and the demand for administrative accountability; and my peers explained that they felt their experience didn't matter because of the privilege Asian Americans had.

These conversations, and my subsequent involvement[77] with the student movements that followed the CMCers of Color's and #BlackLivesMatter's direct actions, brought me to question what it meant to be an Asian American studies major, activist, and soon to be graduate from these institutions. More importantly, it forced me to think about how existing spaces for Asian Americans have or have not fulfilled these gaps in understanding and building an Asian American progressive movement. Ultimately, what came to form were the seeds for my thesis. I have at this point provided a theoretical understanding and a case study of a current event that exemplifies the gap between academia and on the ground experience. Now, I move onto proposing a medium for Asian American studies to address the tensions between theory and embodiment that I mentioned in my previous chapter.

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[75] "CMCers of Color: Official Statement," November 13, 2015, accessed April 22, 2016, https://medium.com/@cmcersofcolor/cmcers-of-color-official-statement-14843a4205cc#.aqc4aipwc. A student coalition group formed after affinity groups for marginalized communities were refused a resource center at Claremont McKenna College.
[76] Matthew Bramlett "Thousands March Across Claremont Colleges, Call for Solidarity," November 13, 2015, accessed April 22, 2016, https://www.claremont-courier.com/articles/news/t17402-claremont.
[77] "Scrippsdemands," November 23, 2015, accessed April 22, 2016, https://sites.google.com/site/scrippsdemands15/.

This section of my thesis acts as an explanation and reference for my creative project, a syllabus for a future course in the Intercollegiate Department of Asian American Studies (IDAAS). I divide this chapter into two main sections: first, I will address overall course objectives and how the class will be structured. This will create the necessary foundation for understanding the praxis of shared leadership[78] and community space that I envision, and how the theoretical component of my thesis is exemplified within the course's goals. Then, I will go through the three units of the course; as well as how and why I have broken up the semester into these sections. As this document will exist after I leave, it is important that I provide full transparency for why I have chosen specific readings, structures, and workshops for this class so that, when implemented, students and faculty can better learn and teach. Throughout this process, I will refer to previous courses, professors, and organizations whose structures/practices heavily influence my own.

This project acts as a reflection of my time here at the Claremont Colleges -- my studies, my activism, and, most of all, my growth. In many ways this is both a measure of the knowledge I've gained, the knowledge I continue to seek, and an example of the nonlinear trajectory of this process. What I hope to achieve through is a resource for students and faculty, as well as the IDAAS department as a whole, that reflects the current state of Asian American activism and studies when written. In the practice of thinking through notions of decolonial methodologies[79], explaining my thought process

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[78] Glenn Omatsu. "We Need to All Aspire to Become Zero," April 20, 2014, accessed April 22, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/glenn.omatsu/posts/10152313132270973.
[79] Linda Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed books, 1999.

allows for a critical but reflexive analysis of my experience that breaks down the dynamics of the institution and the students who learn within it.

Objectives & Class structure

There are three main objectives for this course as a whole. In addition to these, students will be given time to think and write down their individual objectives for the course in order to track any growth that occurs throughout the semester. These objectives are meant to be flexible, and to give space for students and faculty to fill out what it means to pursue a praxis that dismantles systems of oppression and mechanisms for division, like the model minority myth:

1) Students will have a working, fluid critical analysis of the model minority myth and its relationship to a broad spectrum of Asian American issues and social justice movements
2) Students will develop the ability to map and understand how power operates in order to grow organizing and community engagement skills that can be applicable to campus activism and beyond
3) Students will create a classroom community based in ideas of horizontal and shared leadership[80]

These objectives reflect a desire to really push towards thinking about Asian American studies and activism within the context of coalition and solidarity, which ultimately is a mode of subverting the model minority myth, and to explore concepts from my previous chapters in a community setting.

As mentioned, the racial positioning of Asian Americans has been constructed in triangulation with white and Black communities; and the way that Asian Americans have been represented both in history and in the current day, has had a large impact in that

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[80] Shared/horizontal leadership models depart from traditional top-down structures of leadership.

positionality. Thus, these objectives work towards learning history and unlearning ascribed notions of Asian America, and to find ways to subvert the systems that have erased our history while remaining reflective of the different ways oppression can be experienced in conjunction with others. This requires challenging traditional classroom structures of hierarchy that place faculty at the top and students at the bottom, and including space to challenge embodiment as well as discourse.

The classroom will be structured as a community space and attempt to be self conscious of traditional dynamics of power that exist in the room (between teacher and student). To do this, the first unit of the class will have rotating student facilitators, before the class decides what structure to use in the later second and third units. During these facilitations, faculty in the room are encouraged, primarily, to listen and should not be invited to join discussion until students ask them to. This structure comes from multiple Asian American studies and Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (FGSS) courses I've taken in the past four years that have helped to build facilitation skills, create community accountability in the classroom, and to really expand students' agency on the course material. Having faculty "invited back" to join the discussion comes specifically from Professor Warren Liu's model of student led discussions.

In order to create safe classroom dynamics and a living document for accountability, the class will create a list of community agreements in the beginning of the semester and revisit them throughout the duration of the course (as needed) to ensure accountability for all members in the room. I have been in a multitude of student spaces at the Claremont Colleges that implement community agreements for workshops,

dialogues, weekly meetings, etc… in order to encourage equitable dynamics within the

room. Many of my peers and I have discussed implementing community agreements into

classroom discussions after facing microaggressions[81] and/or tokenization[82] without

faculty intervention or awareness. Examples of some community agreements are as

follows:

- *One mic:* when one person is speaking, they have the "mic". Therefore, there should be no side conversations or talking over that person.
- *Assume there is a survivor in the room*: when discussing sensitive topics, it is important to always assume that there are people in the room who have first-hand experience with that trauma. This makes it more comfortable for those who do not wish to disclose their trauma, for whatever reason, to continue participating.
- *Take space, make space*: be conscientious of the amount someone is speaking (whether you or someone else), and make space for others who have not spoken up to put in their thoughts. This means being comfortable with silence and, if your peers are comfortable, knowing when to gently push someone to speak up or to ask a question that addresses folks who have not spoken as much.
- *No devil's advocate*: when discussing issues that are more personal (most things are, to some degree), it's important to balance being critical and the desire to "play devil's advocate". Speaking from what you know is what helps ground discussions and to not discount others' experiences and values.
- *Trigger warnings*: if bringing up something that is violent and/or traumatic, it is important to preface with a warning so that people in the classroom can prepare themselves for these discussions and take care of themselves as necessary.
- *First draft*: acknowledge that most thoughts shared in the classroom are "first draft" statements that can, and probably will, evolve later on

By collectively drafting these agreements, students and faculty will have a firm

understanding of the expectations set upon them by themselves and their peers. This

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[81] Microaggressions are considered to be subtle forms of racism coded/delivered in a way that makes it less obvious to pinpoint the origins of discomfort. I have heard it often described as "small papercuts"

[82] Flores Niemann Yolanda. "The Making of a Token: A Case Study of Stereotype Threat, Stigma, Racism, and Tokenism in Academe." *Frontiers* 20, no. 1 (1999): 111-134.

document supports the navigation of tense conversations, and should be thoroughly and thoughtfully considered throughout the course to optimize community growth and working environment (especially in Unit 3).

Course Breakdown

The breakdown of the course is in three units, with five weeks for every section. The goal of splitting the course into theory, practice, and community, is to create a trajectory of understanding and dismantling the model minority myth that first, grounds students in existing Asian American studies frameworks; second, takes these frameworks into workshops that directly address systems of power that organizers must navigate; and finally, provides an opportunity for the class to apply their knowledge into the community that they exist and the creation of a collective project. Coursework consists primarily of readings, but also includes weekly reflections, an individual mid-semester project, and a collective project at the end of the course.

The weekly reflections, which can be written but may also take shape in other forms, is meant to help students document any growth they experience and to further process the content of the course. The reflections also offer an opportunity for students to bring up any further questions that they have, which can then be brought up in future discussions. Weekly reflections are quite common in both Asian American studies and FGSS courses that I've taken, and have always been helpful as a different medium for conversation between faculty and students.

