RE: Reflections and Explorations

Essays on Politics, Public Policy, and Governance

Edited by
Max Stephenson Jr. and Lyusyena Kirakosyan

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Virginia Tech Institute
for Policy and Governance
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For Jessica
-MOS Jr.

For Mauricio
-L.K.

A note from the cover artist

I was delighted when this volume's editors approached me and asked me to create art for this book's cover. After thinking about my own contributions to the collection, reading many of the other chapters in the text, and reflecting on the mission of the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance, the theme that most struck me, and that I therefore chose to highlight in the painting I produced, was social, cultural and political resilience.

To portray this, I chose a desert oasis, which to me symbolizes resilience in an environment of otherwise dry, crumbling earth where it is challenging for life to thrive and human progress to occur. This small oasis symbolizes hope, rest, fertility, and a place for reflection. The subject, or the reader, collaborator, or anyone who opens this book, may see their reflection in the small oasis pond. But that portrait appears as a desert sunflower with human characteristics. Sunflowers track the sun, following its position as it moves through the sky. Similarly, I believe that the articles collected here represent an attempt by these contributors to move toward the light, to follow and find truth, and to remain loyal to it. That is, I sought to suggest that knowledge constitutes a light in our world that may be used to illuminate and overcome darkness.

As with all of my work, these observations represent only one possible reflection and exploration of its meaning. I encourage you to explore and consider the implications of this art for yourself, in light of the volume's essays. As an artist, I am ever hopeful that the reflection and perceptions evoked by my efforts will continue to change and evolve, becoming deeper and richer with time.

Jacquelyn Harder

Blacksburg, VA

July 27, 2015

Acknowledgements

No book comes to fruition without the support and encouragement of many. We are indebted first to each other. Max Stephenson is grateful for Lyusyena Kirakosyan's ever thoughtful and disciplined attention to all aspects of this volume. She has kept this project on course from its start. In her turn, Lyusyena Kirakosyan is grateful to Max Stephenson for sharing this opportunity to learn and grow and for his guidance and support during the months that the project evolved.

We both wish to thank the many students who have given generously of their time and talents to contribute to this series. All of those represented in this collection volunteered to write for RE: Reflections and Explorations and it exists only as a consequence of their ongoing involvement. Very importantly, we were fortunate to enjoy daily assistance from Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance staff members Regina Naff, Wanda Mills, Lauren Mills, and Business Manager Nancy White. They aided us in countless ways, large and small, and we are much in their debt. We are both also thankful for the strong support of many students and colleagues who have expressed enthusiastic interest in this project. As always, while we are grateful to all of these named, we alone are responsible for this volume.

MOS and LK

Blacksburg, VA

July 1, 2015

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Introduction to the Series

Musing on RE: Reflections and Explorations: The Passionate Quest for Discovery Also Demands Responsibility

RE: Reflections and Explorations, launched in January 2013, began with a Ph.D. candidate suggesting to me that the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG) develop a platform that would allow interested graduate students to share essays and commentaries about their evolving research, interests and experiences concerning relevant topics. The Institute is a research center within Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs charged with addressing its subject foci broadly at all scales of analysis and, as appropriate, across all of the university and its major missions. As envisaged, students' contributing to the proposed publication series could explore a wide range of concerns within the purview of VTIPG's mission, but their work typically would be connected to enduring democratic challenges. Led by Lyusyena Kirakosyan, who originally suggested the enterprise and co-edited this volume, a group of graduate students developed a name, website and general guidelines for the new effort.

As writing of virtually any sort is at once a demanding, exhaustive and exhilarating enterprise, one of my goals for Reflections at its inception was that its participants could gain a glimpse of the ardor, discipline and labor it takes to produce and polish writing for public consumption, and begin to develop their own voices. As editor, I have challenged those who have written for the series to produce clear, concise prose in their own mode of expression. When successful, this process of editorial give-and-take can result in important opportunities for intellectual growth and learning. In a way, this to-and-fro between editor and authors can be viewed as an important mentoring opportunity as students work to realize or refine their own authorial identities. As such, this process surely embodies the educational mission of the Institute and university.

Since the series' introduction, participating students have written something close to 70 commentaries on a dizzying array of fascinating and relevant topics. Some have concerned their personal struggles with discrimination and the endemic challenge of othering among human beings

and their implications for the character and possibility of community. Other pieces have addressed policy issues in this nation and globally in a number of domains, while still other articles have treated more conceptual or philosophical concerns related to the fundamental requisites of self-governance. Taken together, the students' efforts thus far have treated a range of important subjects with which they were grappling as they moved forward in their graduate programs and professional careers.

That fact reflects the ongoing realization of a central founding aspiration of this initiative, that students would take ownership of it and use it to share their evolving views and research on pertinent matters. To date they have surely done so, and we sample only the first fruits—the 2013-2014 year—of their work here. To the extent that the series reflects student curiosity and zeal for sharing their discoveries, it may be said to have grown naturally from and reflect the research mission of the Institute and the university. Perhaps more deeply, it also suggests the most basic rationale for creating and sustaining higher education institutions in free societies: to open possibilities for vigorous minds to quest for deeper understanding of phenomena that engage them, irrespective of their domain or expected utilitarian portent.

I had also anticipated as we launched the series that the essays within it could be framed so as to be accessible. I entertained this goal on the view that it would encourage our authors to write thoughtfully for as diverse an audience as they could muster. My aspiration was that writing for individuals who did not share the students' advanced knowledge or specialized vocabulary would be edifying while simultaneously requiring that the authors offer their arguments cleanly and clearly, and thereby sharpen their own reflection.

As they did so, I reasoned that these students could play the role of public intellectuals, and in so doing engage and perhaps inspire a share of those beyond the university to new insights and/or fresh action. Such critical efforts likewise also could carry the aims and fruits of VTIPG as an enterprise to a broader audience. My sense is that Reflections has served this role well so far and has touched many who would not otherwise be involved with these students, their studies or subjects, or the Institute.

Many forces in today's society press our nation's best and brightest individuals pursuing graduate study to concern themselves entirely or primarily with the instrumental and apparently vocationally relevant. Paradoxically, many scholars indirectly echo this narrowing of aspiration by emphasizing how the students with whom they work can (or perhaps should) succeed in a very restricted vein

of academic endeavor. While hardly disavowing the disciplinary homes of those contributing to its pages, I have sought to use my role as series editor of Reflections to broaden and deepen participants' considerations in their chosen domains. My own view is that such a stance accords with a classical view of the power of inquiry and education to open minds and to chart new intellectual terrain. As Thomas Jefferson observed concerning the role of education, including higher education, in society, "look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource most to be relied on for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue and advancing the happiness of man" (Jefferson, 1822).

Further to Jefferson's perception, it seems reasonable to contend that effective graduate study at a great university should inspire in its students a voracious desire to pursue knowledge and an equal appetite to share that learning with others, in their chosen fields of study and beyond. My fond wish is that Reflections embodies and celebrates each of these attributes by encouraging a lively interdisciplinary conversation concerning important and enduring policy and governance issues and by providing graduate students studying in germane areas of interest a venue in which to share their perspectives and to do so in a judicious, accessible and closely reasoned way. And students have, in fact, engaged one another via their writing for the series and also prompted interactions with a diverse group of readers. I see this as an example of precisely the sort of civil intellectual exchange that the academy should engender concerning vital social concerns.

When the Institute published the 25th essay in the Reflections series, I noted the effort "… neatly embodies the truism that membership in the academy has ever been a privilege that comes laden simultaneously with responsibility" (Stephenson Jr., 2013). What I sought to convey in that phrase was the multi-faceted character of this endeavor. Higher education undoubtedly provides those so engaged, including the professoriate, with the immense, indeed immeasurable, privilege of daily pursuing what has often been called "the life of the mind." In principle, at least, if not always in practice, universities allow faculty and graduate students alike to follow their interests in a virtually unfettered way, but that freedom comes freighted with the responsibility to share the bounty of that exploration with other audiences both within and beyond their institution's walls. My sense is that Reflections can and has served for some as a way to quicken their interest in ideas, whether their own or those of others, and has helped encourage in each a growing passion to share their critical insights with a wider audience. In this sense, this series embodies the engagement aspiration implicit in all lives of hope and discovery, and certainly of the modern public land grant university, of which Virginia Tech is surely a leading exemplar.

I am also struck as I write that Reflections can be seen as an organic metaphor of the sometimes messy, sometimes fretful and sometimes uneasy process of the gestation of ideas at universities. In truth, ideas know no boundaries of department or discipline and they recognize no sovereign as their lone owners or claimants. Rather, they are the product of fertile minds in conversation encouraged to consider possibilities freely and openly. In this sense, this series revels in and represents the catholicity of perspective characteristic of the university of which it is a small part. To the extent it has played this role, it mirrors and encourages the essence of free inquiry in a modest but notable way.

I want to thank each of our contributors once more for their ongoing thoughtful engagement, the heart and soul of this enterprise. It could not exist without their imagination, involvement and hard work. It has been a special personal privilege for me to have interacted with each of the authors represented in these pages as they drafted and honed their efforts.

RE: Reflections and Explorations Series editor
MOS
Blacksburg, Virginia
July 1, 2015

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Editors' Preface

We have organized the essays that follow in this volume into nine themes or broad topical foci based on the subjects our RE: Reflections and Explorations authors selected for their efforts during 2013-2014. A brief overview of our contributors' organizing issues follows.

- Part 1 contains six essays that address the role(s) of the academy in society.
- Part 2 offers six essays that address questions central to the relationships among art, culture and politics.
- Part 3's five essays treat issues linked to community building.
- Part 4 includes five essays that explore the challenges of public leadership at multiple scales and in a variety of contexts.
- Part 5's eight essays examine a variety of concerns central to the characteristics and fundaments of democratic citizenship and ethics.
- Part 6 consists of six essays that explore different dimensions of international politics.
- Part 7 of the volume comprises seven essays that directly or indirectly illuminate alternate facets of local and international development dynamics.
- Part 8 includes six essays that together analyze several manifestations or implications of neoliberalism, the current dominant public imaginary or frame in American and indeed, Western, politics
- Part 9's seven essays each afford readers alternate lenses into the dynamics and vicissitudes of change processes, as conceptualized at alternate analytical levels.

The 56 essays together address a variety of concerns central to democratic politics and self-governance. The topics are as varied as our contributor's substantive interests and perspectives, and that diversity yields a complex array of analytical insights. We hope you enjoy reading this richly textured collection as much as we have enjoyed assembling it.

MOS and LK
Blacksburg, Virginia
July 1, 2015

RE: Reflections and Explorations

Part 1: Academia and Society

This section offers essays that discuss a variety of issues in higher education, from its role and aims to its costs and relationships with the broader society of which it is a part. Colleges and universities have confronted unprecedented challenges of scope, scale, and pace of social change in recent years in nations around the globe. The central thread running through these reflections is the need for these institutions not only to address these formidable forces, but also to incorporate deeper intellectual, cultural, moral, and spiritual dimensions, thereby continuing to serve their historic roles as instigators and purveyors of social change and individual and social growth.

Eric Hodges examines the question of veterans' transition to civilian life and the capacities such individuals offer their home communities. Hodges calls on universities to create both educational and research initiatives that would not only deepen collective understanding of how to meet veterans' overall needs effectively, but also assist their reintegration into academic and professional life. Sabith Khan reflects on former Yale University President A. Bartlett Giamatti's arguments concerning the nature and purposes of higher education. In the spirit of Giamatti's original essay, Khan contends that universities need to create conditions for the intellectual and emotional growth of their students, thereby helping refine their interests and capabilities both deeply and broadly. As a young scholar, Sofia Rukhin shares her personal quest to locate her own interest and passion in the field of sociology. A class assignment urged Rukhin to interview her professors and encouraged her to begin to develop a vision of sociological "beauty" closely linked with citizen and academic activism.

Jerald Walz analyzes the issue of the accelerating price of higher education in the United States by discussing possible causes and solutions to the student debt/higher education cost dilemma. Walz warns that delaying financing reforms risks reducing student access to college or university and the quality of institutions available, or both. Cory Brunson draws on recent survey results that show a gap between popular and expert views on scientific matters, such as, for example, climate change, and suggests that policymakers must ensure opportunities for citizens to obtain science literacy, critical thinking, and cultural cognition capacities if this gap is to be closed. Sarah Lyon-Hill shares her personal response to experiences, situations, and events in the life of a doctoral student, weaving together thoughts from prose, poetry, and television to portray her ongoing search for a sense of purpose and place in the academic community.

Reflections on Veterans Readjustment, Higher Education, and Community Service

Eric Hodges

(Originally published April 18, 2013)

According to a recent National Public Radio report, American colleges have experienced a 400% increase in the number of student veterans on campus since passage of the post-9-11 GI Bill in 2008 (Abramson, 2012). That sort of influx is not new in the United States as a similar bill passed in 1944 to assist World War II (WWII) veterans as they returned from their service prompted millions to turn to higher education as the next stage in their lives. WWII America realized the contribution that veterans could make to society and the original GI Bill provided returning armed services personnel educational benefits that covered college tuition. That support arguably helped to fuel our society's prosperity for the next 50 years. But today, that educational investment – paying tuition– as vital as it is, is not enough.

Today's educators must also invest time and money to build a body of research to understand how to meet veterans' overall needs effectively, both in and out of the classroom. If we do that, both our country's veterans and society will be stronger. In a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Michael Dakduk, executive director of the Student Veterans of America, observed, "a lack of reliable data on military and veteran students is problematic" (Dakduk, 2013). Such information could assist many veterans materially as they return to civilian society.

Indeed, my personal experience suggests Dakduk was right. My transition from the Marine Corps to the University of Virginia was the biggest culture shock of my life. When I took my place among that university's incoming first-year students, the strong sense of camaraderie, responsibility, and purpose I had experienced in the Marine Corps was replaced by feelings of isolation, confusion, and uncertainty. Although I was only 22-years-old when I departed the service, my previous position had been command of a Marine detachment charged with the security of the American Embassy in Oslo, Norway. I provided weekly security briefings to the U.S. ambassador and his team. Perhaps more important, I was an integral part of a close-knit group with a clear mission and strong sense of purpose. That changed when I became a student. I was no longer a part of a unit with a single goal, and while I did have an aim, it did not feel as immediate or urgent as my missions in the Marines during that service. It took me a year to make the transition to full-time student. Meanwhile, I became used to being known in class as "the guy who could kill you with his pinky finger."

I was lucky. Although I had been deployed to a forward operating area, I was never in combat.

The majority of my brothers-and-sisters-in-arms who are currently returning home have experienced combat. This group of veterans is larger than the population of Hawaii. The transitional problems I experienced were significant, but largely cultural. But tens of thousands of veterans are coming home following experiences in combat, which add immeasurably to the stresses of reentering civilian society, whether on campuses or in communities. Their collective needs as they return should be an issue of national concern.

> "What has been lacking is an understanding of ex-soldiers' civic lives and the role that community organizations can play in their shift from military to civilian life. Veterans acquire values and skills while serving in the military that arguably are valuable in the workplace and in communities."
> *–Eric Hodges*

I am currently a Ph.D. candidate at Virginia Tech in its School of Public and International Affairs. My experience and those of fellow veterans I know led me to undertake my doctoral research on the question of whether and to what extent military training can prepare veterans to serve in their communities. My sense as I begin my effort is that veterans possess many capacities that may benefit their hometowns. Nonetheless, we need to know more about what those capabilities are, how they arise, and how they can positively assist both veterans and their hometown populations.

This work has already begun and I hope to contribute to it. In 2009, Mary Yonkman and John Bridgeland published a report that was the first nationally representative survey of the United States Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) All Volunteer Force (AVF) veterans and aimed to share their perspectives on their civic lives as they transitioned from battlefields abroad to communities at home.

Existing research has appropriately focused on the importance of healthcare, employment, and family support in aiding veterans' transitions to civilian life. However, only 13% of OIF/OEF veterans responding to the AVF survey strongly agreed that their shift home was going well. Meanwhile, 9 of 10 veterans completing the national survey strongly agreed or agreed that Americans could learn something from the example of their military service.