Additionally, the reflections help with building towards the mid-semester individual project, which should showcase students' ability to engage with the theories that they have learned by applying it to existing objects (ex: current events, a tv show, or a specific personal memory). This engagement with particular objects helps students focus in before moving outward in their analyses. I find this method particularly useful in developing my analytical skills and in contextualizing smaller incidents into larger frameworks, and give credit of this "object analysis" to Hentyle Yapp and Todd Honma, with whom I took Disability Studies and Body Art in the Diaspora, respectively.

The community project at the end of the course is meant to both encourage collaboration between students and the broader consortium community, and also give the class an opportunity to collectively create something with what they have learned. This can take shape in some form of action, a resource for future or existing students, an event, a panel, etc… that will encompass what they believe to be a form of #modelminoritymutiny after everything that they have learned.

Unit One: Theory

The first five weeks of the course will be dedicated towards gaining familiarity and fluency in common theories found within Asian American studies in order to better articulate the model minority myth. The four classes of this section are organized as: Introductions, Unpacking "Asian American", Globalization and Capital, The model minority myth, and What does solidarity look like? This organization ensures a working understanding of the history of "Asian American" and Asian American racial formation,

moves these conversations into discussions of labor on a global scale, relates these specifically to the model minority myth, before finally tying into what solidarity can look like with consideration to aforementioned subjects. Readings from this section are pulled heavily from a variety of classes I've taken: Asian Americans and Non-profits with Michael Pedro, Senior Seminar with Sharon Goto, Pacific Islanders and Education with Kehaulani Vaughn, and Body Art in the Diaspora with Todd Honma.

Simultaneously, this period is for students to facilitate student discussions in order to create an accessible and shared understanding of the concepts that they are learning, while practicing useful tools such as facilitation and curriculum writing. A term map will be created and revisited throughout this period for students to map out different terms and ideas and make visual connections. This map can be physical, virtual, or recreated and saved each class.

Unit two: Practice

The next unit of the course focuses upon putting learned histories and theories into practice. This period of the course will be more participatory and involve workshops that help to support students' abilities to organize with critical analyses of power. The three workshops on power include: star power[83], power mapping[84], and a power simulation[85]. These are meant to showcase how power operates in different communities, can be moved, and can look like while organizing. For me, these are workshops/tools that were formative for helping understand how organizing can be effective, because it

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[83] Appendix A
[84] Appendix B
[85] Appendix C

allowed me to see how different players (ex: student organizers, administration, board of trustees) can impact shifts in policy or stances. This is especially salient for the power mapping exercise, where students will have read demands and statements from the 2015 - 2016 school year that are applicable to the workshop. When applying this understanding of power to the model minority myth, it helps to see how the model minority myth can be seen as a tool, whether ascribed or internalized, that maintains power in oppressive systems. The decision to have Yuka Ogino, Sefa Aina, and Linda Lam facilitate these workshops[86] is primarily due to my faith in their ability to facilitate such workshops. However, if students or faculty of the class would like to facilitate, they can certainly do so.

In addition to these workshops, students will be turning in and presenting their individual projects in week eight. The individual project is meant to prove a working understanding of content up until that point through application to a specific object. Presentations should talk about methodologies, next-steps, and the medium utilized.

The final class for this unit poses the question, "what does #modelminoritymutiny look like?" in order to lead into the third section of the course, where students will primarily be engaging with existing student groups and resource centers while working towards a collective project. With a collective agreement on what #modelminoritymutiny looks, the class will then address how to structure their time in the third unit, which is also contingent on the community project they decide to pursue.

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[86] If they can!

Unit three: Community

This section is meant to primarily be at the agency of faculty and students to decide upon. The goal is for the course to begin to shift inwardly, and to look at the current political climate of the Claremont Colleges. As such, an hour of each class has been allotted towards many of the existing spaces that serve marginalized communities -- from student organizations to resource centers. How the class decides to engage with these spaces shall be decided as a collective; however, the purpose of bringing in these groups is to fill any gaps between IDAAS and other existing resources for political or community growth.

The only requirement for this section is a community project that, as mentioned, faculty and students will decide upon together. This can take the form of a summit, a public dialogue, a pamphlet, or even a direct action. Students are encouraged to work with existing resource 7C centers, student groups, or local organizations to bring in speakers and plan events. This furthers the connections between the classroom and on the ground, while giving students a feasible way to plug in their own potential activism and advocacy into the classroom. Any additional readings and workshops in this section will be determined by the class, with a minimum of one reading per week. Students and faculty are encouraged to create a system for rotating who decides on the readings, and set guidelines to how readings should apply to the community project.

This structure is inspired by the Intersectional Feminist Leadership course created by Scripps alum Vicki Wong when I was in my sophomore year. This course was housed

under FGSS, and was entirely student structured and led for that year, and has since been evolved into a course offered by Piya Chatterjee.

Conclusion

Once again, this chapter is meant to bridge the previous chapters' conversations with the creative project presented in the next chapter. This syllabus is, first and foremost, a guideline for students and faculty to follow as they begin to build community and work towards heightening existing conversations on Asian American experience, in relation to subverting the model minority myth, at the Claremont Colleges. The third unit currently stands as the most flexible portion of the semester; however, I trust faculty and students' decision to alter aspects of the course in order to reflect current political climate and the needs of the community.

By implementing this course, I believe that Asian American studies can provide a space where students will have ample and accountable agency in their learning and growth. Because of the nature of the course, the faculty becomes an even more apparent "learner" alongside students as they collectively work out the application of the curriculum to suit the needs of their community. This course has the potential to really give a space for existing organizers, budding organizers, and newly politicized folks to come together and learn from one another as they begin to shape what it means to subvert ascribed and essentialized notions of Asian America.

Nonetheless, the course does have its limits. More emphasis on gender, queerness, and ableism in unit one would help to see how solidarity is implicated when addressing

structures intersectionally. Ways to change this are to create more space in the practice or community unit to discuss feminism, patriarchy, etc… or to propose readings and workshops during the third unit of the course. Hopefully, as this course is renewed each year with new faculty and students, suggested readings will be shifted in order to accommodate student interest. As a document that is meant to be built, expanded, and compressed, this course syllabus should always be reflective of the time that it is being used. Nonetheless, this chapter provides full transparency for how I envision the structure of the course, and why it is organized in its current trajectory.

Chapter four: #modelminoritymutiny syllabus

Course Title: #modelminoritymutiny
Intercollegiate Department of Asian American Studies (IDAAS)
Semester 20XX

Professor:
Office hours:
Contact:

Course summary:

In 2014, in the wake of #BlackLivesMatter, a call to action was made for Asian Americans to actively engage with and unlearn the age old model minority myth, and join the movement for racial justice. In this class, we will unpack what #modelminoritymutiny[87] looks like, and gain a clear understanding of the historical and far-reaching ways in which the model minority myth has participated in: erasing histories of Asian American resistance and activism; and perpetuating anti-blackness in Asian American communities and beyond. Through in depth readings, workshops, individual and collective projects, and guest speakers, students will contextualize how Asian American positionality, vis-a-vis the model minority myth, fits into larger discussions of coalitional activism against systems of oppression.

This course was developed in Spring 2016 for the completion of Pamela Ng's senior thesis, "WTF is #modelminoritymutiny?: solidarity, embodiment, and practice in subverting ascribed Asian American racial positioning".

Objectives:
1) Students will have a working, fluid critical analysis of the model minority myth and its relationship to a broad spectrum of Asian American issues and social justice movements

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[87] Soya Jung. "The Racial Justice Movement Needs a Model Minority Mutiny," October 14, 2014, accessed April 22, 2016, http://www.racefiles.com/2014/10/13/model-minority-mutiny/.

2) Students will develop organizing and community engagement skills that can be applicable to campus activism and beyond
3) Students will create a classroom community based in ideas of horizontal leadership[88]

Grading breakdown:

Components to the grading breakdown are final. The class will collectively decide how percentages will be allocated in the second week of the course.

Participation

Class participation is necessary, but can be fulfilled through nonverbal pathways such as posting on sakai or otherwise agreed upon terms between student and professor. Nonetheless, students are encouraged to participate in class discussions, as they are the most generative ways for everyone in the room to learn!