AVF survey respondents identified many skills they believed they possessed that would be valuable to their communities. Sixty-four percent of responding OIF/OEF veterans cited their management and supervision skills; 61% referenced their ability to lead diverse groups of people; 63% cited their team-building proficiencies; 57% noted their operational capacities; and 40% pointed to their logistics capabilities. According to Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009),

> Nonprofits across the country need these very skills to fulfill and expand the basic services they provide every day. Whether they are operating food kitchens in a large urban area; helping at-risk youth clean up a polluted river that runs through their neighborhood; leading a home-build in a community struck by natural disaster; or driving a wounded veteran to a doctor's appointment; skilled volunteers are desperately needed to both coordinate and execute these essential services. (p. 26)

Virginia Tech is one of six nationally recognized Senior Military Colleges and has an outstanding Corps of Cadets. With its proud tradition, Virginia Tech has committed to help veterans' reintegration into academic and professional life at the university by providing support networks and a central resource for information. Efforts like Virginia Tech's initiative are critical to the success of returning military personnel transitioning to civilian life. Higher education is vital to the futures of many of the nation's post-September 2001 veterans. The nation must recognize the sacrifice of its own via effective reintegration programs. I hope in my own research to explore new ways in which veterans can give back to their country following their return home.

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The Modern University as a Free and Ordered Space

Sabith Khan

(Originally published May 17, 2013)

As heated debate about the appropriate role and aims of the university continues today, both within the academy and in the political sphere, former Yale University president A. Bartlett Giamatti's book of essays represents an eloquent call to consider once more the role of a liberal education in facilitating the development of critical thinking and communication capabilities and in assuring a civil citizenry. *A Free and Ordered Space* is a collection of essays written by Giamatti (1938-1989), while serving as Yale's President in the late 1970s and early 1980s concerning the nature and purposes of the American university. These essays, originating as most did, as formal opportunities at which the Yale President (1978-1986) spoke during the course of the academic year, provided an opportunity for Giamatti to reflect on the nature and purposes of higher education, and especially of liberal education and learning in an increasingly marketized and careerist-oriented society.

In the various addresses and speeches anthologized there, Giamatti outlined his vision of the challenges confronting the American university as an institution and provided a clear and cogent set of arguments on behalf of the continued vitality and indispensability of "liberal education," which, he argued, represented an education for freedom, a freedom of the mind to make itself new. Given this orientation, Giamatti called for renewed appreciation of the university's long-time role in cultivating the intellectual reach, imagination, and equanimity of its students. The essays also critiqued the long-term trend toward the corporatization of the university, calling such a move a usurpation of the rightful role and centrality of the professoriate to its most profound mission of ensuring individual and social inquiry and learning.

And perhaps ahead of his time, Giamatti (1988) called for the development of interdisciplinary curricula to prepare students to address more effectively the nation's increasingly complex challenges:

> In the face of all these forces, it will be more important than ever that Yale affirm its character as a place that fosters the fluidity of passage of ideas, people and programs, that continues to encourage programs, joint degrees, joint appointments – all the forms of interconnectedness that resist fragmentation into academic baronies or bunkers that emphasize as a conscious statement of this University's peculiar character, its interdependent nature. (p. 283)

By dubbing the university a "free and ordered space," Giamatti sought to describe these special institutions as intellectual spaces where learning occurs for its own sake and to consider them places, that, "for those who live there and for the country at large [represent] a source and symbol of what

we can be and can do at our best" (p.287). Giamatti saw the university as a place in which students could grow intellectually and emotionally as deeply as their capacities, proclivity, and discipline might take them. That space does not exist to embrace this or that ideology or faddish claim of the moment, but to allow and encourage students to develop and refine their interests and capabilities both deeply and broadly. As he put it in an address to his colleagues at Yale University,

> I urge you to affirm the connection [among individuals, learning and a vital and democratic social order] and not to sway to the music of fragmentation. I urge us never to be complacent about what can be achieved for others, never to be smug in our own stations or status, never to be mired in a fictional past that never really existed or welded to some grand, overarching abstraction that never touches human beings much as it may claim to save humanity. (p.280)

"Giamatti's vision for the American institutions of higher education was one that allowed students to develop a disciplined awareness of the power and responsibility of intellectual freedom and possibility."
–Sabith Khan

Full engagement with the possibilities offered by the free and ordered space of the university both humbles those so privileged and reminds them of their common bonds with all of humanity:

> Be mindful of what we share and must share, not the least of which is that each of our hopes for a full and decent life depends upon others hoping the same and all of us sustaining each other's hopes. (p.281)

Giamatti's vision for Yale and for other American institutions of higher education was one that allowed students to develop a disciplined awareness of the power and responsibility of intellectual freedom and possibility and of its persisting capacity to transform the lives of those who are privileged to partake of it.

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Exploring the Sociological Agenda, or What Do I Want to Do in Sociology?

Sofia Rukhin

(Originally published December 12, 2013)

Before coming to Virginia Tech in August 2013, I earned my bachelor's degree in Sociology at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow. I would not say that I fell in love with this discipline immediately as some of my colleagues did, but rather my interest developed gradually during my years as an undergraduate. The Higher School program helped me develop a variety of tools to apply in the field that made me feel confident as a future professional. However, my first semester at Virginia Tech prompted me to reconsider my relationship with sociology and challenged my view on my anticipated career.

I have had an opportunity this fall to communicate more closely with Virginia Tech's Department of Sociology faculty members about their research, the paradigms within which they work, and to explore a number of additional intellectual issues. From my very first encounters with several of the program's professors, I realized that sometimes we were not "on the same page." My biggest concern was that the largest share of my teachers was interested in research that was, in my view, quite far away from solving urgent social problems. By "urgent social problems," I imply a range of issues involving human suffering including poverty, hunger, war, and racism, among other challenges. My personal vision of sociology had always been bound closely to a (perhaps, naïve) desire to make the world better. I adopted this social justice outlook as an undergraduate, but every time I raised the question of the relevance of research to social problems in class, the answer was neither satisfying nor seemingly honest. The response I typically received was that the academic sociology enterprise was not intended to resolve challenges, but to increase the body of knowledge concerning society and social dynamics.

The result of this juxtaposition of my perspective and my perceptions of the faculty in my new department found me initially struggling to discern any meaningful incentives to build a career in this world of sociological academia, which, in my view, too often lacked a sense of reality. However, it would have been too easy just to give up without trying to discover the "essence" of this field and to ascertain whether I could locate my interests within its bounds. By chance, as part of a class assignment, I interviewed two faculty members of my choice concerning their research interests; their view on sociology as a discipline and what the implications of their perspectives might be for graduate students seeking to build a career in the field. I was very fortunate to interview Professors

Nick Copeland and Paulo Polanah from the Department, who, as it turned out, hold broadly similar, but still distinct perspectives on their discipline. Their views have assisted me deeply as I have sought to locate my own interest and passion in the field.

In exploring Professor's Copeland's website prior to interviewing him, I discovered that his research interests lay in the sphere of "political imaginaries," "governance," "indigenous politics," and "Guatemala."[1] During my interview with him he observed that his research is also focused on the analysis of "governments," "violence," "coercion," and "gender inequality" as well as "injustice." His academic passion for these topics is clearly reflected in the studies he has conducted in Guatemala since 2004: "My research deals with indigenous politics in Guatemala, ethnographically and historically, since the 1940s."[2] When I asked Dr. Copeland about his motivation for the work he does he responded, "I am advocating for social change," which struck me as a very personal position.[3] His embrace of this view is clearly reflected in the research he conducts, in the classes he teaches, and in the public service he provides.

> "One's impact as a scholar may not occur in the short-term, but may nonetheless bring dramatic changes in the long run due to its power to prompt individuals in society to think differently."
> *–Sofia Rukhin*

In his interview with me he mentioned specifically that the research he conducted with Mayan women "raised their profile within the nongovernmental organization they were working with."[4] His personal and obviously emotional involvement in the inquiries he has undertaken led me to conclude that he did not see himself as an impartial academic anthropologist. Moreover, he told me that he does not believe in scientific objectivism, but rather, research as a discourse that has potential to touch people's lives. Dr. Copeland's answer to my question concerning "what it means to be an academic sociologist" struck me as quite close to my own perspective as a young scholar. His aims for his work extend beyond "developing the body of knowledge," to creating discernible impacts in the societies in which he undertakes his work. Dr. Copeland's version of scholarly activism seems to me direct and to the point. Indeed, I find it irresistibly appealing. After my conversation with him, I realized that I was not alone in my desire to have my research have an impact and not simply augment existing knowledge.

I asked Dr. Polanah about his attitude toward sociologists, who, in my view, too often "lack a sense of reality." Dr. Polanah's reply to this query sounded simple, but was in fact very complex. He contended that increasing the body of knowledge may also have a dramatic impact on the world's capacity to address its most important social problems. His attempts to provoke his audiences into reconsidering the "iron cage" of established perceptions through which they view the world are a specific version of scholarly activism. His stance does not seem to represent a direct call for action, but instead an appeal for an alternative to oppressive epistemologies and intellectual dogma. When scholarship employs critical thinking with the ultimate goal of improving established forms of social existence, Dr. Polanah argues it can result in new modes of social construction of meaning or as he put it, "Thought can organize reality."[5]

The work Professors Copeland and Polanah daily undertake is very meaningful to them because it is derived from their personal attitudes toward the issues each addresses. Both of them find themselves opposed to dictatorship, inequality, patriarchy, racism, and slavery, for example. However, Dr. Polanah seeks to reveal possible alternatives to the reproduction of existing social problems that might change the world in the long run. Both of these faculty members share a belief in seeking to encourage social change. Dr. Copeland's ideal is to influence not only the ontological views of those who read his work or experience his teaching, but to do so "effectively in real time as well."[6] My interview with Dr. Copeland found me adopting the view that being a scholar does not always imply working exclusively in the field of "silent" knowledge production, but instead, it may give one an opportunity to tackle certain "burning" problems with the knowledge produced from sustained inquiry. Meanwhile, speaking with Dr. Polanah debunked the myth I had embraced concerning the inapplicability of knowledge production to improving social life. One's impact as a scholar may not occur in the short-term, but may nonetheless bring dramatic changes in the long run due to its power to prompt individuals in society to think differently. To conclude, I would like to quote Dr. Copeland who argued in defense of sociologists engaged in knowledge production that "beautiful things sometimes should be created just because they are beautiful."[7] My emerging vision of sociological "beauty" is surely subtler than when I began my graduate study a few months ago, but it nonetheless remains inextricably linked with activism.

Notes.

1. Nick Copeland's profile on the Department of Sociology's Website. Retrieved from http://www.sociology.vt.edu/People/Faculty/NCopeland.html
2. Assignment 3 for SOC/PAPA 5214 by Sofia Rukhin (December 6, 2013).
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Financing Higher Education: The Cost and Debt Dilemmas—and Possible Solutions

Jerald H. Walz

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Lucia DiPoi, a first generation college student, owed more than $84,000 when she graduated from Tufts University in 2005—$19,000 in federal loans and $65,000 in private loans that charged interest rates higher than her government assistance (Clemmitt, 2008). With an interest rate exceeding 13% on some of her notes, she now pays more than $900 per month to service her college debt (Ibid). Similarly, after six years, four schools, two states, and many course credits, Erin Sandonato graduated from the University of West Florida in 2002 with more than $40,000 in debt (Price, 2003). These two examples illustrate the financial liability that some college students must repay after they graduate. Moreover, these are not isolated examples: fully 70% of seniors graduating in the Class of 2012 did so owing an average of $29,400 (Reed & Cochrane, 2013, p. 1). In 2010, for the first time ever, total student loan debt in the United States exceeded outstanding credit card debt (Essig, 2011; Lewin, 2011). It topped $1 trillion at the end of 2011 and swelled another 20% by May 2013 (Chopra, 2013). Statistics like these beg the questions, "Why?" and "What can be done about it?"

The short answer to "Why?" is that the cost of higher education has accelerated and that public colleges and universities have been shifting those increases to students (or their parents), requiring them to pay a higher percentage of the total cost of their degree. For public institutions particularly, this trend has developed as state support for higher education has plummeted in recent years. For example, in one study of cost, price, and government support at public institutions between 2003 and 2008 researchers found that costs increased modestly, but that price increases accelerated as subsidies declined markedly (Delta Project, 2010). In essence, "tuition increases were caused by cost shifting, rather than by cost increases, as the student share of costs increased relative to declines in state subsidies" (Ibid, p. 2).

When asked in 2000 to explain the causes of increasing higher education costs, state policymakers—including individuals in the executive and legislative branches and campus officials—offered responses that Mumpher (2001) has grouped into five composite narratives and these arguments remain salient today:

- **The states made prices rise**: Rising costs and tuition prices are a result of a long-term decline in state support for higher education. As they have responded to budget pressures lawmakers have elected not to increase higher education funding relative to other state budget priorities. So,

to fill the gap left unfilled by state appropriations, public university officials have responded by increasing tuition. This narrative paints campus leaders as victims of state budget decision-maker choices (pp. 45-47).

- **Medicaid and prisons made prices rise**: This perspective focuses blame for the rise in the price of public higher education on mandated expenditures such as Medicaid, corrections, or transportation that require state appropriations. For most state lawmakers, these items take precedence over higher education spending, which is often viewed as discretionary. Moreover, state appropriators realize universities have a mechanism with which to replace insufficient state funds: tuition (pp. 48-51).

> "Higher education in the United States is frequently admired for its accomplishments, especially in quality and accessibility. However, the current rising cost and debt problems attending higher education represent a threat to those accomplishments."
> *–Jerald Walz*

- **Quality programs cost money**: The changing spending patterns of public colleges and universities are the cause of rising costs. Public institution officials' increased spending patterns are a response to the changing needs of universities. Certain expenditures are required to maintain a quality educational environment. Adequate funding for competitive salaries, maintenance, recreation, and support services is key to providing high-quality programs that attract and retain students (pp. 51-53).

- **Those unaccountable public colleges made prices rise**: In this view, college officials alone are responsible for their institutions' increased costs. Colleges and universities are paying more to be all things to all people without making difficult decisions about spending priorities thereby increasing tuition. In this narrative the crux of the issue is a disagreement about priorities: university faculty prize research and national rankings while state officials emphasize undergraduate education and job training. This viewpoint shows lawmakers in a favorable light, suggesting they are working to ensure federal/state appropriations are spent productively (pp. 53-58).

- **It only looks like a problem**: Tuition inflation is not a real problem. Tuition increases should only be a concern if they impede students' ability to enter college. Most students and parents can afford to attend college and those who cannot, can obtain generous financial aid (pp. 58-60).

Unfortunately, while each of these narratives purports to explain the fact of rising college costs, they do little to address its causes: those offering these explanations talk past one another and do little to change the system of higher education finance fundamentally. Since that has been so, public policymakers at all levels have typically chosen the path of least resistance—raising tuition.

Among other possible solutions to this student debt/higher education cost dilemma, two unique possibilities exist. First, a proposal offered by the president of the University of Oregon (U of O) would ensure state funding to that public university by endowing it with $800 million in money borrowed by Oregon (Blumenstyk, 2010). Under this arrangement, U of O would promise to match that state contribution, dollar-for-dollar. The resulting $1.6 billion endowment would generate enough revenue to fund the university at average current levels (provided the assumptions of 9% investment return and 4% annual payout rate are achieved). At the conclusion of the state's 20-year bond obligation, no further general fund revenues would be appropriated for the university since the state's previous share of support would now arise from the university's endowment (Ibid). This proposal would further change the basic system, structure and character of public higher education.

Another possible solution involves providing an alternative to student loans through Income Share Agreements (ISAs). ISAs do not replace financial aid or state funding, but they do provide an alternative for students' financing their education. Through an ISA, investors fund students' education and in return those individuals promise to return a certain percentage of their future income to their backers during a fixed period to repay the obligation (Palacios, DeSorrento, & Kelly, 2014). Over time, the student may pay more or less than the amount financed, depending on his or her financial success. This arrangement provides students with financing but protects them from the risk if their educational investment fails to pay off as they envisaged. Investors, meanwhile, could pool and diversify their risk in this framework, thereby mitigating any potential losses. At the same time, ISAs allow financiers to offer better terms to students studying for careers that promise higher returns or for individuals studying in higher quality programs, thus guiding them to high-quality, high-yield programs. Likewise, ISAs incentivize investors to provide students with support such as advising, mentoring, or counseling designed to increase their success during and after their studies. And income agreements have the advantage of being open to any and all, regardless of their

economic background or family circumstances—and without government guarantees or subsidies (Ibid).

Higher education in the United States is frequently admired for its accomplishments, especially in quality and accessibility. However, the current rising cost and debt problems linked to attending colleges and universities represent a threat to those accomplishments. In order to survive and prosper, federal and state governments and higher education institutions will need to control costs better, increase revenues, and minimize student debt while continuing to promote access and quality. Delaying finance reform will increase future social trauma by more radically reducing accessibility or quality, or both. The time to act to save higher education financially is now.

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Mythology and Moorings: Science Surveys in Cultural Context

Cory Brunson

(Originally published April 8, 2014)

Lately I have felt inundated with survey results that highlight alarming disconnects between public beliefs about scientific matters and the consensus views of practicing scientists. Recently, for example, I learned that more than 40% of Americans believe astrology is at least "sort of" scientific (National Science Board, 2014), that a similar fraction of us place human origins within the past 10,000 years (Gallup, 2012), and that a quarter of us believe that the Sun orbits the Earth (National Science Board, 2014). More alarming still are the cases in which Americans' beliefs about topics such as climate change (Gallup, 2008a) and human origins (Gallup, 2008b) fall along an ideological split. My nation's culture wars are being waged not only through the heated but legitimate competition of values, but in grotesque debates over whether hard-won knowledge and expertise play any role at all. While this can be viewed as a casualty of increasing political polarization, it is equally important to invert the picture, and ask what our polarized responses to scientific propositions say about our attitudes toward science itself.

Political theorists have argued that an enlightened citizenry is essential to the functioning of democracy. Results like these suggest that our citizenry is woefully uninformed. Popular coverage focuses on the science comprehension of survey respondents, or on their trust in science generally, and infers from them a growing gap in science literacy. Popular reactions naturally then focus on improving quality of or access to, science education. Ongoing research, however, complicates our understanding both of the character of the problem and potential responses to it, including what it means to be "informed."

A first question is whether interpretations of relevant survey results are themselves robust. For example, during its 2012 Science and Engineering Indicators (SEI) survey, the National Science Foundation conducted a small experiment by adjusting the wording of its question concerning human origins: Half of the survey respondents were presented with the traditional prompt, "Human beings, as we know them today, developed from earlier species of animals"; for the other half, this statement was preceded by the clause, "According to the theory of evolution by natural selection" (National Science Board, 2014). The usual 48% disagreed with the usual wording, but a full 72% accepted it with the proviso (See Bishop et al., 2010 for a similar example.)

A further complication arises when survey results on politically-charged questions are stratified

by educational attainment. To set a baseline, consider that the SEI has consistently found belief in astrology to decrease with educational attainment (National Science Board, 2014), as expected under the hypothesis that science literacy tends to erode contra-scientific beliefs. In contrast, Americans' view of the likely impact of, the present effects of, and the human causality behind climate change do not change dramatically with education—at least on average. Instead, they become polarized, largely in line with political affiliation (McCright, 2011).

> "How, then, might the gap between public and expert views on such crucial matters as climate change be closed, and does this task necessarily entail the convergence of political factions on answers to science awareness surveys?"
> *–Cory Brunson*

Complications like these challenge the "ignorant citizen" characterizations of some of the survey results above by calling into question whether knowledge itself is even being measured. In a series of studies that address these concerns, Kahan and colleagues have proposed "cultural cognition" as an alternative framework for understanding how individuals evaluate new information and revise beliefs—and how that process need not lead people of divergent identities to converge in their beliefs (see Kahan et al., 2011 in particular).

An especially illuminating study (Kahan et al., 2012) collected the following measurements from a representative sample of the U.S. population:

- A slate of agree/disagree items used to situate their social organization world views along two axes (hierarchicalism–egalitarianism and individualism–communitarianism) (Douglas, 1970);
- Two several-item assessments, drawn from existing literature, designed to measure science literacy and aptitude for technical reasoning;
- Personal assessments, along an eight-point scale, of a variety of risks, including some concerning climate change.

The findings were distressingly similar to those of McCright (2011). First, participants' perceptions of climate change risk did not increase on average with science literacy or technical reasoning. Second, hierarchical individualists and egalitarian communitarians of higher science

literacy and technical reasoning ability were more, not less, polarized in their views. These findings do not challenge the importance of science literacy and technical reasoning; indeed, they indicate that we are as adept at using them in the service of maintaining existing beliefs as of reevaluating them.

Cultural cognition can be described as the unconscious influence of normative predispositions on the selectiveness with which we incorporate new information into existing beliefs. To the extent that our existing views are already closely aligned with our values, cultural cognition looks like confirmation bias (Kahan et al., 2011): For example, someone like me who values social freedoms and safety nets is likely to have less favorable views of big business and to favor environmental regulation. Such a person may already view the nuclear power industry with suspicion. Asked about the risks involved with nuclear waste disposal, they may nonetheless seek out science journalism or expert opinions. If, however, resources that downplay the risks take a pro-business tone, while those that play up the risks project a pro-environment image, this person will tend to ascribe less evidential weight to the former than to the latter. That is, they will apportion credibility to sources in a way least disruptive to their cultural moorings. This leads to the counterintuitive view of cultural cognition as a quite rational risk assessment process: Our beliefs do not come about in a vacuum, but within value-defined community structures. When expert opinion runs contrary to such views, we face not only the discomfort of cognitive dissonance but also, and more perilously, the likely emotional, social, and economic costs of dissenting from our networks of support (Kahan et al., 2012).

How, then, might the gap between public and expert views on such crucial matters as climate change be closed, and does this task necessarily entail the convergence of political factions on answers to science awareness surveys? While Kahan and colleagues do not criticize advocates for a continued emphasis on science literacy and critical thinking, they deemphasize its explanatory role. Instead, they suggest that the science communication environment becomes "polluted" as polarizing cultural cues contaminate the messaging of ultimately value-neutral information. This insight highlights the risk that attends various forms of communication, such as delivery by advocates with partisan associations (e.g., Guggenheim, 2006) or within value-entangled contexts (Kahan et al., 2010).

Kahan and colleagues have recommended several legislative and communicative strategies to reduce or overcome these challenges, synthesized from their own and other research. In the case

of policy these include, in particular, identity vouching—the involvement and recommendation of culturally diverse figures in the shaping and selling of policies—and social-meaning overdetermination—the infusion of values into, rather than secularization of, policy proposals, with the aim of making policy accessible to citizens of all cultural commitments (Braman & Kahan, 2006; see also Kahan et al., 2011). To the extent that scientific conclusions bear directly upon policy (e.g., global warming and nuclear waste disposal), these strategies may temper resistance among members of groups with dissonant values.

One may, I think, complement these recommendations by considering research concerning corrective countering of misinformation. Lewandowsky et al. (2012) have argued that skepticism can serve as an attitudinal corrective to the biasing effects of worldview. For example, when primed with cues that prompt distrust, subjects performed better at non-routine reasoning (Schul & Mazurski, 1990) or exhibited greater mental flexibility (Mayer & Mussweiler, 2011). While the authors did not present research concerning the possibility and viability of continual, attitudinal skepticism as a preventive against misinformation, they nonetheless concluded that their results "suggest that a healthy sense of skepticism or induced distrust can go a long way in avoiding the traps of misinformation" (Lewandowsky et al., 2012, p.121).

Cultural cognition involves forces closer to our identities than most of the varieties of misinformation discussed in Lewandowsky et al.'s review; likewise, its influence is likely to be more intransigent. However, just as an awareness of common cognitive errors can help us guard against them, an appreciation of the subtle, continual influence of cultural values on our beliefs—and even on the mechanisms by which we re-evaluate them—and of the types of values those beliefs are most likely to affect, should help us prepare and account for them. An understanding of how even the most knowledgeable and rational among us reliably fail to converge in our interpretations of the evidence that informs our policy discourse—that is, to realize the Enlightenment ideal as imagined in Condorcet's jury—is essential to our becoming a more realistically enlightened citizenry.

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Life and the Endless Journey of Situating Oneself …

Sarah Lyon-Hill

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This is definitely a reflection: pretty short, hopefully sweet. I have been considering the way we position ourselves in academia, our research and our writing. Like many undergraduate and graduate students, I am currently reading a book for a class that is due next week. In my case, that volume is *Depression: A Public Feeling* by Ann Cvetkovich. The first half of the text is a memoir of the author's last years as a doctoral candidate and her first as a scholar working to publish and to gain tenure. Through descriptive vignettes, somewhat in the style of Walter Benjamin, the book describes her experiences with depression and vividly portrays how daily and ordinary activities in life and academia became difficult and anxious moments for her.

While I do not wish to compare myself to Cvetkovich (2012) or her struggles with depression, I nonetheless sometimes found her descriptions eerily familiar to my own experience. For example, I was struck by the questions she tended to ask herself as she finished a work as well as one of her conclusions:

> Academia breeds particular forms of panic and anxiety leading to what gets called depression—the fear that you have nothing to say, or that you can't say what you want to say, or that you have something to say but it's not important enough or smart enough. (p.18)

These thoughts can be particularly apparent and vexing now, as finals approach and the end of the semester motivates me to look forward to my future endeavors; hooray for preliminary exams (be sure to smile)! Her indecision when making the most basic life choices (e.g., what to get at the grocery store), definitely reminded me of certain days in my life when I was so focused on the need to move forward in my research that I balked at deciding what to eat for dinner: "cereal … carrots … ice cream … Or sushi?" Thank goodness for my cuisine-savvy roommates! I also felt I understood her feelings well when she described her inability to write as deadlines came racing forward. Her description caused me to think back to my most recent paper, whose last page took an entire day to write, even though I knew what I wished to argue. Granted, I spent some of that time lying on my floor, dancing through the hallway of my apartment and watching some seriously fascinating squirrels outside my window. I had reached an impasse, Cvetkovich's word for all of those times that one cannot seem to move forward.

Impasses often occur as doctoral students seek to situate themselves in their respective academic fields by pursuing research, networking in relevant academic communities or writing. In her book,

for example, Cvetkovich pondered whether her memoir would fill a particular gap in the academic literature on depression. When writing an article, a scholar must consider how she expresses her ideas, even what words to use, in order to send appropriate signals to her academic peers. Likewise, when conducting qualitative research, the analyst should constantly reflect on where she is positioned in her investigation—where she is coming from; who she is with respect to her subject; how she is engaging her subjects and what she should say to present herself to her audience. The constant pressure to analyze one's position in all of these ways can be daunting. It requires making choices and moving forward toward our goal of contributing to a general body of knowledge that could, someday, help the world. Nevertheless, the intellectual and emotional pressure the academy can put on aspiring academics occasionally seems overwhelming.

"It [the constant pressure] requires [doctoral students] to make choices and move forward toward [the] goal of contributing to a general body of knowledge that could, someday, help the world. Nevertheless, the intellectual and emotional pressure the academy can put on aspiring academics occasionally seems overwhelming."
–*Sarah Lyon-Hill*

I have no specific suggestions concerning how most effectively to address these questions. The well-known children's story, The Little Engine That Could, comes to mind at such times. Nevertheless, how one sees oneself within society, within a certain field, as a member of a community or as a researcher during a particular project requires constant reflection. Setting aside the fact that there seems to be limited time to contemplate given the busy schedule required in academic life, how do you find the mental discipline to consider issues before you analytically and not simply fall prey to the concomitant angst and other emotions that may accompany self-conscious consideration?

Is it naïve or even foolish to envision analytics and reflection as occurring without feeling? Perhaps this train of thought focuses too much on the individual and on personal achievement. But

it must be said that the academy socializes individuals to embrace a distinctively liberal and Western mode of thinking. Even as doctoral students critique the power structures and discourses that shape our society, our own academic experience shapes us. Would focusing our efforts on the goal—to in some way make a contribution to society—shift our perspective? If so, how could we ensure that epistemic change interacts with the academy as a whole? Is that too idealistic? Or should we make this shift for ourselves and, with a wink and a nod, otherwise acquiesce to the common, very ego-driven academic discourse?

And if you get to that impasse point of complete mental inertia because everything seems so inextricably intertwined and the pressure is so great that you do not know what to say, do or think, what can you do? Just before I entered my doctoral program, I received a quotation at a planning retreat in which I participated for Community Voices, a graduate student run program on campus. I have since found it valuable: "There is no path I can take without having my heart broken, so why not get on with it and stop wanting those extra-special circumstances, which stop me from doing something courageous" (David Whyte). If Whyte's reflection doesn't lift, or at least leaven, my spirits, I try this aphorism offered by the lead character in a famous television series:

> I thought it was gonna be like in the movies—you know, inspirational music, a montage: me sharpening my pencil, me reading, writing, falling asleep on a big pile of books with my glasses all crooked, 'cause in my montage, I have glasses. But real life is slow, and it's starting to hurt my occipital lobe. (Buffy the Vampire Slayer)

On further consideration, I see that each of these quotations illustrates intensely reflective and personally-focused thought. Ah!

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Part 2: The Arts, Culture, and Politics

The essays in this section explore the power of the arts to catalyze social action and change, to heal, to encourage community revitalization, and to mediate conflicts. Jacquelyn Harder examines the healing power of the arts at both the individual and community levels. Through a brief snapshot of local and international artistic initiatives, Harder presents a spectrum of possibilities that social leaders can employ to engage in collective healing and empowerment. Continuing the theme of community arts and motivated by the visit of Bond Street Theatre's Artistic and Managing directors to Blacksburg, Virginia in October 2013, Lyusyena Kirakosyan examined that theatre company's peacebuilding work in Afghanistan, where Bond Street has been working since 2003. Kirakosyan offers examples that illustrate the group's commitment to initiating change through grassroots participation and helping citizens develop capacities relevant to their communities.

Kate Preston Keeney investigates funding for arts and culture in the United States and the political implications of uncertain income streams. Keeney argues that the often divisive politics around public and private financing in the United States is harming the nation's arts institutions by contributing to their loss of identity. In a second commentary, Jacquelyn Harder focuses on murals as a form of public art and compares three organizations that practice that art form. She analyzes how the artists from each of these groups capture stories and portray those narratives in their murals to generate reactions and responses that will be heard, considered, and questioned by a wider public.

In her essay, Sarah Halvorson-Fried reflects on her experience during a summer project that analyzed the role of the arts in community revitalization. Halvorson-Fried visited and interviewed members of two community groups that actively use the arts to encourage economic development in the towns in which they are located. Finally, Sarah Lyon-Hill ponders the question of intentionality in intergenerational theatre by examining two such programs. Lyon-Hill and her colleague interviewed program directors and staff members and collected more than 30 questionnaires from program participants in search of answers concerning how intentional these programs should be in seeking to create new and lasting relationships that might encourage individual community participation and community building.

Community Healing through the Arts

Jacquelyn Harder

(Originally published April 11, 2013)

When we think about "the arts," what usually come to mind are thoughts of theatre productions, fine art galleries, or musical performances. However, there is another dimension to the arts that not only can activate our curiosity and fulfill our need for enjoyment, but can also serve as a means for addressing emotions and thoughts in relation to life stresses, traumas, or grief that cause emotional, psychological, spiritual, and/or physical distress or imbalances. In this sense, the arts can help us heal from the trials and tribulations we face not only as individuals, but also within the communities in which we live and participate.

On the individual level, the arts are a means by which people may access and address the deep emotional or psychological turmoil that may result from disease, illness, or trauma. Moreover, medical research points to the interrelationship of mind and body in securing individual health. A growing number of studies has argued that patients suffering from chronic illness can directly address the emotional aspect of disease through creative activity. For example, Dr. Susanne Babbel, a psychologist investigating the connections between emotional stress, trauma, and physical pain, has observed,

> During a traumatic event, the nervous system goes into survival mode (the sympathetic nervous system) and sometimes has difficulty reverting back into its normal, relaxed mode again (the parasympathetic nervous system). If the nervous system stays in survival mode, stress hormones such as cortisol are constantly released, causing an increase in blood pressure and blood sugar, which can in turn reduce the immune system's ability to heal. Physical symptoms start to manifest when the body is in constant distress. (Babbel, 2010, para.6)

Babbel has also suggested that physical pain can function as a warning signal that there is still emotional work to be done. Enter the arts. As Joshua Smyth, a psychologist at Syracuse University has contended, "By engaging in dance, poetry or music, people are likely to initiate processes that help them manage stress, reduce negative mood states, and perhaps change behavior that we know impacts cardiovascular risk and recovery" (Winslow, 2009, para.11). Researchers in New Zealand working with individuals suffering from congestive heart failure asked patients to draw pictures of what they thought their hearts looked like. Those who depicted their hearts with the most damage turned out to have worse outcomes, raising the possibility that doctors could use drawings to help their patients change mental images of their disease and possibly improve the course of their illnesses for the better (Ibid).