Attendance

The community structure of this course relies heavily on student participation and, thus, attendance. Students are expected to attend all classes unless there is an emergency or it has been cleared prior with the professor. To make up an absence, students must either post a discussion question on sakai prior to the class they are missing or

Weekly Reflections

Students must turn in a weekly reflection. The medium for this reflection is flexible, and it is encouraged to think outside of the box! However, once a medium is decided upon, students must stick to this form until mid-semester, whereupon they are allowed to switch the method they are using. Guidelines for weekly reflection will be decided upon at the beginning of week 2.

Student-led facilitation

In the first unit of the course, students (# contingent on class size) will be required to lead discussion for the assigned readings for that day. Discussion should last for the majority of the class, with ten minutes at the beginning dedicated to community announcements and/or check-ins. Detailed student-led facilitation guidelines and sign ups will be given at the end of Week 1.

Individual mid-semester project

Students will utilize course material learned up until the mid semester point to generate a critical analysis of a current event, specific object, or incident (ex: a popular article, an episode from a TV show, an experience that they've had) that is relevant to the course. It is encouraged for students to get creative. Proposals for this projects are due in week five, and students will present their projects in week eight.

Community project

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[88] Horizontal leadership

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Together, students and faculty will work towards creating a final community project that encompasses what they believe #modelminoritymutiny to look like. This can take shape in an organized event, action, a resource for future IDAAS students/courses, etc… The class is encouraged to reach out to existing student organizations and resource centers for this project, and think reflectively on the needs of the community at this time.

Extra Credit
Programs, events, or actions you attend that are cleared in advance with the class and/or faculty can count for 5% of your overall grade. A verbal or written report back is necessary for knowledge and reflections to be shared and effectively disseminated.

Course schedule

UNIT 1: THEORY

Week one: Introductions
      Exercise:
- Class introductions, syllabus overview, community guidelines
- Activity: What does Asian American mean to you? What does it mean to other people (the media, your school, your peers)?
- Individual goals for the semester

      To do:
- Coming Together: Intro to the Asian American Movement by Yen Lee Espiritu
- Heterogeneity, Hybridity, and Multiplicity by Lisa Lowe
- NHPI: Community of Contrasts by EPIC
- Guidelines for weekly reflections + facilitations

Week two: Unpacking "Asian American"
      Exercise:
- Student facilitation #1 (1 hour 15 min)
- Term map
- Grading percentages

      To do:
- Our Lovely Hula Hands by Haunani Kay Trask
- Coolie Labor in the Age of Emancipation by Moon-Ho Jung
- Denationalization Reconsidered by Sau Ling Wong
- Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

Week three: Globalization and capital
      Exercise:
- Student facilitation #2 (1 hour 15 min)
- Term map

      To do:
- Success, Japanese American style by William Peterson

- Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans by Claire Kim
- Techno-Orientalism (introduction) by David Roh
- Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

Week four: The model minority myth
  Exercise:
  - Student facilitation #3 (1 hour 15 min)
  - Term map
  Homework:
  - People of Color Blindness by Jared Sexton
  - Economies of Color by Angela P. Harris
  - Four Prisons and the Movements of Liberation by Glenn Omatsu
  - Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM
  - Individual project proposal DUE before the start of the next class

Week five: What does solidarity look like?
  Exercise:
  - Student facilitation #4 (1 hour 15 min)
  - Term map
  - Polynesian Panthers documentary
  - Project proposals DUE before start of this class
  To do:
  - We must strive to become zero by Glenn Omatsu
  - The Self Aware Organizer by Loretta Pyles
  - Tactics for Change by Loretta Pyles
  - Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

UNIT 2: PRACTICE

Week six: What does it mean to organize?
  Guest facilitator(s): Kehaulani Vaughn/Sefa Aina of the AARC
  Exercise:
  - Presentation sign ups
  - Star Power workshop[89]
  To do:
  - Scripps Demands 2015 by Students Organizing for United Liberation (SOUL)
  - Whose Voice, Whose Vision? alum solidarity letter
  - An Open Letter From Scripps Faculty on Commencement Speaker Madeleine Albright by 28 Scripps faculty
  - Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

Week seven: Mapping power

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[89] Appendix A

Guest facilitator(s): Yuka Ogino of SCORE
Exercise:
- Power mapping workshop[90]
- Debrief:
    - How does tie into what Pyles reading? How does this tie into student organizing/activism at the Claremont Colleges?
- Work time for individual projects
To do:
- INDIVIDUAL PROJECT + presentations (Due week eight)
- No weekly reflection due

Week eight: Presentations
Exercise:
- Individual project presentations
- Debrief projects
To do:
- No weekly reflection due

Week nine: Facing power
Guest facilitator(s): Linda Lam of CAPAS
Exercise:
- Power workshop[91]
To do:
- The Racial Justice Movement Needs a Model Minority Mutiny by Soya Jung
- Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

Week ten: What does #modelminoritymutiny mean?
Guest Speakers: #Asians4BlackLives (1 hr 15)
Exercise:
- Unit 3 structure
- Community final project brainstorm
To do:
- Article about ethnic studies movements
- CMCers of Color: Official Statement
- Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

UNIT 3: COMMUNITY

Week eleven: Intercollegiate Department of Ethnic Studies
Guest Speakers: IDAAS, Africana Studies, Chican@/Latin@ studies (1 hr 15)
Exercise:

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[90] Appendix B
[91] Appendix C

- Work time
To do:
- Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

Week twelve: Resource centers
Guest Speakers: The AARC, CAPAS, SCORE, Office of Institutional Diversity, AdBoard, ModG (1 hr & 15 min)
Exercise:
- Work time
To do:
- Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

Week thirteen: Mentor programs
Guest Speakers: 7C AAPI mentor programs, IDEAS, International Student Sponsor Program (1 hr & 15 min)
Exercise:
- Work time
To do:
- Our Sound issues 1- 4
- Minor Threats by Mimi Nguyen
- Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

Week fourteen: ARTivism
Guest Speakers: Our Sound
Exercise:
- Zine workshop
To do:
- Weekly reflection due Sunday at 5 PM

Week fifteen: Debrief and celebration
Exercise:
- Review individual goals from beginning of the semester
- Course evaluations

Conclusion

A few weeks ago, I was helping a few friends by participating in a documentary they were making for their Social Documentation and Asian Americans class. One of the interview questions was, "As the only [Asian American] Studies major in your year, some may question whether Asian American Studies is important or say that it is unnecessary. What would be your response?" Though I had been given a set of questions prior to the interview, this particular one brought up a multitude of emotions that ranged from frustration, sadness, to amusement, when it was asked aloud. Though I can't recall exactly what I answered, what I offer now is a much longer version of it backed with sources, sprinkled with jargon, and delivered much more formally.

These past four years, I have carried a self-imposed weight on my shoulders, that I can only describe as guilt, when it came to organizing as an Asian American in coalitional spaces. I was extremely conscious of the privilege my community held and tried my absolute hardest to abolish perceptions of apoliticalness that might've come across when I so much as opened my mouth or walked into a room. I felt an incredible pressure to show up to things, for fear that if I didn't show up then "nobody else" would,

and held a burning frustration towards my community that I now realize is slightly misplaced.

At the same time, I harbored an intense resentment at the fact that there were so many Asian American issues and experiences almost nobody knew about because nobody found Asian American racial politics to be of any importance or relevancy. When I look at instances where Asian Americans perpetuate the oppression of other communities of color in an effort to validify their own struggles, I think to the moments where I have felt exhausted carrying a weight I have only put onto myself while never having my community's issues validated or considered. What prevents me from being just like Peter Liang supporters? Affirmative action denouncers?

Perhaps it is chance, but for the sake of future Asian American budding activists, leftists, and revolutionaries, reading this thesis is going to be necessary for contextualizing *exactly* why, amidst all the contradictions and lost-in-translations, #modelminoritymutiny is integrally tied to others and other communities. Don't give into those thoughts of "what about me!" Therefore, this thesis, which is a complete result of my education from both the classroom and the communities I've been a part of, is a humble form of subverting what many, myself included, have come to expect from someone who looks like me.

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APPENDIX A, B, C

STARPOWER: EXPERIENCING A STRATIFIED SOCIETY

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Years ago, the late Dr. Richard Stone asked me to attend his cultural anthropology class and participate in a simulation game. He told me nothing except that it would be interesting and that he needed one more person in the game for it to work properly. I went and was introduced to "Starpower," a totally engaging activity that I subsequently modified and incorporated into my own classes.