So, art can help individuals access and address sometimes obvious or occasionally deeply hidden emotions, but how exactly does this help them to "heal"? The Merriam-Webster definition of the verb, heal, is "to make sound or whole." Often when people are "unhealthy" they can identify that they are out of balance in some way, whether they are overweight, depressed, suffering from a disease, or experiencing other challenges. By addressing the emotional dimension of suffering, or imbalance, individuals may take steps to bring their minds and bodies into alignment, knowing what we know about the mind-body connection. Finally, arts-based healing is about self. These processes empower individuals to take ownership of their emotions and release them creatively.

> "Through the creative processes of the arts, individuals can improve their overall health. The arts also can be a means in community by which we can address conflict, trauma, suffering, and other issues affecting our lives and become whole again."
> *–Jacquelyn Harder*

Creative processes can help to identify and release negative, painful, and even repressed emotions that can free up our immune system and clear our minds. This in turn, allows the body to fight off disease and heal emotional wounds. But how does a community access the arts as a resource for healing? First, its members must identify possible sources of community suffering. Has there been a traumatic event or a natural disaster? Has polarization occurred over a topic or issue? Second, it is important to understand the context of the conflict or suffering within a community. What perspectives are involved? What are the other dynamics of the situation? As Craig Zelizer, Founder and CEO of the Peace and Collaborative Development Network, has observed, "While it is unlikely that community-arts processes have the ability to halt the violence of severe conflict or directly address the more structural and economic components of conflict, it is clear that they can play an important role in building relationships between groups in conflict" (Zelizer, 2011, para.17). Those interested may employ different media to facilitate community healing through the arts. Whether through theatre productions, storytelling circles, dance and movement, painting and photography, sculpture, or other media, it is critical that community art and artist assets are leveraged and utilized in the consideration and development of a

peacebuilding or healing arts program.

One international nongovernmental organization, CHART (Communities Healing Through Art) works with local communities to, "provide traumatized & grieving children & families with a safe environment to heal, grow and move beyond their losses through creative arts activities" (Chart, n.d.). Populations that currently participate in this program include CHART-Haiti, CHART-Sandy and CHART-Thailand. Other locations may be found on their website. Several additional organizations are involved in facilitating community healing through the arts across the United States. One in California, called engAGE, seeks to promote active and independent living for low-and moderate-income seniors living in affordable apartment communities by providing arts, wellness, lifelong learning, community building, and intergenerational programs. EngAGE offers a program called, "engAGE in Creativity," in which professional artists teach college level art classes and host events with residents in communities at no cost to them (EngAGE, n.d.).

Finally, such initiatives may also be found here locally in Blacksburg, Virginia. One group of actors and musicians from the Virginia Tech School of Performing Arts and Cinema, called Building Home, conducts interactive theatre and music events with communities throughout the New River Valley. Just a year ago, this group of faculty members and students partnered with the New River Valley Livability Initiative, a program of the New River Valley Planning District Commission, to host a Town Hall Event to build awareness and invite healthy, productive public dialogue around community issues. As part of an independent graduate student project, members of the Building Home team created "Whether System: A Town Hall Event," drawing on stories and perspectives collected from Building Home's 20-plus community gatherings in the city of Radford and the counties of Giles, Pulaski, Montgomery, and Floyd (Livability, n.d.).

This brief snapshot of current programs demonstrates the spectrum of possibility for which communities and community leaders can utilize the arts to engage in community healing and empowerment. Through the creative processes of the arts, individuals can improve their overall health. The arts also can be a means by which community members can address conflict, trauma, suffering and other issues affecting their lives as they seek to become whole again.

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Creating Conditions for Peace and Justice: A Decade of Bond Street Theatre's Efforts in Afghanistan

Lyusyena Kirakosyan

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Lebanese theatre-maker, actor, and playwright Rabih Mroué has argued that theatre is an ideal medium for exposing complex and uneasy issues, and an especially powerful vehicle to raise questions and to formulate fresh ideas, without reaching conclusions and judgments (Mroué, 2009, p. x). Similar beliefs have motivated the creative work of Bond Street Theatre (BST) of New York City since its foundation in 1976. This group of socially concerned actors, musicians, and educators has shared its passion and repertoire and created works with audiences and partners in Japan, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Israel, Palestine, Hungary, Romania, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and across Western Europe, Canada and the U.S.

As Bond's Artistic Director Joanna Sherman observed in a recent interview with the author, company members recognized theatre's unique ability to illuminate social issues with wit and eloquence early in its history. To reach the broadest variety of audiences, the group has sought systematically to employ performance techniques that will captivate, while also being universal. The company creates innovative works that address social and environmental issues and that function as a humanitarian outreach tool for education and healing. The group has performed in refugee camps, areas of conflict and in post-war environments while collaborating with local artists to reap the benefits of such exchange and to promote the value of the arts in helping communities and cultures shape more peaceful futures.

BST has been working in Afghanistan since 2003. Live performance theatre is little known in that nation following 30 years of war and 5 years of brutally repressive Taliban rule, from 1996-2001. As a result, for many Afghans, a visit by Bond Street to their community constitutes their first exposure to the live performing arts. And since Afghanistan today remains an unsettled and conflict-filled country, the company's efforts are occurring in environments characterized by ongoing violence and continued struggle. BST has sought to develop ways it can help address that reality for the nation's citizens: "We do conflict resolution through theatre on a consistent basis, […] offering workshops for children, to explore alternative ways to resolve conflict, without violence," Ms. Sherman observed in a recent phone interview.

Women in Afghanistan lack adequate protection under the law as well as little access to education. Afghani women are also often subjected to domestic violence. Ms. Sherman suggested that Bond has managed to help create several theatre companies in Afghanistan that address issues surrounding women's everyday life experiences:

> Sometimes they can't really use the word "theatre." They're "Women's Companies," that are doing what I would call theatre, but they can go speak to women. … Only women can go and do these performances for women, and they're pretty dauntless. The group that we formed in Kandahar went from door to door, knocking on doors and gathering the women in the neighborhood, just to go to one woman's house and do the performance in the courtyard or the living room, for maybe just twenty, twenty-five women. These are women that really never leave the home and would not be able to have access to this particular information about domestic violence or about some of the traditions about how in-laws treat their new young brides. They start breaking them [traditions] down. A woman playing an abusive husband is a scary sight to see, because they really know what it's like. Afterwards, the women in the audience get a chance to come up and act out the scene with them, with the character of their choice, and say how they would treat the situation. It is some interesting dialogue, as you can imagine. (Sherman, 2013, phone interview)

Bond Street helps Afghan women create theatre performances about their concerns that speak directly to other women in a safe environment. The testimonial form of addressing human rights abuses, on which BST and its partners draw, privileges personal voice and seeks to empower the marginalized (Rae, 2009, p.17). Jan Cohen Cruz has argued similarly that "change [is] brought on more by people making theatre than by watching it," when reflecting on her decision to shift from performing in travelling street theatre to facilitating community-based workshops (Cohen-Cruz, 1998, p.5). Bond's approach reflects its commitment to initiating change through grassroots participation and helping develop skills relevant to individual community environments.

"Bond's approach reflects its commitment to initiating change through grassroots participation and helping develop skills relevant to individual community environments."
–Lyusyena Kirakosyan

Bond's ongoing "Theatre for Social Development" project brought theatre to women in prisons in three provinces of Afghanistan — Herat, Kabul and Jalalabad. One of BST's partners, Simorgh Theatre in Herat, was determined to use plays to reach out to women in otherwise isolated communities in its region. Bond Street's Sherman, Managing Director Michael McGuigan, and performing artist Anna Zastrow, worked with Simorgh's actors for a month in 2011 to craft theatre pieces addressing family

violence and literacy. BST's members were deeply affected by the situations they encountered of women who had been incarcerated for alleged crimes and who had little access to legal counsel, resources, or appeals. As they noted in a Bond Street newsletter,

> In the Juvenile Prison, most of the young women had fled forced marriages or abusive families. We came to understand that frequently the women face a situation far worse than jail if they were to return to the homes they fled. Many of the women have their children with them in the prison – infants and toddlers. It is sad to see children growing up in jail, and yet it clearly gave mother and child great joy to be together. (BST Newsletter, 2011)

BST seeks to create theatre that helps to restore human dignity, which Sherman considers foundational to peace and justice in the communities touched by Bond's work:

> As long as women are kept under the conditions they are, there will not be peace. Women are definitely part of the peace quotient for sure. We end up working with the men separately from the women and it shapes the situation to a certain degree. My message to the men is: "You can't be a country that just hops along on one foot. You really have to walk on two feet. And women are half of your country. And you will never be able to achieve peace alone and peace begins in the home, really." (Sherman, 2013, phone interview)

Bond Street promotes theatre as an instrument for healing and peace in areas of conflict. With a humility born of both experience and self-reflection, Sherman explained this aspiration in our recent interview,

> We can't come in, as the foreigners, with the better way. … Our strategy is always to collaborate with local artists and have our partnership on the ground and then we can work peer-to-peer and really discuss the issues and discuss their thinking and our thinking. … Then and only then can you start at least to understand where each other is coming from. Then you could maybe create a play together that's addressing these issues from more of a fair point-of-view, or maybe a more culturally appropriate point of view. … We're training organizations to use theatre in a certain kind of way … to use theatre as a way to speak out about the issues that confront them. (Sherman, 2013, phone interview)

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How Our Arts Funding System is Shaping Culture in the U.S.

Kate Preston Keeney

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Late summer for the arts community is quiet and arts organizations are busy planning bold, glamorous and what will soon, they hope, be their best seasons yet. Normally, one might not give much attention to a production of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's well-known opera standard, Eugene Onegin. Yet, this September, the Metropolitan Opera's star-studded season opener occurred on the heels of Russia's outlawing of purported gay propaganda and its embrace of anti-gay rhetoric. The timing of the production of this particular opera – composed by a gay, composer from that nation (Tchaikovsky) and starring a famed Russian-born soprano – ignited much-needed debate and discussion about the marriage or separation of politics and art. Activists opposing Russia's new law as profoundly discriminatory urged leaders of the Met to support gay artists publicly (Cooper, 2013). The Met published a statement doing so, but refrained from taking a political position:

> The Met is proud of its history as a creative base for LGBT singers, conductors, directors, designers, and choreographers. We also stand behind all of our artists, regardless of whether or not they wish to publicly express their personal political opinions. As an institution, the Met deplores the suppression of equal rights here or abroad. But since our mission is artistic, it is not appropriate for our performances to be used by us for political purposes, no matter how noble or right the cause. (Ng, 2013, para.5)

Douglas McLennan, founder of Arts Journal, recently considered this controversy and posed the question, "Are arts leaders cultural leaders?" At first glance, this may appear to be a question with an obvious answer. In the U.S., where there is no established or officially sanctioned culture, arts and cultural organizations are the citizenry often imagines them to be the agents that create, support, and disseminate our culture. Nonprofits and private philanthropists fund 38.2% of these entities, while government accounts for only 6.7% of their total revenues (NEA, 2012). In short, ours is a distinctively privately supported arts culture in which artists and arts organizations, rather than designated government agencies, are our cultural leaders. However, this support structure yields unintended consequences that shape both the content and character of our cultural products and social identity. I argue in this essay that the often divisive politics surrounding public and private financing of arts in the United States is contributing to a loss of identity among the nation's arts institutions. Specifically, I discuss trends in private, foundation, and public funding of the arts that are contributing to this phenomenon. I then examine these issues briefly as they relate to my dissertation work on state arts policy in Virginia.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts (2012), nonprofit performing arts groups and museums earn 45% of their total revenue from contributed income provided by individuals, corporations, foundations, and governments. Other support comes from earned, interest, and endowment income. To understand the wellsprings of the 45% of income that is donated, one must consider the complex reasons why individuals and organizations give to the arts. The simple answer is that people give to these institutions because they support them socially and ideationally (Wyszomirski, 2002) and because they can take advantage of, and leverage, tax incentives as they do so (NEA, 2012). However, such donors may contribute to mission drift or dilution (Minkoff & Powell, 2006) if they provide support for activities that push these entities to move in directions not in accord with their original or core missions. Put differently, because they are the most significant source of income to arts and cultural organizations, private donors can have huge impacts on what those institutions do, how they do it, and what they say about what they do.

> "The arts funding system in the U.S. is problematic in that its uncertainty and funder-driven demands shape the cultural products available to our population. […] We need collectively to discern new ways to ensure that our severely funder dependent arts organizations enjoy at least as much latitude in their programming and artistic choices as our colleges and universities do."
> *–Kate Preston Keeney*

Foundations account for 9.5% of arts organizations' total revenue (NEA, 2012), a small but significant source of income. Recently, philanthropies have been making waves in the nonprofit sector with calls for evidence-based grant making and increasing program outcome evaluation demands. The ethicist Peter Singer has called for "effective altruism" – doing as much good with each dollar and each hour as possible – while at the same time, suggesting that this standard cannot be met at an art museum, for example (Singer, 2012). Formalized donor benchmarks concerning

what constitutes program or activity impact can create serious challenges for arts and cultural organizations. Anxiety about this turn among donors led to a 2013 convening of foundations working in the arts and social change realm to discuss what it is that should be evaluated when considering arts and culture related efforts. Leaders in the field sought at the gathering to catalyze a national conversation on how organizations should measure impacts, while assessing the relevance and utility of the evaluation processes that have been employed to gauge the value of the arts and arts organizations in the past.

Although the public sector accounts for a much smaller percentage of arts and culture organization revenue than do other sources, such funding is important to these entities not only as support, but also, and more importantly, because it confers prestige and standing, which can be used to garner additional assistance. Even though this claim has been criticized (Brooks, 1999), public arts funders often argue that government assistance leverages additional funds:

> Furthermore, government funding helps to attract other investments. State arts agency grants typically come with a minimum 1-to-1 matching requirement, but matches often exceed that minimum. Dollars from a state arts agency provide a widely recognized "seal of approval" that helps grantees raise additional funds from individuals, corporations and foundations and to attract partners in entrepreneurial and earned income ventures. For every $1 of total grant funds awarded by state arts agencies nationwide, about $40 in matching funds is secured from earned or contributed funds. (NASAA, 2010, pp. 8-9)

Guided by this sentiment, arts and cultural organizations compete vigorously for the little public money available to support them at the national, state, and local levels. Recent trends in the public arts arena, including economic development initiatives and collaboration with non-arts agencies, such as transportation, housing, and social services, have changed the work and programs being pursued by the arts organizations engaged in them. In short, while our public arts agencies are designed to fund organizations at arms-length, they undoubtedly affect our nation's cultural direction anyway as a result of their out-sized influence.

Persistently uncertain funding acts as a continuing source of apprehension for arts leaders who rely on contributions for nearly half of their total revenue. It is no wonder then, that the Metropolitan Opera was unwilling to take an explicitly political position against Russia's anti-gay law. The opera company's complex funding streams might have been jeopardized regardless of how it addressed this difficult controversy. A consequence of our nation's arts funding arrangement is that organizations are often unable fully to embrace their role as cultural leaders.

The question remains, however, which institutions are responsible for creating and preserving

our arts, humanities, and culture? I have pondered this concern in light of the funding system I have briefly described and have explored the role of higher education institutions in creating and disseminating the arts in Virginia. To be sure, colleges and universities struggle with complex revenue streams and competing funding and resource demands, just as their arts organization cousins do. Yet, education institutions are buffered to a somewhat greater extent from the market-based demands than are most cultural organizations. Arts centers at colleges and universities have different capacities, built-in audiences, and revenue-generating models built with an educational mission first and ticket-sales second. This discretionary decision space may allow for a greater degree of artistic experimentation with work that pushes existing boundaries, makes one feel uncomfortable, and perhaps may be difficult to understand. Just this type of effort can address systemic social issues and raise questions about our society and our culture that can cause audiences to think afresh about their norms, values, and assumptions.

The arts funding system in the U.S. is problematic in that its uncertainty and funder-driven demands shape the cultural products available to our population. Of course, this is ironic, considering that our system has long been justified with arguments that suggest it has completely opposite impacts. We need collectively to discern new ways to ensure that our severely funder dependent arts organizations enjoy at least as much latitude in their programming and artistic choices as our colleges and universities do so that collectively they can serve as leaders in both preserving and challenging our culture.

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Mural Arts in the Public Sphere

Jacquelyn Harder

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We often encounter public art employed to invigorate residential and commercial spaces as well as to provide insights into the unique culture and history of a community or geographic area. According to the Association for Public Art in Philadelphia:

> Public art is a part of our public history, part of our evolving culture and our collective memory. It reflects and reveals our society and adds meaning to our cities. As artists respond to our times, they reflect their inner vision to the outside world, and they create a chronicle of our public experience. (aPA, n.d.)

Contemporary theorists have identified a key difference between "public art" and "art in public places." "Public art" can be understood as that which constructs a public whereas "art in public places," while it may have public value, is art that is publicly accessible and is characterized by "bureaucratic legitimization" (Hein, 2006, p.53).

What does it mean to construct a public? According to public art theorist Hilde Hein, "Unlike popular or mass art, it [public art] does not assume a preexistent generic audience to be entertained or instructed but sets out to forge a specific public by means of an aesthetic interaction" (Ibid, p.49). In this case, art-making serves as a social process in which art expresses and affects its culture. Art in public spaces often links patrons by spatial orientation and little else.

One form of art, the mural, sometimes serves as public art and sometimes as art in public space. The following three artist organizations, I argue, seek to use murals as a form of public art. The Beehive Design Collective, a nonprofit art activist group based in Maine, develops murals to engender discussion about social justice issues. This organization's principals see their role as educators, presenting graphics that tell stories that might not otherwise be broadly salient in public conversation. Examples of such concerns include mountain top removal coal mining, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, biotechnology, and colonialism. When the group elects to address a question, Collective artists committed to working on the piece travel and meet with stakeholders who have been directly affected by the issue they have chosen to depict. Beehive mural narratives are captured through conversations with the people touched by the issue or concern portrayed, and translated by the artist into graphics. The Collective suggests that their hope, serving as "anonymous translator," is that "these visual tools … will self-replicate, and take on life of their own" (Beehive Design, n.d.).

The Bogside Artists of Belfast and Londonderry, Northern Ireland, draw on their personal

experience of living through a period of deep political conflict referred to as "The Troubles" in their province, "A violent thirty-year conflict that began with a civil rights march in Londonderry on 5 October 1968 and concluded with the Good Friday Agreement on 10 April 1998. At the heart of the conflict lay the constitutional status of Northern Ireland" (BBC, n.d.). With more than 3,600 people killed and injured and psychological damage afflicting more than 50,000 more, this legacy of violence has had a lasting impact on the region's residents. The Bogside Artists attempt to address the deeper emotional and spiritual dimensions of the suffering in Northern Ireland through their murals, "Our murals stand therefore as the not too silent witnesses to the colossal price paid in suffering and brutalization by a hopelessly innocent people in their struggle for basic human rights" (Bogside, n.d.). Through twelve pieces the artists re-present some of the most significant events of the 30-year conflict, "In telling this story they have served a pressing need for their community and Derry' people in general to acknowledge with dignity if not pride the price paid by those who became victims of the struggle for democratic rights" (Ibid).

"What joins all three of these organizations is the view that murals should do more than simply convey a single artist's creative vision."
–Jacquelyn Harder

Groundswell is a nonprofit organization based in New York City that brings together artists, youths, and members of community organizations to use art as a tool for social change. The institution's leaders view their group's murals as a tool for beautification as well as a process to engage and facilitate the empowerment of youth and to introduce otherwise underrepresented perspectives into the public dialogue. While the impetus for bringing together artists, teens, community organization representatives and funders varies, the collaborative mural-making process is the same across all Groundswell projects. First, the purpose of a proposed effort must be identified clearly. Following this step, participating young artists undertake intensive research, which includes interviewing community residents and issue experts. Artists and youths then work together in design sessions to create a shared vision of a concept for the mural. The engaged artisans work during this process to ensure the final product has artistic integrity while preserving the contributions of individual team members (Groundswell, 2012). Once the design has been developed, participating teens share their work with community members and stakeholders for

feedback. Following this public input process, the group responsible for a mural revises its design to reflect those comments. The final stage of the mural making process includes fabrication, during which the young people involved gain experience and develop insights into the art-making process. Groundswell mural creation efforts conclude with a celebratory public dedication of each completed piece. Groundswell's organizers have observed that, "Through this process, we've seen over and over again how public art can activate space and convert it into something extraordinary–inspiring reflection, revelation, action, and change" (Ibid).

The Association for Public Art in Philadelphia has argued, "Public art is a reflection of how we see the world—the artist's response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are" (aPA, n.d.). These three artist organizations demonstrate varying means by which art can be used to create a public—expressing and affecting the culture from which it derives. Interestingly, the role of the artist in the process varies across these entities as well. The Beehive Design Collective artists gather stories and translate those voices into a graphic advocating for a specific perspective on a social justice issue reflected in the narratives they studied. The Bogside Artists share their lived experience and work to express and reflect the ongoing psychological and spiritual suffering of a post-conflict population. Finally, Groundswell artists seek to facilitate a group and community creative process. In addition, they seek to ensure artistic integrity so that the mural, resulting from a robust stakeholder consultation process and youth involvement, can achieve maximum impact. What joins all three of these organizations is the view that murals should do more than simply convey a single artist's creative vision. Instead, artists from each of these groups capture stories and work to portray those narratives in a public setting to generate reactions and responses while seeking to ensure as they do, that accounts shared will be heard, considered, and questioned by the widest public practicable.

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Ecological Re-enlivenment and the Role of the Arts in Community Development

Sarah Halvorson-Fried

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This summer I participated in an independent study with a group of graduate students exploring different methods of "ecological re-enlivenment." Dr. John Browder, a professor in Urban Affairs and Planning here at Virginia Tech, uses this term to describe the end goal of environmental change efforts. Instead of going back to an environment that has been lost, re-enlivenment takes a step beyond restoration to discover ways to move forward to create a new ecosystem in an area whose previous one has been damaged. This idea appeals to me in its practicality and in its applicability to community development, my main subject of interest.

A key tenet of ecology is that ecosystems are constantly in flux. Disturbance and re-establishment are regular occurrences in any dynamic environment. Since no ecosystem is ever static, one cannot, as a practical matter, speak of simply returning it to a previous state of affairs. Unfortunately, as many scientists have observed, ecological restoration is often based on just such an assumption. So, too, I believe, are many social change efforts. That is, we often think the best (or even the only) way to help a community is to help it return to a previous state. Yet, for example, although community developers may want to bring back the middle-class manufacturing jobs that once fueled a robust American economy, they must face the reality that the opportunity to do so may no longer exist. Once those seeking to assist communities acknowledge this fact, they can take more informed action.[1]

My summer project analyzed the role of the arts in re-enlivenment, a strategy I have found enlightening. Art is increasingly being used as a talking point, an organizing tool, and as a resource for the environmental movement. More than this, it is also being employed to create new spaces and centers of life. Quite literally, some artists have used their craft to transform ecologies. Mel Chin, whose 1991 work *Revival Field* employed plants to draw toxins out of a superfund site and who also displayed those designs at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, is perhaps the most famous practitioner of this form of art making. The same concept that underpinned Chin's work has been applied in the social realm. Two of the community groups I visited and interviewed this summer—the Beehive Design Collective in Machias, Maine and Wormfarm Institute in Reedsburg, Wisconsin—are actively using art to revitalize communities and economies. Both have environmental foci as well, but a key piece of their value lies in their re-enlivenment of the towns

in which they are located. While the Beehive Collective does impressive national and international work—in which they help communities address environmental destruction and globalization, creating new social connections, skills, and hope in the process—they also have actively worked to revitalize Machias, an old lumber town whose economy, like much of the state's economy more generally, has faltered since that industry's collapse in the 1990s. Their work restoring the town's old Grange Hall is one example of the new environment they have helped to create. The Hall now hosts free summer camps for local children, serves as a location for community group meetings and activities and holds the annual Blackfly Ball, a mini music festival that brings hundreds of visitors to Machias each year.

> "Art is increasingly being used as a talking point, an organizing tool, and as a resource for the environmental movement. More than this, it is also being employed to create new spaces and centers of life."
> –*Sarah Halvorson-Fried*

Critically, the Beehive Collective did not attempt to return Machias to an old way of life; neither they nor anyone else can bring the lumber industry back and many environmentalists would argue against doing so even if this could occur. Rather, with community help and support, the Collective has helped to foster efforts to create a new town. "Re-enlivenment" implies change in the social as well as the ecological, if communities are to be created anew.

Notes.

1. The necessity of re-enlivenment in lieu of restoration is a point on which those involved with social movements should reflect. The food movement comes to mind as an example, due partly to my experience in it. Many of those involved in this effort want to destroy the corporate food system and put in its place a network of small farmers and producers—an idea with which it is easy to agree in principle, to be sure. But when one considers how to do this, I believe we should draw inspiration from the tenet of re-enlivenment that moving forward is far more realistic than going back. To paraphrase food justice activist LaDonna Redmond, whom I quoted previously, we cannot go back to a fair, just, and healthy food system that has never existed.

Foundations of Intentionality: Intergenerational Theatre and Community Building

Sarah Lyon-Hill

(Originally published October 9, 2014)

In my continuing endeavor to understand how the arts, specifically theatre, may promote collaboration and more inclusive community development, I partnered with my roommate to study the effects of two intergenerational theatre programs on participant perceptions. Neda Norouzi is a doctoral student in the School of Architecture + Design intrigued by how physical environment affects collaboration between individuals of different age groups. In discussing our overlapping interests, we decided to explore what intergenerational theatre programs exist, how they seek to encourage the co-mingling of age groups and what long-term impacts, if any, their efforts might portend for community building.

Both programs we investigated have roots in specific disciplines and approaches. The directors and staff of the New York theatre program we examined, Mind the Gap (MtG), have backgrounds in community-based theatre. In contrast, the staff of the second initiative we studied, the Intergenerational Learning Center (ILC), in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area, is grounded in education and human development. Although both programs have the goal of fostering connections across age groups, their leaders' perspectives on how best to approach that aim, and thus their methodologies, differ tremendously. The Intergenerational Learning Center welcomes individuals from different age groups to collaborate in producing an annual play. Mind the Gap invites selected applicants to participate in a scriptwriting process during which youths and seniors are partnered, interview one another about their lives and experiences, and interpret what they hear from the other in the plays they write.

Only a handful of articles and books have addressed intergenerational theatre. These studies have been rooted in multiple fields, including community-based theatre, community development, critical theory, democratic theory, and performance studies. In *Roots & Branches*, Arthur Strimling (2004) argued that the rationale for intergenerational theatre is the erosion of the traditional family unit in which different generations traditionally interacted. As he contended, "we have lost an essential part of ourselves that can only be regained through lasting, intimate contact between the generations" (p. 5). Intergenerational theatre seeks to address this challenge and foster collaboration among different age groups by offering opportunities for all those engaged to participate in the theatrical process in a variety of ways. Scholars argue that intergenerational theatre participants benefit from

their involvement by gaining a sense of agency through self-expression, learning new skills and knowledge from those with whom they are collaborating and actively reflecting on the arc of their lives. When they succeed, such programs build trust among individuals of different ages, create shared history and develop intergenerational relationships that may later lead to stronger social networks within communities (Strimling, 2004; Petherbridge & Kendall, 2011; Gildin et al., 2013).

"Scholars argue that intergenerational theatre participants benefit from their involvement by gaining a sense of agency through self-expression, learning new skills and knowledge from those with whom they are collaborating and actively reflecting on the arc of their lives."
–Sarah Lyon-Hill

Michael Warner (2002) has coined the phrase poetic world making to capture the potential of theatre or art more generally to construct new understanding, identities, and publics, even when compared to the deliberative discourse prescribed by the philosopher Jürgen Habermas. Both Warner (2002) and Cvetkovich (2012) have highlighted art's use of affect—the emotion and poetics artists employ to engage others—to support the construction of audiences. Affect can help individuals feel a part of a community or communities, whether they participate in the process of art making or merely watch as spectators. Art may also be used to "shock" audiences out of their comfort zones so that they might reflect on their assumptions and consider and possibly change them (Marcuse, 1978). Art's innate capacity to play this role stands in contrast to many traditional, enlightenment-inspired notions of community building that rely instead wholly on rational discourse and expert analysis.

The theatrical process can also encourage citizen agency, engagement, and participation. Many researchers have cited play during the theatrical process as a way of actively engaging different groups in interpersonal communication, respectful dialogue, awareness, and reflexivity (Gusul 2009; Hinthorne & Schneider, 2012, p. 6). These functions of play mirror those capacities and habits of mind necessary for democracy. Civil society theorist Peter Levine has argued for merging work and actions with reflexivity, active listening, and discussion among a diverse array of participants to

bring about more "deliberative democracy" within and among groups. As he has contended,

> The participants will not simply meet, talk, listen, judge and reach conclusions. Rather, their talk will be sporadic, sandwiched between other activities such as working, playing, advocating or performing together. Their communication will not be purely civil or rational. They will not merely exchange proposals and reason but will give personal testimony, tell stories, form friendships, express self-interest, communicate with anger or irony, and indicate positive emotions such as camaraderie and even love. (Levine, 2013, p. 42)

While Levine focuses primarily on activities addressing public problems, often through participation in nonprofits, intergenerational theatre can also encourage those involved to share their views, interests, and experiences and jointly deliberate concerning them. These are the fora in which relationships and mutual understanding are created—through discussion, working together, play, and tackling concrete projects. These are ways of building a common narrative among individuals or between groups, creating the potential for larger community impacts.

This argument implies intentionality, defined not only as deliberate action, but also reflecting a certain level of foundational knowledge, so as to be strategic in character. While the potential evidently exists for intergenerational theatre to increase levels of association among members of different age groups, as described by Levine, and to create possibilities at a larger scale, is a specific level of intentionality needed to turn that potential into reality? Before it pursues these types of interventions, should a group research the theoretic frameworks and, to some extent, absorb the culture undergirding this kind of endeavor? And if so, toward what level of intentionality must an individual or group aim to create new and lasting relationships that might encourage participation and community building?

During our examination of the two intergenerational theatre programs, Neda and I interviewed program directors and staff, and collected more than 30 questionnaires from program participants. Based on this data, I argue that the New York program evidences more examples and forms of intentionality than its Minnesota counterpart. Like the ILC, the Mind the Gap initiative addresses the goal of building intergenerational relationships by exposing participants to members of different age groups and encouraging exchange. Through its methodology, however, it creates clearer opportunities for "play" and collaboration than does the ILC. MtG also offers its participants a theoretical frame and the knowledge and vocabulary by which to make sense of their efforts. In questionnaire responses, more participants in the Mind the Gap program referenced "self-discovery," "reflexivity," and an intention to take what they have learned and use it elsewhere than did those engaged in the ILC. Mind the Gap, with its staff's understanding of the nuances of intergenerational

theatre, appears self-consciously and conscientiously to urge participants to use their newly acquired knowledge to work to build community following their involvement with the initiative. Interviewees from both programs, however, described a deepening of their understanding of the other generations' complex characteristics. Anecdotal evidence also suggested that participants in both efforts learned from one another and also engaged outside the confines of their programs, but this occurred to a larger degree for those involved with MtG.

So, how intentional must program designers be when approaching the goals of intergenerational theatre? Both nonprofit organizations we investigated demonstrate that offering space, opportunity for play and the consideration of affect can bring about greater understanding among individuals. The extent to which these effects can contribute to a larger epistemic shift in groups beyond those participating is debatable. Having the theoretical understanding and vocabulary to reflect on their intergenerational experience and self-consciously translate that experiential learning across different contexts seems important because this process can build the capacity and call forth the agency of participants, giving them the tools to engage in numerous activities and contribute to building more resilient, inclusive, and deliberate communities. Can this process encourage a reflective, thoughtful and caring community without the need for a theoretically informed and shared vocabulary to express the experience or new understanding beyond its isolated theatre context? The social sciences have long emphasized shared language to promote common understanding. But does this perspective diminish the capacity for accomplishment of those without that mutual language and knowledge base? Based on the evidence we have gathered to date, it seems to me that sharing knowledge and vocabulary across professional boundaries and disciplines is important. Such efforts, however, must be intentional, respect other knowledges and vocabularies, and seek to elicit further conversation, rather than foreclose it.