First developed in the 1960s, (Shirts 1969), Starpower creates a limited-mobility, three-tiered society based on differential wealth. Participants engage in "chip trading sessions" to increase their individual wealth and societal status. Variations in wealth are ostensibly based on "merit" (success at trading chips) but most members of each "strata" (called "Squares," "Triangles," and "Circles") unknowingly receive different resources (trading chips) at the beginning of the game and at each subsequent "trading session." Thus, most participants remain in their original group throughout the game. To preserve the mobility premise, an occasional lower status person receives enough trading chips to allow a group change. After several trading rounds, the wealthy group ("Squares") "earns" the right to make rules for the rest of the game. Trading continues under the new rules.

Shirts' version assumes power inevitably corrupts and that the "wealthy group" will make unfair rules that generate frustration and even revolt by other groups. My experience shows that students respond in a variety of ways, sometimes opting to create an egalitarian society through rules that redistribute "wealth." Perhaps their enrollment in a cultural anthropology class makes a difference! In any case, at some point, the instructor ends the game and then facilities a discussion of the experience.

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[1] A version of this activity appears in the Teacher's Guides associated with the American Anthropological Association public education project, RACE: Are We So Different (www.understandingrace.org).

Student's emotional responses and behavior are generally linked to their social position in the simulated society. The "Triangles" (lower class) become despondent, angry, self-blaming, self-critical, resentful, and often give up on playing the game, or sometimes simply cheat. Other groups also react in ways characteristic of the middle and upper classes. The game illustrates the complex processes of economic, social, and political stratification, linkages between wealth and political power, the ways in which stratification is maintained and justified, and how stratification is experienced on a personal level, by members of different "strata" and by different individuals within the same strata. Starpower is effective because it allows students to understand how stratified systems "work" structurally and to experience how they "feel."

I find Starpower particularly useful for demonstrating the subtleties of "meritocratic" political democracies like the United States, in which the rules **seem** "fair." Yet, the unequal distribution of wealth assures that most "Squares" will end up "Squares" and most "Triangles" will remain "Triangles" regardless of their individual merit and a set of equally applied rules for achieving "success" in society.

Starpower can also illustrate how race, ethnicity, gender, or other visible social identity markers function in stratified societies. Participants in each group sit separately and wear a visual symbol of their group membership as "Squares," "Triangles," or "Circles." This will offer you an opportunity to discuss the role of visual markers in stratified societies, as both internal and external symbols of one's identity that facilitate differential treatment. Such visual markers can become potent symbols of group membership, substituting for and masking the class basis of the hierarchical system.

Time and Players; Room and Material Requirements

This is a complex game to set up and carry out, but well worth the effort. I have used it in introductory cultural anthropology classes, but it would be perfect in upper division economic and political anthropology classes that emphasize wealth and power or any class that addresses stratification and systems of inequality. The game requires at least two hours or about 45 to 60 minutes for the "trading sessions" and at least an hour for the discussion and analysis. It can be used effectively in either one long class or in two separate class sessions in the same week. The game works best with from 25 to 35 participants, although it can handle a range from 18 to 45. If you reduce the "strata" to two groups, you can play with as few as 12 students.

Since each group must meet and confer between trading sessions, it is best to have a room with movable chairs unless there is sufficient empty floor space for the group to stand together or sit on the floor. During trading sessions, students move around the room seeking a trading partner and stand while they are making a trade.

Procedures

The description that follows is my "bare-bone" version. Over the years, I have modified the original game, changing chip values, sometimes altering trading rules to allow more or less mobility, sometimes going with the "flow" of a particular class, sometimes manipulating the class in a certain direction. Regardless, participants' reactions cannot always be predicted, especially after the "Squares" are given the power to make rules. So, there is no "template" for this game. Each session is excitingly different!

Materials You Will Need

- Trading Chips (or pieces of paper) of different colors representing 5 different point values (10, 5, 4, 2, 1), e.g., gold, green, blue, pink, and white.
- Bonus Trading Chips that are worth 5 points each. At the end of each trading round, give each group 3 of these chips to distribute to 1 to 3 members of their group. The group unanimously decides who receives each chip. If they can't decide, they forfeit the chips.
- Envelopes containing the 5 chips that each participant receives at the beginning of each trading session. Make enough envelopes for at least 3 rounds. Contents of the envelopes depend on one's "social group." Discretely mark envelopes but also keep each group's envelope in a separate pile.
- "Square's" envelopes: 1 gold, l green, 3 other chips.
  "Circle's" envelopes: 0 gold, 1 green, 4 other chips.
  "Triangle's" envelopes: 0 gold, 0 green, 5 chips of other colors.
- Several "mobility" envelopes. These contain at least 1 gold and 1 green chip. At least 1 "Triangle" receives one each round. In early rounds, this allows them to move "up" to a "Square." Occasionally, give a "Square" a low value envelope. The impact varies depending on how far it is into the game. After several rounds, it has no mobility impact! This is a key point.
- Symbols (Squares, Circles, Triangles) for members of each group to wear around their neck, pinned to their shirts, etc.
- A badge for the police officer (optional).

Game Rules

In addition to the above materials, you can either create handouts or posters for game rules, or simply write them on the board:

- Scoring Chart that lists the values for each chip color and shows the number of additional points participants receive for having several chips of the same color: 5 of a kind = 5 points; 4 of a kind = 4 points; 3 of a kind = 3 points.
- List of Trading Rules:
  You must touch while you are trading.
  Talk only while trading; this applies **even** to the director or police.
  Once you initiate a trade, you must trade before going on to another trade.
  Players with arms folded do **not** have to trade.
  All chips must be hidden at all times (except when exchanging chips).

One for one trades only.

All rules will be enforced and penalties levied as in deducting points.

- List of Bonus Session Rules:

    Each group receives 3 chips and each chip is worth l0 points.

    Chips can be given to 1, 2, or 3 group members.

    Chips must be distributed by unanimous vote.

    Undistributed chips are forfeited after 4 minutes of play.

- Scoring Card For Each Group or create three separate sections on the board, one for each group.

Procedures and Basic Stages in the Game

(1) **Divide students into three groups**. Have them sit in pre-arranged chairs, and distribute symbols for them to "wear" (squares, triangles, circles). You can tell them they are distinct ethnic, religious, or geographical or any other type of communities.

(2) **Introduce Purpose of Activity**. Tell students the game is designed to illustrate how "exchange" works in small-scale societies. They will engage in several trading sessions. At each session, they will receive a packet of 5 chips of different values, randomly selected. Their goal is to devise a clever trading strategy for amassing as many points as possible. They accumulate points from each session. After several trading rounds, scores will be totaled. Those with the most points "win" the game. You may tell them to draw upon their knowledge from the course. I sometimes say the activity is a "test" of previous course material and "Grades" will be based on student point totals at the end of the game. This makes it more "serious," but it can also create tension.

(3) **Explain Trading Sessions and Trading Rules** (see above).

(4) **Begin Trading Session**. Distribute envelopes to each group (remind them to hide their chips.) Give them a few minutes to create a strategy. Then tell them they can now stand up and move around the room, looking for a trading partner. After about 10 minutes, tell them the trading session is closed and they should return to their seats.

(5) **Calculate and Record Scores on Board or Chart**. Students individually calculate their scores and write it in the appropriate space for their group (use only initials). Alternatively, appoint a recorder in the group to collect and write scores on the board.

(6) **Distribute 3 bonus Chips to Each Group**. Groups decide which members will receive the chips. This can be 1, 2, or 3 people. Add points to these students' scores. If the group can't decide (3 to 5 minutes), take the chips back.

(7) **Rearrange Groups**. With the whole group watching, tell them group membership will now be based on "scores" and the top scorers will be "Squares," the bottom scorers are "Triangles," and the remainder are "Circles." This is an opportunity to reiterate the meritocracy rhetoric. You will have to decide the cut-off scores. Physically shift

individuals between groups and in the group membership list on the tally board, as appropriate. Have switchers trade old symbols for new appropriate ones.

(8) **Begin Trading Session 2.** Use the same procedures as above, including a few "mobility" envelopes. At the end of the trading session, total the scores for both rounds for each student. Rearrange groups again, although there will be less movement. Unless time is limited, do a third trading session before proceeding to the next stage.

(9) **Give Power to "Squares**." After trading session 2 or 3, use meritocracy rhetoric to justify giving rule-making powers to "Squares," i.e., their scores show they've mastered course material on trading and exchange and they deserve to make the rules for the rest of the game. This is where you begin playing it by ear!

(10) **"Squares" Make New Rules.** Have "Squares" discuss what rules they want to make. Members of other groups can sit in on the process and you can allow them to make comments. However, only "Squares" make decisions. The content of these discussions is always significant and relevant for the post-game processing. (I sometimes jot down snippets for future reference.) This is the most fascinating, volatile, and unpredictable part. Monitor closely to make sure it doesn't get out of hand. If playing the game in two sessions, waiting until the second session to have "Squares" change the rules may minimize the out-of-class tension students sometimes experience.

(11**) New Trading Sessions Using the New Rules**. "Squares" now are in charge of the police officer. The police officer need not administer the rules fairly, nor are points always added up "accurately" by the scorekeeper, who may be the police officer, the instructor, or someone from the "Squares."

(12) **Play it By Ear.** But always monitor students and situation so it remains a positive learning experience. What happens next, especially responses of "Triangles" and "Circles" depends on what kinds of rules "Squares" made as well as the class itself. "Squares" often initially try to preserve power, some more paternalistically than others. Some honestly think they "deserve" to be "Squares;" others are suspicious. "Non-squares" usually try to influence "Squares." If the new rules are harsh, tensions increase and both "Squares" and lower status groups respond in a variety of predictable ways. If rules remain "fair," it takes more rounds for tension to build, and apathy can occur. Some students never realize the game is "stacked!" Sometimes social justice oriented "Squares" try to figure out how to redistribute chips (a fascinating process). It is impossible to describe the range and complexity of what occurs and the extent to which students replicate what social scientists know about human behavior and responses in situations of stratification. You will have to experience it yourself!

(13) **Stop the Game and Begin the Discussion**. At whatever point you stop the game, students must process how they are feeling **before** beginning the more abstract discussion. You may have them write down their reactions and reflections immediately or after class. But, it is important to move beyond feelings. One way is to ask students to describe strategies they employed in the game, then place different strategies into the

larger context of stratification and how one's class position affects one's strategies. I usually let the discussion take its own course but always try to make links between student experiences and the more abstract ideas and processes involved.

(14) **Summarize What Has Been Learned**. At the end of the discussion or at the next class, give students a more formal summary of key features of stratified societies (See Appendix A handout). Connect, once again, with the Starpower simulation experience.

Reference

Shirts, R. Gary
1969 *Starpower*. La Jolla CA: Behavioral Sciences Institute.

APPENDIX A: STUDENT HANDOUT

STARPOWER: KEY POINTS OF THE GAME

1. **Illustrates general features of stratified resources and labor**
- Unequal distribution of and access to key resources and labor.
- If groups begin with different resources, it is almost impossible for them to compete equally even if the rules are fair and equally applied.
- Unequal resources produce inequalities in potential for authority power, in the strategies one uses, in one's attitudes about the "system," in one's attitudes toward members of one's group, and in one's attitudes toward other groups.
- Status Differentiation. From inferior to superior marked by distinct "cultural" symbols or markers of one's status.
  - Rights, duties, opportunities, and interactions depend on one's status.
  - Ascribed vs Achieved Status. Is one's position "ascribed" (based on birth, what one is "born into") or is it "achieved" (based on one's own actions). Does it differ at the beginning of the game? Later on?
- Formal Political Organization
  - Emergence of "State:" "Squares" supported by the "police" or "military."
  - Unequal participation in decision-making by lower status groups.
- Ideology: variety of belief systems exist that justify (legitimize) stratification.
- Meritocracy: focuses on achievement and hence implies it is a "just" system. One gets rewarded based on one's capacities and hard work (e.g., Horatio Alger).
- Some mobility: those "moving up" demonstrate the system is "fair," "merit based."
- Political democracy emphasized: "equal rights" for all. Equal opportunity laws.
- Luck: an alternative ideology. It's just a matter of luck (hiding that the system is "set up"). Words like "unfortunate" imply it is "fortune" rather than the system.
- Blame the victim: it's your fault. Get victims to also blame themselves.
- Secrecy and ignorance: "Hide chips from each other." Cultivate individualism.

2. **Illustrates People's Reactions and Strategies Reflect Their Class Position**
2.1 Lower Class Strategies:
  - Individualistic: break rules, apathy, resentment, cheating, anger, depression, withdrawal, develop alternative things to do in class
  - Collective protest, non-cooperation, strike, ostracize upper groups.
2.2 Middle Class Strategy: inaction, don't take sides, try to preserve one's chips.
2.3 Upper Class Strategy: alternative strategies depending on values and goals. All emphasize group unity, however.
  - Preserve power through paternalism, authoritarian rules, "law and order," manipulate and alter rules when threatened. Each strategy produces different reactions in other groups. Reiterate legitimizing ideologies: emphasize "fairness,""merit," and "equal opportunity" rules. Deny system is unjust.

- Prioritize social harmony; create a more just system and give up (some, all) power and privilege.
- Prioritize justice (experience guilt): create a more equal and just system and give up (some, most, all) power and privilege.

2.4 Police Strategy: uphold rules but especially for lower status groups; bend rules for upper classes; identify with authority, maintain distance from lower status group.

2.5 Attitudes toward "game" or system: who enjoys the "game?" Who wants it to continue? Who feels alienated? Who wants it to end – quickly? How about those who "moved up?" Did that alter their view of the game"? How did they feel about those "left behind?" What expectations did those left behind have about those who moved up? Were they disappointed? Feel betrayed? How did old timers feel about "newcomers?" What does this illustrate?

2.6 Alternative Group Strategies for Bonus chips: share, give to low, give to high, long-term vs short-term strategies.

3. **Maintaining Inequality: Informal and Formal social Control Mechanisms**
   - Paternalism is more effective than authoritarian regimes. "Squares" don't want to alienate lower groups. They want to maintain social solidarity and a feeling that "leaders" care about other groups. Cultivate "good intentions" and concern for "common good," use "family" metaphors (the "mother" or "father" of the people.)
   - Divine sanction also legitimizes authority (e.g. the instructor becomes "God" who ordains the "Squares.")
   - Social Separation of classes. Reduces social pressure from lower groups on upper classes, diminishes envy by lower classes, prevents empathy or guilt by upper groups.
   - Constantly reinforce "just" ideology: system is just, fair, natural, or supernaturally sanctioned.
   - Why Do Lower Classes Continue to "Play?" Hope, lethargy, a culture of obedience, waiting for someone else, self-blame so try harder.

4. **Alternative Outcomes and Their Significance**
   - Trading off social good will and social solidarity against amassing wealth and political power. What are the plusses and minuses of each system? Why do some choose different alternatives? Does having wealth (for several generations/rounds of the game) make one more likely to share?
   - Complexities of restructuring the system: will simply making trading rules "fair" help? Is "affirmative action" enough? Does solution require equalizing wealth? At every round? Will some inequality remain?

Power mapping

Objectives:

- To help participants consider the social and political context within which they are developing strategy.
- To creatively consider allies, opponents, targets and constituents prior to embarking on a campaign.
- To serve as a reminder and framework for subsequently revising strategy.

Time: 1 hour – 2 hours.