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Part 3: Community Building

The commentaries in this section grapple with the diverse issues and complexities that arise from individuals living together, from concerns evident at the community level to those with implications for all of society. Sarah Lyon-Hill reflects on the rhetoric around individual responsibility in contemporary political debates and argues that American society must reframe its view of the supposed divide between self and community and instead adopt a view that defines personal responsibility as encompassing both self and community. She contends that such a redefinition would help Americans devote themselves productively to developing high quality partnerships, whether individually or collectively. Sarah Hanks explores nonprofit boards and contends they constitute communities of practice, which at their best develop a culture of sharing knowledge and experiences that embraces social learning and thereby fuels sustainable community change. As a food movement activist, Sarah Halvorson-Fried uses her essay to critique the term "food deserts," often adopted by policymakers and food justice advocates. She argues it is necessary to consider both the assets and needs of a community to develop strategies that both address a population's poor access to fresh, healthy food, and acknowledge the ability (and dignity) of those citizens to play important roles in crafting solutions.

Interested in the interdependence between place and people, Jordan Laney reflects on how physical spaces pose challenges to populations desiring to forge paths to inclusion and polyvocality. Continuing the theme of the relationship between place and identity in a second commentary, Laney critically examines the stereotypes of Appalachia and Appalachians. Challenging basic popular assumptions about the region, its residents and underlying economic and social conditions, Laney asks her readers to reimagine the region so that it can, "emerge in the public mind as the complex and textured tapestry of land and people it is, as opposed to the misleading stereotypes by which its citizens have for so long, so often and so misleadingly been described."

How Do We Move beyond Rhetoric?

Sarah Lyon-Hill

(Originally published February 28, 2013)

Consider these two scenarios.

Scenario One. President Obama has just finished his inaugural address, discussing the need for citizens to engage in their government. A poll on one of the major broadcasting network websites asks:

Is [President] Obama's address a call to collective support in society consistent with the foundations of the country?

A) Yes, this country works better when citizens work together through government.

B) No, the country was built on a system of individual responsibility.

C) There has to be a happy medium.

Scenario Two. A local branch of a national nonprofit wants to apply for a federal grant. Because the focus of the aid program is local partnerships and place-based development, the nonprofit works eagerly to forge as many community partnerships and procure as many letters of support as possible. As the grant writing proceeds, however, most collaborators do not see or seem to care to see the grant or its components. What happens when/if the grant is awarded and these supposed partners have to sit down to implement the plan with which they are only vaguely familiar?

One might wonder what these two situations have in common. Beginning with the first scenario, this question and its answers refer to one of the basic philosophical debates today, the appropriate reach and role of government. Politicians, the press and many citizens routinely frame this debate dichotomously. On one side, people believe that individuals partnering and collaborating with government can bring about a better society. In contrast, others see government as a too-frequent impediment to personal responsibility and believe that citizens, through their individual work and ingenuity, can assume accountability for themselves and work to better their, and indirectly society's, way of life.

This perspective is both false and misleading. The view emphasizing personal responsibility portrays individuals as atoms, independent from everything save the consequences of their own actions. As history, current events and philosophers have shown us, this is simply not the case. Modern-day critical theorists such as Horkheimer, Adorno, and Foucault (if one may characterize him as a critical theorist) have illustrated how deeply enmeshed individuals are within their

surrounding societies, cultures, and power structures. Each of these thinkers has discussed how citizens are influenced by and can potentially influence social constructs.

> "The collaborative governance and nonprofit academic literature highlights the need for quality relationships: ones based on trust, extensive reflection and communication and in which partners share similar goals and a sense of reciprocity for efforts and ideas. [...] Here, I think, is where a citizenry broadly acculturated to an understanding of individual responsibility for self and community may come into play."
> *–Sarah Lyon-Hill*

Consider, for instance, a recent two-part story from Public Radio International's This American Life (thisamericanlife.org) in which the show's writers described Harper High School in Chicago, in which all students automatically belong to gangs based on the street block on which their home is located. They have very little choice in such occurring. This scenario illustrates the fact that despite the responsibility one may take for one's own life, individuals are unavoidably subject to their surroundings. As such, a person's ability to conceive of life outside social constructs or find a way out of their strictures that does not entail leaving everything and everyone they know, is difficult. Teachers at Harper attempt to mediate this situation by talking with students about their out-of-school activities, offering youths rides to and from school so they do not have to go through other gangs' territories, and providing after-school space and programming so individuals may stay in school (a safer place as compared to home or traveling home) as long as possible. These actions demonstrate a shift in the definition of individual responsibility from one of self-alone as determinative, to one of self and community, as inescapably essential. As we are inextricably connected to those around us, we often may need to collaborate or help each other in order to maintain or tend to our communities and, indeed, our place within them. Hence government, as the

only legitimate democratic representative of citizens and the communities they comprise, should play a part in this collaboration.

Nor does collective support negate the necessity for individual responsibility. If individual responsibility were removed from the process of collaboration, the very nature of partnering would be moot. Scenario Two demonstrates this point nicely. In the example, the federal government is offering support to local communities that wish to build their capacities to reduce crime in targeted areas, emphasizing the use of partnerships to build capacity to do so. The nonprofit organization's leaders, too, perceive crime as a problem in their community. Upfront financing is needed to initiate a project, and they need to demonstrate community collaboration to receive national support.

So the partnering begins. Some possible collaborators attend a meeting at the beginning of the grant-writing process. Some must give input on the programmatic strategies they are employing to reduce crime. They offer the grant writer names of programs and examples of pertinent literature. Others agree to participate, which one might imagine would imply that they will take a significant part in designing a research and evaluation plan, but they provide little or no input. Others agree to be partners and provide letters of support. Few actually read the grant proposal.

To be fair, many of these organizational representatives and would-be project partners are overworked. They must provide simple and preferably, quantitative measures of their work to justify their legitimacy as organizations, and the more they do so, seemingly the better. They record, at the end of their fiscal years, and often far more frequently, what they have accomplished and their participation in such a grant effort represents an additional data point suggesting they are doing their jobs.

But when does partnering become rhetoric, or simply an action one takes in order to acquire funding (or a good grade in school)? The collaborative governance and nonprofit academic literature highlights the need for quality relationships: ones based on trust, extensive reflection and communication and in which partners share similar goals and a sense of reciprocity for efforts and ideas. Conceiving of levels of engagement and partnering is far subtler, however. Here, I think, is where a citizenry broadly acculturated to an understanding of individual responsibility for self and community may come into play. I do not wish to argue that it is every individual's responsibility to put 100% of their effort into each partnership in which they or their organization are engaged. That may be neither appropriate nor feasible. Most professionals today are charged with maintaining multiple collaborations in dozens of activities. The strain to act as true team players, and not just

partners in name, can be great. However, if we reframe our common popular dichotomy between self and community and reflect on individual responsibility for self and for community, that alternate framing could help us to invest more fully in the quality of partnerships we make individually and collectively. How might this reframing change our approaches to government as a democratic representative of citizens, government's role in society and citizens' engagement in the public realm? Such a reframing might just lead Americans to a more realistic and equitable approach to developing their communities.

Nonprofit Boards as Communities of Practice: Identity, Social Learning, and the Distinction between "Knowing That" and "Knowing How"

Sarah Hanks

(Originally published January 30, 2014)

As a doctoral student, I am often asked about my future career plans. With excitement, I share that I would like to support nonprofit organizations in achieving effective board governance. In response, some people smile and nod, passively dismissing the idea that my proposed goal is attainable. Others sigh deeply and suggest that I could hone my skills and begin my work by "fixing" their organization's board of directors. This latter group of individuals seemed to be suggesting that a presumably highly skilled, professional group of volunteers is neither engaged nor equipped in ways that meet the needs of the nonprofit they are serving. It is in that moment that I want to help my colleagues and friends reframe governance, shedding light on the possibilities and limitations that are created as a result of the lens through which we choose to view the nonprofit sector.

I believe effective organizational governance is an art and a science. It is a beautiful, contextually, and situationally based experience. Generative governance represents one helpful way of considering this complexity. As defined by Chait, Ryan, and Taylor (2005), generative governance, is a way of thinking that produces a "sense of what knowledge, information, and data mean" (p. 84). In addition to the fiduciary and strategic work of a board, this form of interaction aids members in determining what to address, what decisions need to be made and why, and how to make sense of the process of deciding (Chait et al., 2005). Adopting this way of proceeding, directors and trustees ask and debate such questions as the following:

- How does this (action or step or direction) relate to our mission?
- What does this communicate about our values?
- Is there a gap between what the organization claims it is and what it actually is?

A number of scholars and practitioners have suggested various so-called best practices aimed at encouraging boards to accept the challenging work of generative thinking. In my view, however, the socially dynamic nature of governance coupled with the cultural complexities that often characterize nonprofit boards, suggests instead the utility of social learning as a way to encourage such an orientation.

Lave and Wenger (1991) have proposed that social learning takes place in communities of practice, defined as, "system[s] of relationships between people, activities, and the world; developing

with time, and in relation to other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (p. 98).

"It is imperative for today's boards to develop a culture that embraces social learning as a means of attaining generative governance and effective mission attainment. In doing so, belonging, identity development, and shared commitment to a common purpose become cornerstones of a board's meaning-making efforts, and thereby fuel for sustaining social change."
–Sarah Hanks

Exploring the components of a community of practice, Wenger (1998) has argued that meaning, practice, community and identity "characterize social participation as a process of learning" (p. 4). He defined each of these components as follows:

- Meaning: a way of talking about our (changing) ability – individually and collectively – to experience our life and the world as meaningful.
- Practice: a way of talking about the shared historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action.
- Community: a way of talking about the social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation in recognizable as competence.
- Identity: a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities (p. 5).

When successful, communities of practice become common ventures with shared expectations and accountability. They are characterized by mutual engagement that leads to collective action concerning issues or problems. Members communicate stories and adopt tools, language, and artifacts that lead to a sense of belonging within the community (Wenger, 1998). The capacity of communities of practice to promote social learning raises the question of whether a similar approach might be applied to nonprofit organization governance.

Communities of practice, grounded in social learning theory, provide an interesting means by which to encourage generative thinking among board members. Learning to be an effective nonprofit

board member must include the development of four ways of knowing:

- Learning to *be* a board member (identity development),
- Learning *how* to govern (practice),
- Learning *about* the organization (community and culture), and
- Learning *why* the organization's mission is a cause for service (meaning and impact).

While a well-crafted board orientation session can promote awareness of the policies and procedures that shape an organization's business ("knowing *that*"), they too often fail to engage fully the ambiguity, cultural context, social roles and dimensions that comprise the "*how*" of board governance. This is true for novice and experienced directors alike, whose identities and social role(s) as board members are established within the community of practice in which they find themselves members. Social learning leads to the infusion of "know *how*" into the fabric of peer interactions among board members and creates a shared experience in which "knowing that" is no longer sufficient to exercise effective governance. While not all boards function as communities of practice, this framework offers an alternative to the widely accepted view of governance as a linear or rigid process of information sharing and cultural cue taking.

In a detailed case analysis of one nonprofit board, Beck (2014) has contended that several major characteristics contribute to a "culture where learning and generative governance can occur within the routine work of a nonprofit board" (p. 109). Most notably, Beck suggests that policies and practices that link board member personal motivations and contributions to mission ensures that each member is clear about the responsibilities of their governance role, promotes expertise sharing among members, and encourages broad recognition among members of the significance of questions posed in formal meetings. Taken together these steps create, "opportunities for learning and identity development through practice" (p. 119). Beck found that member recruitment practices and clear descriptions of individual directors' roles were in turn critical in shaping overall board identity development, enhanced member's commitment to the organization's mission, and aided in shaping the questions they posed for consideration in meetings. Role clarity also provided members a frame by which to evaluate their impact and to share the organization's story. Individual director articulation of the nonprofit's narrative, "reinforced and elaborated (their understanding of the organization's) mission, and identified the board's role in its stewardship" (Beck, 2014, p. 120). Beck found that when such practices are adopted, newcomers were able to join an organization's board and grasp quickly the board's operative culture as a governing body.

Wenger and Snyder (2000) have argued that, "people in communities of practice share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new approaches to problems" (p. 140). Generative governance, highlighted by the use of skilled and challenging questions that encourage discussion, debate, and at times dissent, enables nonprofits, as problem framing entities, to meet the changing needs of their typically diverse stakeholders. It is imperative for today's boards to develop a culture that embraces social learning as a means of attaining generative governance and effective mission attainment. In doing so, belonging, identity development, and shared commitment to a common purpose become cornerstones of a board's meaning-making efforts, and thereby fuel for sustaining social change.

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The Rhetoric of "Food Deserts"

Sarah Halvorson-Fried

(Originally published March 6, 2014)

My commitment to community engagement and social change work stems from my involvement in what many have called the food movement. Having come, like many others, to this effort from a personal place of concern for specific issues—the environment, my own connection to health and the land—I have worked in a variety of settings, attended many conferences and gatherings on the topic and been challenged by divergent beliefs. I have learned that the food movement is characterized by quite different approaches, rooted in divergent perspectives. One group's interest in the movement is that of solving the problem of food access, or lack thereof.

The term used often by policymakers, public health professionals, and any number of nonprofit organizations to describe this challenge is "food desert." Indeed, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has formally embraced this descriptor to designate communities without access to fresh, healthy food (Gallagher, 2011). Both urban and rural locations can lack such foods, but often "food desert" describes neighborhoods in the inner city, littered with convenience stores that sell a variety of differently packaged and flavored corn and soy products. First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" program, arguably the most visible healthy food access program in the U.S., has partnered with Walmart to bring fruits and vegetables into these locations and has reported successes in doing so (Walmart, 2013).

However, new studies have shown that this approach—bringing healthy food to the people—does not work on its own. A recent article in Salon, for example, described an inquiry that used 15 years of data and found no link between health and readily accessible grocery stores (Gilligan, 2014). Another study by Alviola et al. (2013) showed that urban areas in Arkansas actually had better access to fresh fruits and vegetables than rural locations, but the writers speculated that a high density of fast-food establishments was causing health issues. This information suggests that inner city Walmart locations alone are not the answer.

It would be too hasty to say that programs such as that offered by the giant retailer do inner city families no good; in fact, it is obvious when one compares prices at Walmart to those at a typical farmers' market that the fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods at the national chain are more affordable. Those who have lived in neighborhoods whose convenience stores stock mainly chips and soda, as I have, know that sometimes, any grocery store is welcome. Indeed, it is tempting

to defend the idea that people's environments matter, and that changing a person's context will affect their health. In fact, the entire environmental justice movement rests on just this premise. The value of easy access to fresh, healthy foods cannot be ignored.

"When policymakers define an area as a food desert and ask large corporations to provide for that population's basic needs, they quite literally may be missing an opportunity to help support a community's self-sustenance and resilience. A conversation focused on needs alone, rather than on both assets and needs, risks failing to acknowledge the ability of citizens to create a share of their own solutions and thus compromises their dignity."
–Sarah Halvorson-Fried

Food justice activists around the country take issue with this stance, however. LaDonna Redmond, a self-termed "freedom fighter" with whom I have had the privilege to work, started planting urban farms because of her son's food allergies and the fact that she was unable to find healthy, fresh, organic foods in her Chicago neighborhood. This sounds much like the definition of food deserts, yet Redmond does not much like the designation. As she has observed, "the trouble with the term 'food deserts' is that it describes lack in a way that indicates that the solution is outside of the community" (Redmond, 2009, para.1). Redmond's view is that "food desert" implies an empty space that needs to be filled, a need that must be assessed and handled. Viewed through the lens of an asset-based approach to development, in which community members identify their resources and create plans to utilize them (Green & Haines, 2012), this implication does not sit well.