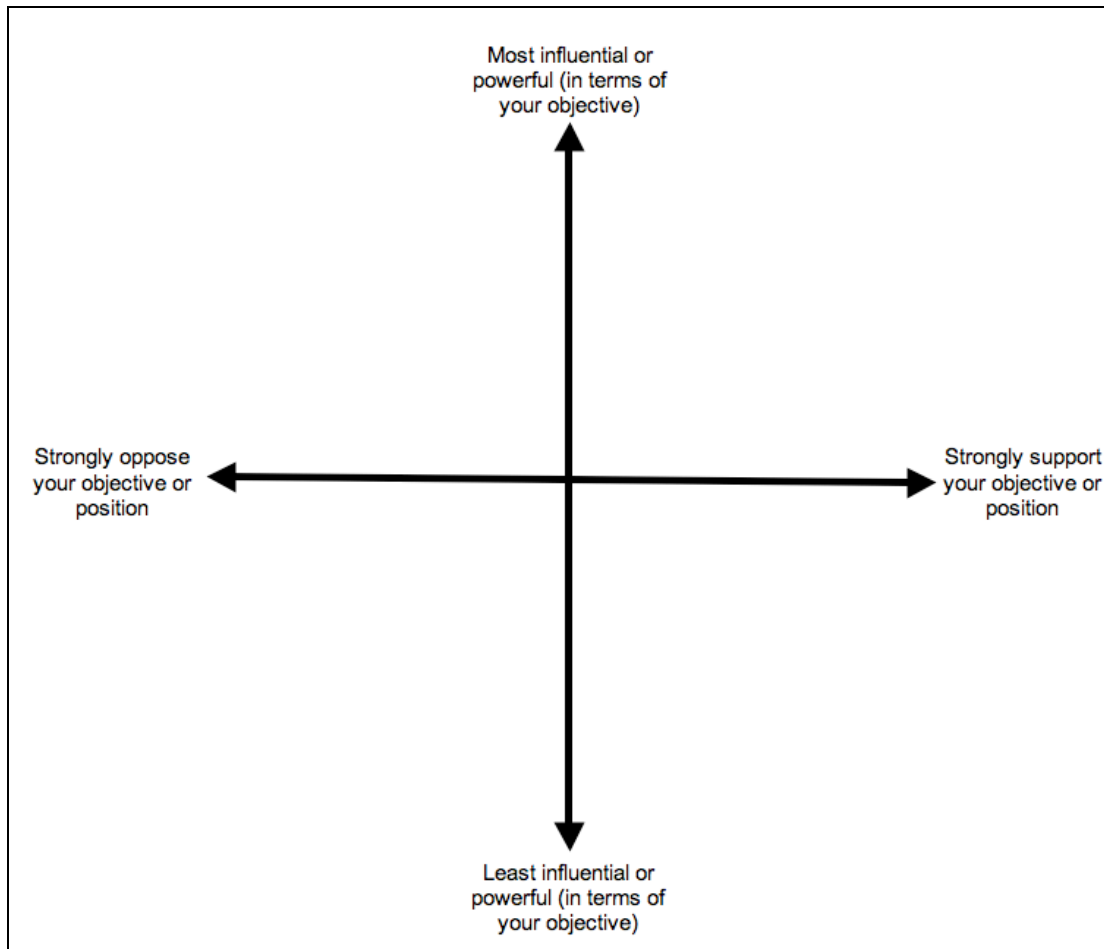## How it's done:

In pairs/threes:

1. Think of a campaign you are involved with (or might become involved with).
    What is it you are trying to achieve with this campaign?

2. Briefly describe your campaigns to each other.

3. Select one campaign for this exercise.

    Consider: **"What is the main outcome your campaign hopes to achieve?"** Define this outcome in terms of a realistic and achievable objective (eg. recycling bins in every classroom or a doubling council's budget for native tree planting).

4. With this outcome in mind, write on the cards provided the names of organisations and people with whom you might need to engage in order to achieve this outcome. Start with yourself and the main decision-maker/s. You might like to include:

• your own group	• churches	• particular sectors of the community
• other community groups - consumer, residents, environment, etc	• federal government - which departments or ministers?	• indigenous people
	• local, regional and national media	• youth, unemployed,
• local government - which officers?	• property/ real estate developers	• men/women, the aged
• state government - which departments or ministers?	• local businesses	• industry
	• experts	
	• professionals (eg teachers, police)	

Each group needs a blank power map on butchers paper. This is a simple matrix with a horizontal axis and vertical axis. The vertical axis indicates the level of influence or power each person or organisation has to give your group what you are asking for. The top of this axis is where you would place people or organisations that have most power or influence. The horizontal axis indicates whether people support your group's specific objectives or if they are opposed to these objectives. At the left end of this spectrum are people who are most opposed to your desired changes or objectives. At the right end are people who support your objectives most strongly.

```
                          Most influential or
                          powerful (in terms of
                          your objective)

                                   ↑




Strongly oppose                                              Strongly support
your objective or    ←─────────────────────────────→        your objective or
position                                                     position




                                   ↓

                          Least influential or
                          powerful (in terms of
                          your objective)
```

5.   Place the card with the name of your organisation on the power map.

6.   Identify the organisation or individual holding <u>the most power</u> in terms of delivering your desired outcome. Place this card on the power map, leaving some distance between the two cards.

7.   Place each card in turn on the power map. As you place them down, say something about how they are related to your organisation, to the main power-holder and to each other. How much influence do they hold? Do they cooperate with each other or are they in conflict? Do you presently have a relationship with these people? Are they likely to agree with your position?
   •   Position the cards according to the relationships that exist between them.
   •   Consider the relative power of the stakeholders in your campaign. Who is closest to the key decision makers? Move them around. Spend at least five minutes until the map feels right.
   •   Your partner/s in this exercise can help clarify power relationships by questioning you as you go along.

8.   When your map is complete, identify the <u>two or three locations</u> within the map where you feel your campaign might effect the greatest influence. Are there people or organisations who hold power and who you might successfully influence?

9.   Report back, discussion.

Here's a variation. Create the grid with masking tape on the floor. Invite participants to brainstorm the agents involved and place themselves on the grid to represent these individuals or organisations. Discuss and agree your campaign can do to shift these agents. To get the most from the exercise, participants need to do some research first

Where tool comes from:
James Whelan http://www.thechangeagency.org

UNDERSTANDING POWER RELATIONS

Time: 2 Hours: 15 minutes for role-play set-up; 45 minutes for role-play preparation; 15 minutes for role-play; 45 minutes for role play debrief and power presentation

MATERIALS

- butcher paper
- markers

HAND-OUTS

- Relations of Power Role-Play Background Sheet
- Relations of Power Community Team Sheet
- Relations of Power Company Team Sheet

CHARTS/VISUALS

- Definition of Power
- Forms of Power
- Student Power

OUTLINE

    I.   Purpose of the Role-Play

    II.   General Observations

    III.   Role Play and Debrief

    IV.   Forms of Power

I. The Purpose Of The Role-Play

- The main purpose of the role-play is to start the participants thinking about power as the factor which determines winning or losing in organizing. This theme will be continued throughout the training. The idea of holding and using power is a difficult one, and somewhat uncomfortable for many people. Often, we encounter the attitude that being morally right, having all the facts, making good arguments or even using creative tactics is, and should be, all that it takes to win. The point we want to make here is that these things are all necessary but not sufficient. We must also have real power.

- Another key point to the role play is that the students are places in a situation where none of the forms of power that they are accustomed to using will work. In the debriefing, the trainer discusses why each form of power that the students suggest isn't valid in this particular situation, although it might be in a different case. This should lead the students to start thinking about power as something that exists

only in relationship to a specific target rather than as an abstraction (i.e., people power or the power of the media).

- The role-play gives the instructors a chance to size up the group. Does it tend toward more timid or more aggressive tactics? Does it short-cut the strategy development process and jump directly to tactics? Who emerge as leaders in the planning groups? Who takes on the responsibilities of organizers even though they may not be the people appointed by the trainers? By careful observation, a great deal can be learned about the participants. Problem areas can be spotted for work in later sessions.

- This session also functions as a very good icebreaker and is a challenging start after the introductions session. It is also a whole lot better than asking people what flower they wish they were as in traditional icebreakers.

- Notes on the Role-Play

In this role-play, a community group is pitted against a company. However the group has no power over the company directly. It might have power to influence a city council vote. It might also have indirect power through regulatory agencies or the courts although those are usually partial to corporations. No matter what the community organization team says, nor how militant it acts, it cannot directly force a major concession from the

At one GROW, students raised the question of whether mediation, negotiations, collaboration and consensus building were not preferable to gaining power. The trainers responded that genuine negotiations or consensus building can only take place among parties of equal power. Both sides must agree that there is a mutual problem, and each side must be able to give something that the other side wants. In fact, most direct action campaigns do end in negotiations; but not until the previously powerless side has gained some power. An offer to negotiate when you have little power is usually a deception. Negotiating until the term ends and all of the students leave is a common administration tactic.

company itself. It has no power over the company directly and will have to go through some other agency in order to get to the company. If the students figure out that they have no power over the company, then they can use this meeting with the company to put pressure on the City Council where they do have power. There are, for example, several ways that they could create a situation at the meeting which would make it unpopular for Council members to be publicly identified with the company. However, if the students wrongly believe that they do have power, or that power doesn't matter, they will keep making demands that they cannot win.