Tanya Fields, an activist in New York, has offered an alternative conception of the fresh foods challenge: rather than speaking of food deserts, she argues that advocates should embrace the phrase food sovereignty. For Fields (2013) this, "means that we not solely rely on large corporations to 'fix' our current food predicament, a predicament that they intentionally created. It means that

we analyze and utilize our current community resources to create innovative and just solutions" (para.7). Under a framework of asset-based rather than needs-based solutions, Redmond, Fields, and a network of food justice proponents believe Americans can collectively and radically transform the nation's food production system into one that supports both local producers and consumers.
One successful community initiative is the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN). In the wake of economic decline, city bankruptcy, and what some might call a proliferation of "food deserts" in the beleaguered community, DBCFSN has developed large urban farms, pressed policies at the city level aimed at supporting locally produced foodstuffs, and started a cooperative buying club with the goal of establishing a local grocery store. Importantly, these solutions have come from within the Black community in Detroit and in recognition that "the most effective movements grow organically from the people whom they are designed to serve" (DBCFSN, n.d.). Indeed, the group formed with a primary goal of organizing and highlighting African-American leadership in the local food security movement.

Walmart may well be improving food access in cities across the country, but food justice activist organizations, including DBCFSN, are concerned with communities' abilities to produce as well as consume the foods their populations require. Many are fighting for more than "just access to the food in the store," but also desire "access to land that grows food so [they] may grow [their] own" (Redmond, 2009, para. 6). This motivation suggests that "food desert" communities may not be interested in outsiders' prescribed remedies. When policymakers define an area as a food desert and ask large corporations to provide for that population's basic needs, they quite literally may be missing an opportunity to help support a community's self-sustenance and resilience. A conversation focused on needs alone, rather than on both assets and needs, risks failing to acknowledge the ability of citizens to create a share of their own solutions and thus compromises their dignity.

One may ask the question: Can small-scale community efforts provide the same access to healthy foods that a large-scale retailer can? Perhaps they cannot offer the same prices or variety, but communities' values reach beyond the cost and diversity of food. Fields (2013) has said, "these retailers that are supposed to help the community many times help set the stage for gentrification, as well as not paying a living wage job to residents, if the jobs are even available to them at all" (para. 5). In contrast, community food projects may be more likely to place people's well- being above profits. Prioritizing job access, mental health, and leadership development (see Growing Power; the BLK ProjeK), their goals are broader than access to healthy food alone.

Thus, the real problem with the Walmart solution to food availability is that our economic system makes it easier for this alternative to come from that retailer's headquarters, and much more difficult for the answer to come from within communities. Outside support for better food access is necessary, but it is needed in the form of funding and supportive policies that encourage the success of local and grassroots initiatives. DBCFSN, for example, does not operate in a vacuum; outside grants and recognition by public officials have contributed to its success. As policymakers and advocates think about improving food access, I believe they should work to give communities more voice. Grants for food projects abound, but may often be awarded to outsiders "helping" communities rather than residents working for themselves. The key lies in refraining from defining neighborhoods' needs for those who reside there, but rather listening to food justice activists and citizens when they tell us they do not live in a "desert," and acting to help them realize their vision.

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Person & Place: Thoughts on the Radical Possibilities of an un-Fixed Polis

Jordan Laney

(Originally published May 8, 2014)

As another year at Virginia Tech ends, I am beginning to realize, identify, understand, and critically assess "my place in this place."[1] I have learned parking on the third floor of the parking deck is the most productive use of my time, the printer will never work and I am developing the skill of writing in cadence with the constant hum of construction in the upper quad. I am becoming familiar with the contours, materiality and textures of this place. That is, I am beginning to feel its geography. As postmodern poet Charles Olson has observed, "Plus this—plus this: / that forever the geography/ which leans in/ on me I compel" (Olson, 1968).

The "geography" to which Olson referred is not only physical, but also, as I will contend, is the person-placehood of spaces that allow for the re-imagining of collective and individual identities. New peers, collectives, causes, and structural pressures also "lean on" and provoke this place. The interdependent relationship between place and people has been a concern and interest of mine since my undergraduate years and these notions continue to animate and sustain my research and teaching.

As an Appalachian Studies scholar, place-based definitions are of the utmost importance to me. With a background in creative writing, I look to poetry as a way to understand and translate what I experience, see, and hear in the landscape and soundscape. Charles Olson offers examples in his work of how to put feelings of knowing a place into words. For him this awareness manifests in the form of "polis." Olson works (conceptually and as a poet) with the term "space" rather than place: "I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom Cave to now. I spell it large because it comes large here. Large, and without mercy," Olson has written in *Call Me Ishmael* (1947).

This use of SPACE on the page and as a topic for reflection, questions the relationship between form and content—a connection I felt as I moved my students out of Derring Hall one day recently. We occupied (and I use the term consciously) the picnic tables at Lavery Hall for our class discussion. The mobility of the untethered tables—or form—allowed us to rearrange them, just as we had moved ourselves, creating a smaller cluster of bodies, books, and bags, functioning as a different type of seminar. The function of this newly acquired space remained the same: to learn, share, explore, question, and critique. Nonetheless, those processes did not proceed as readily in the windowless classroom from which we had moved.

When we had ventured outside (to discuss Appalachia as a "place" in American history), I asked the students how it felt to be beyond the confines of the classroom. That is, I asked the group to consider how the campus "at large" made them feel? "Institutionalized" and "surveyed" appeared on a list of otherwise "positive" feelings, including "open," "accepted" and "challenged," that the students shared. Most notably and quite passionately, one individual spoke out against the oppressive feelings the constant construction projects on campus created for him. Others agreed, suggesting that they often have no idea what is physically happening to the environment around them—their space—as Virginia Tech students. While building is necessary to maintain and sustain both endowed and embodied growth and infrastructure, the consistent altering of their physical surroundings caused at least a share of these students to feel "out of place." While these comments were typically discerning for this group, they were nonetheless also exciting, as such animated discussions had rarely happened in the classroom. By moving to a new space, the students reconstructed their relationships with one another and assumed a renewed sense of authority over their roles and words. Once outside there was no lectern for me to lean on, no tiny desks for twenty-year-olds to sit in and no blackboards on which to focus our individual and collective gaze.

> "The significance of understanding the place and person relationship—or, the physical location of the borders that define a person—is monumental. Whether we are consciously aware that it is occurring, the geography in which we live is leaning and we are responding."
> *–Jordan Laney*

This conversation both treated and embodied what social geographers (notably David Harvey and Ted Bradshaw) have defined as a "social space." Such theories assert that the ontology of such space is to be found in the feelings one has about oneself in relationship to one's own experiences regarding a location. Without the assumed constraints of classroom decorum, my students felt empowered to voice their opinions regarding their "place" on campus.

For my part, this experience offered a space for questioning, reflection and hopefully,

collaboration and action as it led me to consider ways that educators, educational systems, and communities (groups of individuals) can create structural and systemic change through the physical and social components of geography. In his 1981 book, *The Dialogic Imagination*, Mikhail Bakhtin wrote:

> I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another . . . every internal experience ends up on the boundary . . . 'To be' means to communicate . . . 'To be' means to be for the other; and through him, for oneself. Man has no internal sovereign territory; he is all and always on the boundary. (p.287)

Bakhtin's idea of being, communicating and navigating boundaries is exciting. It suggests that alternative relations and voices emerge when individuals move from defined spaces. Gloria Anzuldua has likewise explored the possibilities of occupying "between spaces" or borders in her work, Borderlands/La Frontera, and the question her analysis raises for me is, what would a borderland-based education look like? Sound like? Feel like? If the fringes are where we find ourselves becoming conscious, how can we—students, educators, activists, organizers—continually gravitate towards the edges?

The significance of understanding the place and person relationship—or, the physical location of the borders that define a person—is monumental. Whether we are consciously aware that it is occurring, the geography in which we live is leaning and we are responding. The question is how do we, in such a structured place (in this case, our university, Virginia Tech), create relation-based spaces? How might we alter the landscape of which we are a part to broaden its borderlands, working toward creating spaces of inclusion and polyvocality? I believe the answer lies in willing adoption of a lack of fixity, both physical and conceptual. As language justice poet Jen Hofer has written, "[w]e do not become new selves, we are reminded that to be a self is to be traces of various selves in varied places, to be is to be being—a rolling present tense" (p.3). Perhaps our first step necessary to realize Hofer's vision is to acknowledge that we are the borders, we create the spaces.

Notes.

1. A phrase appropriated from Helen Lewis' response to the question: "Why should you study Appalachia?"

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Hashtag Heartwork: Notes on the Relationship between Place and Identity

Jordan Laney

(Originally published September 25, 2014)

A Note to Readers. This is a reflection on place and identity in Appalachia, on the relationship between the places where residents of that region labor and how they imagine themselves and are viewed by others. This is a reflection on the construction of Appalachia in relation to place, identity, and love. Long-lived stereotypes of Appalachia emerged in the late 1900s and have been maintained, if not always intentionally, by government programs and in the mass media. A movement from within the region has emerged, first through service, and soon after through social activism, to educate people about America's internal colony and to construct/reconstruct images that more accurately portray the region. Recent ruptures from the movement were evident when Annie Lowery called the area a "smudge on the map" in a *New York Times* article, "What's the Matter with East Kentucky" (Lowery, 2014). Silas House, award-winning author and Appalachian activist responded with a blog post entitled, "The Matter is You Don't Know What You're Talking About," on July 10, 2014. He argued that the Appalachian people are individuals but are often nonetheless only seen as a sensationalized microcosm of the most difficult of America's challenges, "They work, they love, they fight, they have joys and sorrows and everything in between. Because they're people, just like everyone else. They are not dots or checkboxes or digits in a statistics report" (House, 2014). House sought to call attention to the complexity of place and identity in the region. In order to understand Appalachia, House wrote, "[O]ne must stand for awhile outside the funeral home and smell the air, study the gravestones out back that await the inscriptions of names belonging to people, not statistics" (Ibid).

Appalachia: Stereotypes and identities. During John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign for the presidency he traveled to the area, and famously campaigned in West Virginia where he was deeply touched by the dignity of the people and the depth of the poverty confronting many of those he encountered. Kennedy's assassination in 1963 resulted in Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) completing his term. Johnson was elected to the presidency in 1964 and worked thereafter to realize Kennedy's vision for the amelioration of poverty in the United States. Indeed, in his 1964 State of the Union Address, President Johnson went much further than his predecessor had and declared a national "War on Poverty." Not long thereafter LBJ chose a specific place, Tom Fletcher's front porch in Martin County, Kentucky, to symbolize his aims and concern. In so doing, the president

introduced the American masses to Appalachia once more, "America's backyard," occupied by "a strange and peculiar people" (Howley, 2006, p.1624).

The nation's campaign to eliminate poverty launched Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) (a "domestic" Peace Corps), Headstart for at-risk preschoolers and Community Action Programs and many other initiatives (Ibid). All of these efforts aimed to assist Appalachian communities especially, since the area was viewed, as President Johnson's visit had highlighted, as particularly poverty stricken and located therefore somehow on the nation's periphery. The photograph below from The LBJ Presidential Library shows a scene from President Johnson's Poverty Tour.

"The broader public has not been asked to rethink its suppositions and frames but instead has been permitted, even encouraged, to divide those in need in the region from those residing outside it. Heartwork seeks to break down this separation and to create a space in which all of the work undertaken can arise from genuine love for the place and its people."
–Jordan Laney

President Lyndon B. Johnson shakes the hand of one of the residents of Appalachia as Agent Rufus Youngblood (far left) looks on. Credit: LBJ Library photo by Cecil Stoughton. This image is in the public domain and may be used free of charge without permissions or fees. Retrieved from http://www.lbjlibrary.net/collections/photoarchive.html

Just as many during the nation's post-Civil War reconstruction era had depicted Appalachia as a place with "worthy" people desperately in need of assistance, the War on Poverty painted the region and its residents as in critical need (Drake, 1965, p.6). The President's concern, while well intended, nonetheless hid the systemic economic oppression and structural deficiencies (for instance, mono-economic extractive practices and external land ownership) that created and sustained the poverty of the area's people in the first instance. Ronald Eller has examined how the region's residents came to be regarded by the American public as a backward, but nonetheless pure people,

> Spurred by the image of a privileged, young New England senator being greeted by hungry children and destitute coalminers, a spate of journalists had descended on Appalachia after the West Virginia primary to capture the story of poverty in America. Concerned about the growing disparity between the "affluent society" and what Michael Harrington called the "other America," journalists rediscovered Appalachia as a depressed American region. Between the summer of 1960 and the fall of 1963 more than a dozen books and articles were published illustrating the plight of the poor in central Appalachia. (Eller, 2004, p.204)

Ultimately, this stereotype of the region's residents (hillbilly, backwoods, ignorant) was predicated on the idea that education and work needed to be provided to this area; both were somehow lacking in Appalachia.

It has now been 50 years since Johnson stood with Mr. Fletcher, framing the region, knowingly or not, as a place in need and lacking somehow. The decades since have included a major effort to "lift up" individuals in Appalachia, but to do so without changing the fundamental economic and social structures in which they lived. Many good things arose from the anti-poverty campaign—VISTA workers provided much assistance while also highlighting the complexity of the region, for example, and area citizens established many remarkable organizations, including Appalshop, a very successful Appalachia-based arts institution.

Nonetheless, pervasive stereotypes of the region among Americans have not changed. Human beings cling to stereotypes, as Robert Cantwell (1993) has explained:

> We willingly participate in its artifices, willingly follow them into what we know is an illusion in order to grasp the truth of its dynamic form, which captures like the two dimensional drawings of three dimensional scenes, the moment of recognition itself and objectifies the participant element in it. That moment consequently becomes available for our contemplation as the only way we can master our fear, or satisfy our desire, of the stranger. No wonder we are so attached to our stereotypes; no wonder we are so convinced of their truth. For they are true—true for us, if not for the other: truths that we cannot otherwise know; truths that, moreover, we can vitally confront not in some shadowy underworld of introspection, but palpably and dramatically in the medium of a human relation. (p.183)

In the period since Johnson set out to eliminate want in America the nation's overall poverty

level has decreased from 19% to 15%, but many Appalachian counties continue to experience rates far above the national average. Coal mining continues in the region too, although with far fewer employees than decades prior, due to mechanization and technology changes. Unfortunately, land and water contamination from mining activities also has endured. Nevertheless, many area residents and many others from outside the region continue to labor for and within Appalachia on the basis not of compassion alone or of a sense of assisting a population lacking somehow, but on the foundation of a self-identified reasoning of love.

As the region's residents have responded to the "outside-in" narration process that has so mythologized them they have begun to take part in a psychogeographic process of unraveling, "why who one is comes to be experienced as indistinguishable from where one is, and in turn to where and who others are perceived to be in relation to one's own" (Stein, 1987, p.15). One such native, photographer Roger May, came to visit the Introduction to Appalachian Studies class I teach last week in conjunction with a performance at the Moss Center for the Arts by West Virginia native, country music star and environmental activist, Kathy Mattea. As May spoke with the students I was struck by his passion for the region, which is amply represented on his website:

> These images are a vignette into my working through the problem of the construction of memory versus reality. My work embraces the raw beauty of the mountains while keeping at arm's length the stereotypical images that have tried to define Appalachia for decades. . . . I am both an insider and an outsider and though I maintain a safe distance in my photographs, I attempt to invite you into the intimacy of family, of sacred space. *Testify* [May's recent book of photographs of Appalachia] is my bearing witness of a personal journey, of never truly being able to go home again, to seek answers from my ancestral home. Appalachia testifies of timelessness and natural beauty. (May, n.d.)

I was also struck by the way May tags his work on Facebook and Instagram: #heartwork. As I understand the term, "Heartwork" implies an effort from within. He is currently curating a project that is fully Kickstarter funded and being prepared by photographers native to and traveling through the region. The project, entitled, "Looking at Appalachia: Fifty Years After the War on Poverty" represents,

> [a]n attempt to explore the diversity of Appalachia and establish a visual counter point, this project will look at Appalachia fifty years after the declaration of the War on Poverty. Drawing from a diverse population of photographers within the region, this new crowd sourced image archive will serve as a reference that is defined by its people as opposed to political legislation. (May, 2014, para.3)

The project's submission guidelines allow any photographer to submit work from the year 2014, as long as the image was taken within the Appalachian Regional Commission's recognized

boundaries of Appalachia. This work will arise from and be about the region—a transformation of subject and object as one. One may offer criticisms of this effort, but its organizing concept, projecting what Appalachians see when they view their area's mountains, homes, and towns and fields, is much needed if the stereotypes of the region are to be overcome. More, only when the nation can see past those frames can it begin to recognize the entrenched and enduring conditions that contribute to Appalachia's persistent challenges. This project may represent one step in securing this necessary sea change in perspective.

Photo by Roger May (Untitled, 2014) Used with permission from photographer.