II. General Observations

1. **The role-play is not about a student issue.** There are several reasons for this:

    - It is an equalizer. Few students have experience with this type of community situation, so all are starting out from more or less the same base line.

    - It forces the participants to really think the problem through, and not to rely on past experiences or knowledge.

    - Because participants have little information on the subject, they are more easily able to see the strategy process at work, and less likely to be distracted by details than if discussing a more familiar campus situation.

2. **The company team usually comes out looking very good and feeling very smart, the community organization team much less so.** It is necessary to show both teams that this is a function of the unequal power relations in the situation, and not one of how good they are. DON'T END THIS OR ANYTHING WITH PEOPLE FEELING BAD ABOUT THEMSELVES!!!

3. **This is the only role-play or exercise in which no prior**

discussion is held about how to do the task.

The instructors can therefore establish a benchmark of the group's performance before any training is given, and compare it to later sessions. This is one way to measure the effectiveness of the training.

III. How To Set Up The Role Play

1. **Decide in advance who will play the three main roles:**

    A. <u>Mr/s. Kreighton the company's owner</u>.

    This person should be able to act realistically. Ideally it would be someone who has dealt with corporations/administration/legislators before and knows how they behave .

    B. <u>The spokesperson for the community organization team</u>.
    In choosing a person for the community organization spokesperson role, it is sometimes useful to pick a person who appears excessively loud, over confident, moralistic or ultra left. This takes them down a notch so that they can learn at the training, rather than just use it as a soapbox. Where the group is very inexperienced with such tactics, pick a stronger more experienced person. Do not choose someone who has been to a GROW or Midwest Academy training The organizer of the community team.

C.   The Organizer for the Community team.

   This should be a person with good organizing experience who is a good facilitator. However, save the person who you think would be best in this role for the last role-play.

Make sure that they stay in their roles and that no one else takes over.

2. **Make these points to the group**

- This session is called "Understanding the Relations of Power". We will be talking about what constitutes power, who has it, who doesn't and how those of us who don't have it can get it.

- For the purposes of this discussion, we will use the term power to mean **the ability of our groups to get what we want from someone who has the authority to give it to us when that person would not otherwise do so**. (Write the definition large on poster paper.)

- You will get the information you need to actively participate in the role-play. Afterwards, we will talk together about the concept of power.

- You can make up other information. The only rule is that

what ever you do or say must be realistic.

3. **Distribute the Background sheet,** but hold the worksheets. Call on people to take turns reading the background sheet out loud. When finished, ask if there are any questions.

4. **Say to the group,** "You have probably noticed that this isn't a student issue. This is one of two places where we use an example that is somewhat outside your experience because it is easier to see the larger structure of what is happening if you aren't focused on the particular details.

5. **Announce the roles.** Be sure to balance all roles for race and gender. The company team should be one quarter the size of the organization team, or one third as large if the whole group numbers thirty people or more.

6. **Give the group these instructions:**

   - The person assigned to the role of organizer should lead the preparatory discussion of the community organization team, and then do whatever is necessary to help the group carry out its plan during the role play.

   - The person assigned as the community organization spokesperson during the role-play should not reassign the position to anyone else. Mr/s. Kreighton need not be the spokesperson, one tactic might be to sit silently

and let staff handle it, or Kreighton could be the only
spokesperson.

- If small groups can't agree on a specific point, you
  should quickly take a vote and move on.

> If people want to make decisions by consensus and it is
> taking too long, tell them: "Just pretend that you have a
> babysitter at home and you have to leave for work at
> 7:30 in the morning like the people in role-play would."

- The training room is going to be the company office
  and it can be arranged any way the company team
  wishes.

- Tell each team that they have 45 minutes to prepare
  and that they should plan for a "meeting" (the role
  play) that lasts no longer than fifteen minutes.

- Use the preparation time to answer the questions on the
  Additional Information Sheet.

> Occasionally one of the teams just ignores the questions and jumps right into discussing who will say what to whom. Direct people back to the questions.

- Each team should take poster paper and markers for planning and to make signs or other props.

Be sure to do all of the above before the two teams go to their respective rooms. Send the organization team to another room. Give the worksheets to the heads of each team. Periodically check to see that the teams are on track but don't be too directive.

During the Preparation

- The trainers should circulate between the rooms and listen to each team. Take notes in the Trainer Workbook. Spend enough time to pick up the drift of the conversation and look at whatever notes the groups write on poster paper. You are listening for the following:

  - Group process problems where a word from you is needed to get the group to move along. The groups should both be answering questions on their worksheets and sometimes need prompting to keep moving. If they reach an impasse, suggest that they vote and assure them that afterward there will be a

chance to discuss the merits of any ideas that the group did not adopt.

o Are they actually answering the questions? Are they addressing strategy and power? Some groups drift off the topic and they need to be brought back. Ask them to pay attention to the questions on the worksheet, and do not offer more direction, as it would be distracting and defeat the purpose of the role-play.

o Don't coach either team other than with questions related to the process or logistics of the role-play. The exception is if you hear the company team planning to give in, in which case discuss with them what a real company would do and why. Ask if they have ever heard of a real company giving in under these circumstances. Dissuade them from giving in.

o If you give additional information to either team, you must give it to the other.

o Discourage teams from sending "messengers" back and forth to create a dialogue during the planning (groups often want to establish some type of pre-existing contract or formal arrangement). Explain that they can make up their own details (so long as they are realistic and non-contradictory), that there is limited time for planning and that waiting for a reply would waste valuable time, as well as divert attention

from overall themes of power and strategy to details that will not make or break the outcome of the role-play.

- o Get a good idea of the tactics that the community team will use and the arguments they will make. Use this information in gauging if and when to stop the role play. Stop it after 15 minutes if it isn't going anywhere and you know that neither team has any more tactics to try. The idea is to avoid the problem of stopping the role play and then having one team say, "If you had given us another five minutes, we would have won."

- o Listen for good ideas that were rejected and that you want to call attention to in the debriefing. Look particularly for good ideas coming from quiet people who are being shut down by the more aggressive.

6. **Start the role-play** and allow it to run its course. The role play should not go longer than about fifteen minutes, but be a little flexible. If after 15 minutes it isn't going anywhere, consider the best way to stop. It is better if it ends on its own. To stop the role play, pass a note to Kreighton, telling them that they have another meeting that is beginning right now and they have to leave immediately. This allows it to wind down naturally and gives the community team a chance to make one last effort.

IV. Notes On Debriefing

It is assumed that the community team will lose. This demonstrates that when you have no power, you can't win, no matter how good your tactics or your arguments are. Often, the community team realizes that the real arena where they do have power is in the City Council, and they use this event to discredit the company before the Council meeting. This is excellent. Be sure to point out that the community team's power is over the Council not the company and that the Council does have legal power over the company.

DEBRIEFING - DO THIS:

1. **Tell everyone to get up and sit someplace else.** Make sure that people from both teams get mixed together, and company people get out from behind the table. This helps prevent them from carrying on the fight after the role-play is over. When it is due, give credit to the people

> **Debriefing Checklist:**
> **Here is the general flow of the debrief at-a-glance:**
> - What was each team's strategy? (Ask each team.)
> - How well did each team feel that it carried out the overall strategy? (Again, ask each team.)
> - Review the tactics? Did they support the strategy? How or how not?
> - What was the tone and style? Who controlled the meeting? How or why did it matter?
> - What was the community team's direct power over the company?
> - What were the self-interests of the two teams? Of the individuals with power?
> - What was the point of the meeting? How was it/could it have been useful?
> - Review forms of power.

that you selected to fill roles for being put on the spot.

2.   **Ask each team, in turn, to say what its strategy was.** (There will be a tendency to say that what ever happened was the strategy all along. Use the information you picked up from sitting in on the planning groups as a reality check.)

- Often, when asked what the strategy was, people will describe what they did. Tell them that you saw what they did, the question is: what was their original plan before they came into the room?

- What you are looking for, and will comment on, is whether the community group had a plan to make the company give them something, and thought they had the power to back up their demand. The best case is that the community group figured out that the real arena for this fight is the City Council and they use the meeting to make the company appear unreasonable, secretive, more interested in "trade secrets" than safety, etc.

- The company team should figure out that it doesn't have to give anyone anything. What it can get from the meeting is to show publicly that the community group doesn't care about jobs, and hope to influence the council vote with that information. It can also sidetrack the community into some kind of study group or collaborative committee that takes the urgency out of the Right To Know Bill. It can try

to divide the community with promises to clean up in exchange for dropping the bill. It can simply act wronged and innocent. Whatever it planned to do should be noted by the instructor and explained clearly to the group.

3. **Ask each team how well it felt it carried out the strategy?** This will usually be a problem area. Groups often get so caught up in things like who controls the meeting, where people should be made to sit, who speaks and who doesn't etc., that they lose whatever plan they came in with.

    -   Consider probing a bit when you ask the community team how it felt it did. Usually, if people are being honest, you will get answers like "We weren't together enough." "We didn't work together." "We got in each other's way." "We were disjointed." The company team, in contrast, usually feels pretty good about itself. Point out that powerless people usually feel badly about themselves, and feel that they did something wrong, when the real problem was that they had no power.

4. **Offer your comments on how well the performance reflected the planned strategy.**

    -   Discuss particularly good things that individuals did (both in the role-play and in the planning meetings).

    -   Mention effective tactics and those that didn't work.

    -   Note anything that the organizer did or should have done.

- If either group had planned to use the meeting to influence public opinion, ask how the public would know what happened. This is an opportunity to comment on the role of the media, and how it can't be counted on as a consistent ally. The community team may bring a media person in with them. If in the discussion, they refer to "our press person", point out that the media is never "ours" regardless of who called them first, and that they will end whatever report they give with a Kreighton interview.

5. **Ask what direct power the community had over the company.**

    Encourage people to discuss what kinds of power they think the community had. They will say things like, the power of numbers, the power to give the company a bad image, consumer power, community power, etc. The right answer is none. The City Council has power, regulatory agencies have power, the courts might have power, but the community doesn't. The community can influence those bodies, but that is not direct power over the company.

    - Explain that a company that doesn't manufacture a frequently purchased consumer product, and doesn't have a local market, doesn't care about any of these things. Ask who in the class bought turpentine in the last year, and how much?

    - You can mention that one way to tell if a company cares

about its image or about consumer power is that it advertises in the media that your constituency sees. Companies that advertise are usually makers of consumer products or are under government regulation. Companies that make raw materials and deal mainly with other companies seldom advertise in the mass media; they advertise in trade journals.

6. **Ask what power the company had.**

Campaign contributions to politicians, control of the press, the claim of bringing jobs and development to the area, money to fight in court, etc.

7. **Ask to what extent the style of the community organization and the control over the meeting mattered.**

Was the outcome changed because they were soft, or militant, passive or aggressive, timid or outspoken, they stood or they sat, shouted or spoke softly, etc.

- Point out that these things are tactics within the context of an overall plan. They make little difference in themselves. They affect the internal morale of the community team. They can help to control the floor so that the strategy can be played out, but to the company it makes little difference what the group did. (Unless the company strategy was to portray the community people as irrational.)

8. **Ask to what extent it mattered to the company that the**

community group was right legally and morally?

9.   **Point out potentially divisive issues.**

If the community group tried to get an agreement that the company would clean up the area, ask what impact this would have on the council vote. It could make the bill lose because the company would appear to be solving the problem and council members would think that once cleaned up, the issue would go away.

- Say that in this type of situation, the people nearest the dumpsite are always more interested in clean-up and less interested in preventive measures. Groups from further away are more interested in prevention, so there is a potential split in the coalition. There is also a potential split over who pays for the clean-up, the city or the company. In general, the passing legislation is the most unifying issue.

- Be prepared to respond to people who say, "You set us up."

What they mean is that you send them into a situation where they couldn't win. Ask, if this were a real life situation, would you go to the meeting? The answer is yes, because:

  o You would go to try to use the meeting to influence the Council.

  o You would go to give your members the experience of meeting with the company. This is exciting and helps to build the organization.

- You would go because Council members will ask you if you have tried to work out something with the company and you want to be able to say yes.

- You would go to try to pick up information about the company and its officers that you can use later.

- You would want to collect soundbites from the company, get them to act irrationally, lie, or show disregard for the community and workers, or to blame other companies or agencies.

- You would go because you could get some good press out of it.

There are a lot of good reasons for the meeting if you know how to use the opportunity. Getting a major concession from the company just doesn't happen to be one of them.

11. End with comments on the quality of the strategy plan and then on tactics and implementation.
Keep them separate. Participants should understand that they may be good at one and need work on the other. (Or on both.) Your final remarks should be on the two or three things that you thought were done best by each team.

12. Give the other trainer an opportunity to add comments. Avoid repetition. End with good points.

Overall – the point of the role-play is that:

- Power isn't abstract! It is specific and measurable in every situation. Understanding power is a math or science, when it comes down to measuring power and calculating how much you need to win.

- Power also does not come from being morally right – having the most airtight argument does not mean you have any power.

- You can't know what you expect realistically or what you want until you have analyzed and measured your power.

Draw a chart on the board showing the main forms of citizen power as follows:

FORMS OF POWER

CITIZEN GROUPS

TYPE OF POWER	WHAT MATTERS
Electoral/Legislative	Votes and money.
Consumer	Ability to cut profits.
	Clearly identified brands.
Legal - Regulatory	Clear laws and regulations.
	Free legal help.
Strikes - Disruptive	Ability to cut profits.
	Keep institution from Functioning.

Explain quickly each form of power and what matters when using it. Ask them to always consider whether or not your specific target cares about your specific form of power and why. Your power equals your strength plus your target's weakness. Before any other strategizing, you must assess your power to find out how you need to alter the relations of power in order to win. Your strategy is the solution to altering the relations of power. (We will alter the relations of power by (our strategy).) In

the back of your head, consider your target's strategy.

The tone of your tactics in your strategy can be very important or not very important. Consider that they can be openly hostile and confrontational, coercive, threatening, or very complementary and helpful to your target. Always remember, though, that you are trying to achieve the three principles of direct action organizing, NOT punish the target. The point of your power is pose a threat or to demonstrate your power ONLY until your goals are met. There are some threats that, once carried out, cannot be removed and might actually hurt your chances of winning your goals.

10. **Draw the student power chart as follows:** Mention that at public schools, student power more closely resembles the citizen power chart.

FORMS OF POWER
STUDENT GROUPS

PRIVATE SCHOOLS	PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Hurt enrollment	Same as private plus:
Hurt fundraising	Votes
Legal action against school	Legislative/Budget power
Embarrass powerful trustee or donor	Impact on Governor
Interfere with career of top administrators.	
Consumer power on campus	

13. Explain the chart.

For students at private schools to exercise real power it is necessary to be forceful in ways that the issue itself may not warrant. Organizers must keep a sense of proportion. In addition, very few students view their own school as the enemy and want to damage it. This is particularly true at schools that have a unified sense of identify, such as HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities), tribal colleges and other schools identified with a particular ethnic group or religion. For these reasons it is often better to try to find the institution's self-interest in doing what we want it to do.

- Interfering with the careers of administrators entails making them look incompetent or out of control of the situation. Administrators will make cost limited concessions just to avoid problems. It is here that nuisance tactics have their value.

- Public schools are much more political in every sense, and are subject to all the pressures that students as citizens and voters can bring. But, they are also subject to the pressure that other citizens can bring who don't like what the students are doing. The line between what is "on campus" and what is "off campus" is often blurred.

POWER role play debrief notes:

Make sure everyone switches eats.

1) ask each team to share strategy. What was their original plan? What happened?

2) what kind of power did you have?
   Boycott? No – how many people buy turpentine?

Explain the exercise is a way to show they have NO power.
Company control the situation
Never know what might happen during a meeting – prepare for different scenarios
Need for plan, use limited resources more wisely
Role of organizer

Who was target? (for laws, need to be City Council)
Was the action directed at the right person?

Were you able to execute your entire plan?

2) how do you feel about what happened?
3) review tactics- what was good? What needed improvement?
What about media?
4) did it matter how organized the group was? Was it the right space for an action?
5) even though morally right, this situation the power analysis was not right
6) point out good things that were done
7) Connect to agenda for weekend – why need to assess situations

    Review types of power
    Review DAO principles