For these reasons, the hashtag "heartwork" resonates with me—I must admit I have used it myself. Nonetheless, I am struck that our nation's population will not soon reflect as deeply as necessary and even this fresh "gaze over the region" will result in many imagining that still another project is necessary to "help" Appalachia's residents, rather than finding ways and means to address the region's enduring underlying challenges. As I discuss pedagogy with my peers we are encouraged to utilize "problem based" learning. The result of these discussions is typically a project or an "answer." Rarely does the response involve changing basic assumptions about learning or knowledge. By analogy, for Appalachia, this sort of orientation results in persistent failure to seek change in the region's underlying economic and social conditions. The broader public has not been asked to rethink its suppositions and frames but instead has been permitted, even encouraged, to divide those in need in the region from those residing outside it. Heartwork seeks to break down this separation and to create a space in which all of the work undertaken can arise from genuine love for the place and its people, not as objects or subjects, but as citizens desiring to realize full and free lives. Such labor is hard work. Re/imagining a place is also heart rending work, but it must be done if

Appalachia is to emerge in the public mind as the complex and textured tapestry of land and people it is, as opposed to the misleading stereotypes by which its citizens have for so long, so often and so misleadingly been described.

Photo by Roger May (Untitled, 2014) Used with permission by photographer.

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Part 4: Leadership Challenges

The essays in this section examine leadership challenges in various contexts, offering a broader understanding of approaches to leadership in a rapidly changing world. Emily Barry-Murphy contributes to the ongoing immigration debate in the United States by analyzing the role of asylum officers, who, as she argues, daily make choices that affect not only individuals, but also their dependents and future family members and, implicitly at least thereby, future generations as well. These professionals assume this role by deciding who is a citizen and who is not under national law and therefore who will make up the country's electorate. Likewise, they decide who will be considered an illegal resident and be returned to their native country. Sabith Khan explores the roles of national leaders, using the examples of Turkey and Egypt, in defining a crisis and consequently, responses to it. Khan argues that a leader's sensitivity, flexibility, accurate understanding of events, and responsiveness make a profound difference in how crises unfold. Whitney Knollenberg discusses the shifting leadership needs of a decentralized and rapidly evolving tourism industry. She suggests that despite their complexity, a great many leadership lessons can be learned from other community and economic development efforts aimed at change, such as, for example, international aid organizations' struggle with diminishing support for governments that nonetheless lack profoundly important capacities for governance.

In her first essay in this part, Sarah Hanks reflects on the obstacles and uncertainties that NGO leaders and social entrepreneurs confront in their efforts to create lasting change. Hanks contends that leaders need to ask hard questions to ensure the nonprofit sector's capacity to address the complex and often wicked social problems with which they wish to engage. In her second piece in this section, Hanks surveys a share of the literature concerning governing board-executive dynamics and outlines several persisting tensions that must be addressed successfully if nonprofits are to be effectively led. She suggests that nonprofit organization board members and executive leaders should work vigorously to create conditions that permit them to build a professional relationship that results in shared efforts on behalf of the organization they serve. Anything less that such a commitment is likely to result in less than desired, not to say, desirable, outcomes.

Executive Discretion and the Simulation of Sovereignty in the Immigration Debate

Emily Barry-Murphy

Originally published March 28, 2013)

What to do about the nation's immigration policy is a hot political topic now. Elizabeth Jamison's discussion on the queering of the Alabama citizenry intrigues me. In particular, I was struck by how she drew on Michel Foucault (1977) to argue, "the citizenry and the immigrant body is a discursive text upon which power is inscribed through law enforcement; a Foucauldian disciplining of the communal body" (see Eli Jamison's commentary in this volume, "Who Are We, and Who Belongs Here?").

Like Jamison, I am interested in using Foucault to reflect on the immigration debate, but would like to do so via Cynthia Weber's work. In her 1995 volume, *Simulating Sovereignty*, Weber employed Foucault and his 1980 Discipline and Punish to show, "that some foundational truth underwrites a particular organization of knowledge and that truth is not opposed to but is an effect of power" (Weber, 1995, p. 33). Foucault's argument suggests how, "a search for meaning diverts attention from the production of meaning … in other words, are interpretive communities effects of discourses of truth and the workings of power" (Weber, 1995, p. 34). But, Weber then turns to a post-representational logic (following Boudrillard) to contend that the referent to which Foucault refers is itself a discursively constructed subject and that the state therefore is simulated because it cannot be a referent of itself.

So, if we accept Weber and view the state as a simulated concept, how exactly does this "simulation" occur, especially as it might pertain to the immigration debate? In Weber's work, instead of working through Boudrillard as she intends, she seems to return to Foucault to explain the process of representation and to argue that it is indeed a simulation. Weber raises the question of "who" comprises the U.S. domestic community through how it is discursively constructed and defined, but she addresses this concern by using a "simulated" referent of the "state"; that is, by addressing the regime in relation to interventions that it enacts in other parts of the world.

As Jamison observed, the big question the immigration debate should concern is the boundaries of how who is and is not part of the state and these are discursively defined. But, if we are to take a true Boudrillardian approach to understanding how the state and domestic community is defined, can we employ the simulated concept of the state to address the issue of who composes community? Perhaps we can consider a referent that, for all practical purposes, is not so "simulated." How can

we try to understand how the state is defined without defining the state by calling it a state? What is the unit of analysis here? I want to argue it is the "who," the individual. So, instead of thinking from a top-down perspective, it seems more productive to think about how the domestic community is discursively defined, or written, at the level of the individual.

"In practice it is the immigration officers on the ground, the worker bees, who actually exercise a critical role in defining the composition and character of the nation's immigrant community. Defining who makes up the state is not just the role of Congress."
–Emily Barry-Murphy

So who are these people who discursively construct the state? Who "writes" and defines the state at an individual level, when considering the immigration debate? My contention is that it is the people on the ground, the government workers, who are adjudicating and deciding immigration cases that are the individuals, in practice, who are actually defining, writing, and simulating the state. These immigration officials are "simulating sovereignty." First, they are literally writing into the U.S. records systems, who is a citizen and who is not and who will make up our electoral body and who is considered an illegal and will be returned to their native country. Additionally, immigration officers make decisions that affect not only individuals, but also their dependents and future family members and generations as well. Put differently, when an immigration official makes one decision on one application, he/she is actually making a choice that affirms or denies an individual as part of the state, which in turn affects the composition of our nation's legal domestic body for years to come.

Immigration officials implement the policies enacted by Congress in the form of the Immigration and Nationality Act, but these executive officers also play a role in shaping the rules they follow since the legislature inevitably relies considerably on their discretion. Each decision an official makes is subject to appeal to the immigration courts and to the Board of Appeals and beyond. In that sense, each such interpretation of statute and rules has the potential to influence case law and rulemaking in various circuit courts and influence how future immigration officers make their decisions.

Important questions arise when considering the role of the individual immigration officer in actually "writing" the state through his/her decisions: How do the choices of immigration officials define the state and why are they important? The reality is that these decision-makers evidence wide disparity in adjudicating applications and "simulating" the state in different ways. *Refugee Roulette*, by Ramji-Nogales, Schoenholtz, & Schrag (2009), offers several hypotheses concerning why there are wide differences among executive decision-makers in adjudication decisions in the refugee asylum process, in particular. Their book contends that the statutory definitions offered in immigration law and in the current debate are actually difficult to implement in practice. This fact gives individual officers great discretion in determining how to interpret particular definitions and provisions. In effect in such cases, the immigration or asylum officer can end up writing his/her own version of what an asylee is or should be. Additionally, it is up to the individual official to judge the credibility of the applicant in question. It is up to the immigration officer too to deny or to grant an applicant a specific benefit. These decisions depend inescapably in considerable measure on individual disposition and judgment.

Weber argues that,

> only by maintaining control over the depiction of its people can the state authoritatively claim to be the agent of its people. Without the ability to make credible its claims to both political and symbolic representation, the state risks forfeiting its presumed ability of representation and ultimately its sovereignty. (Weber, 1995, p.28)

I suggest that in practice it is the immigration officers on the ground, the worker bees, who exercise a critical role in defining the composition and character of the nation's immigrant community. Determining who makes up the state is not just the role of Congress. Immigration officers are not the only actors that play a role in defining our domestic community, but I argue that they do play quite a large role and do in fact "simulate" sovereignty through each decision they make. Perhaps our current "immigration debate" is overlooking the fact that it is individuals who make decisions regarding who is and who is not part of our domestic community and whatever new law and policy may be enacted will itself need to be implemented and immigration officers will continue, of necessity, to exercise discretion as they undertake that responsibility.

*** *Disclaimer:* These views are my personal views and do not in any way represent the U.S. government.

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Crises in the Middle East: Exploring the Shaping Role of Leader's Perceptions

Sabith Khan

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Egypt and Turkey continue to make front-page news, for different reasons. At the heart of much reporting concerning these two nations is the discourse surrounding democratization in the Middle East. A large share of the media analysis focuses on the ethnic and religious divisions that exist in these two countries and how those affect their citizens and the prospects for democracy in the region. Related to these issues are analyses concerning how the leaders of these two nations are managing the conflicts afoot in their respective countries.

This essay employs an argument first advanced by Margaret Hermann and Bruce Dayton (2009) of the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University to analyze recent developments in Turkey and Egypt. Those authors have suggested that crisis definition and framing by the head of state in the initial phase of a situation determine how the leader will react to it thereafter. The authors analyzed 81 crisis situations around the world to assess the importance of leaders' perceptions of "triggering events" in shaping their later decisions as matters unfolded. I consider how leaders in these two nations have reacted to unforeseen events in their countries: widespread protests concerning government policies in Egypt and demonstrations against the proposed development of Gezi Park in Istanbul, Turkey. Using Hermann and Dayton's framework, I argue that the scenario confronting each nation today could have been different if each leader had perceived the 'triggering event' for these situations in another way.

Defining "Crisis" in Turkey and Egypt. Turkey was recently rocked by popular protests of that government's initial decision to press ahead with an urban development project at the site of Taksim Gezi Park in Istanbul. The Gezi Park demonstrations began on May 28, 2013 with organized sit-ins to oppose the construction of a shopping mall in the park. The magnitude of the protests grew as the government responded with a brutal eviction of participating citizens and that action garnered widespread media attention. The Park protests soon became anti-government demonstrations and came to be seen by Western and some Turkish media organizations as epitomizing public reaction to the increasingly autocratic behavior of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey's Prime Minister. The opposition party already had accused him of pressing an Islamist agenda and had criticized his leadership as a result of his government's efforts to ban the sale of alcohol and to censure artists, actions that included accusing one famous pianist of blasphemy (Traynor & Letsch, 2013). As a

recent *New York Times* article pointed out, "Throughout the recent upheaval, Erdoğan's seemingly autocratic behavior has given new fuel to already-simmering questions about his aims and methods — whether he has turned more autocrat then democrat, or at the least whether a deft politician has fallen into overconfidence" (Arango, 2013, para.2). The prime minister's actions prior to his handling of the Park sit-ins had already been perceived by a wide segment of the Turkish population as part of an Islamist agenda (Safak, 2013). Some observers also described his statements as having a divisive effect on Turkish society. In a story about the protests, *The Guardian* quoted an Amnesty International official, Andrew Gardner, as saying, "His rhetoric from the start has been negative and inflammatory, provocative. But his speeches have increasingly turned not only against protesters, but also against people who defend the rights of protesters" (Traynor & Letsch, 2013, para.16).

> "The role of leaders is crucial when unexpected events occur as the public turns to them to help it understand and make sense of what is happening. These two recent cases [Egypt and Turkey] illustrate the key role that the head of state's perceptions and choices play in defining a crisis and how it develops."
> *–Sabith Khan*

News accounts suggest Erdoğan initially perceived the Park sit-in as a small environmental group protest of no consequence and that framing and the impunity with which he acted thereafter on it, cost him much political capital and represented a deep misunderstanding and miscalculation on his part. Originally, the prime minister chose to dismiss his critics as so many "cranks" and he went so far as to label the protestors "capulcu," (looters) and sought thereafter to ignore them. His position only hardened later when the police forcibly removed protestors from the park. Strong criticism and media attention from the West and within the country forced Erdoğan to rethink his stance.

Mohamed Morsi, the now deposed President of Egypt, behaved in an autocratic manner during his one-year tenure, as many observers, both within and outside of Egypt have pointed out. The Army and a large segment of Egyptian society perceived his actions and policies during his

presidency as a threat to democracy. His efforts to entrench an Islamist agenda by modifying the nation's constitution, and his failure to deliver on his promise to work to fix the economy in his first 100 days in office while also distancing himself from the Army were some of his blunders. But he seemed oblivious to the impact of his actions and the sense of urgency with which he had to react, when the citizens of Egypt demanded a different approach to handing their fragile democracy in the first few months of his presidency.

Addressing a gathering on completing one year in office, he roundly criticized the opposition and secularists for dividing the country. Yet, the facts suggested otherwise. An article published in the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, during the crisis pointed out, for example, "Activists claim 15 million Egyptians have signed a petition calling for his departure, and expect a significant proportion of that number to turn out on Sunday to force him from office" (Kingsley, 2013, para.8). A disconnect from "reality" haunted Morsi's presidency and he lost his post to what some observers have dubbed a "coup" and others have called a 'popular vote' against his rule. I argue that his decision to ignore both the Army's ultimatum to negotiate and the de facto 'popular vote' of 15 million citizens, who took to the streets to protest his regime, provide evidence of his inability to grasp the gravity of the situation confronting his government (Kirkpatrick, 2013). As a recent article in *The National Interest* noted, perhaps Morsi saw the Army's ultimatum and the demonstrations as little more than a demand to step down, and from his perspective, he was justified in staying in power as he was a democratically elected leader (Borghard, 2013). In any case, this stance framed his handling of the crisis. He saw himself as the rightful representative of the "great people of Egypt," the one who embodied their true aspirations, irrespective of the millions protesting in the streets.

Role of leaders in crisis definition and response. The leaders in these two cases had to decide whether the situation confronting them constituted a crisis. Hermann and Dayton (2009) contend that contraction of authority, in the sense of ultimate power of framing the situation resting with the leader, may well determine how a situation is managed and addressed thereafter. Morsi's refusal to change his position and his view that he was the "legitimate" representative of the people and as such, need not compromise or shift his positions or actions, and Erdoğan's labeling of the original Gezi Park protestors as petty thieves and their protests as a minor disturbance for the country, are illustrative of the importance of this insight. Previous research has also pointed to the impact of the long-term implications of how a crisis is framed. For example, the George W. Bush administration framed the September 11, 2011 terrorist strike as "America under attack" and this understanding has

remained dominant for more than a decade, despite frequent criticism. Given that framing of a crisis necessarily occurs and that the individual perceived as in charge plays a vital role in that process, at least in its initial phases, a leader's narrative concerning a triggering event and how to address it becomes crucial.

I am persuaded that Morsi might still be in power had he addressed the concerns raised about his mismanagement of the economy as those arose and had he also behaved less autocratically and actually listened and responded to alternate points of view and actively pursued compromise positions as a result. Had he framed the Army's ultimatum to negotiate and street protests as legitimate demands for reform and acted accordingly, things could arguably be different in Egypt today. The same can be said about Erdoğan's political standing, both locally and internationally, had he agreed initially to make the concessions concerning Gezi Park to which he ultimately acceded.

Implications of this research. While this inquiry points to the critical significance of leader responses in crisis scenarios, it is not predictive. The role of leaders is crucial when unexpected events occur as the public turns to them to help it understand and make sense of what is happening. These two recent cases illustrate the key role that the head of state's perceptions and choices play in defining a crisis and how it develops. Their sensitivity, flexibility, understanding of events and responsiveness can make a profound difference in how events unfold.

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Lessons in Leadership: Responding to Challenges in Tourism Development

Whitney Knollenberg

October 24, 2013

Recent postings on RE: Reflections and Explorations have addressed a wide variety of topics, ranging from Anna Erwin's discussion of the need to address food security for the world's impoverished populations (see Erwin's commentary "Kenya to America – Tackling Problems at the Crux" in this volume,) to Lyusyena Kirakosyan's examination of theatre as a form of peacebuilding in conflict areas (See Kirakosyan's commentary "Creating Conditions for Peace and Justice: A Decade of Bond Street Theatre's Efforts in Afghanistan" in this volume). The theme of change runs through many of these contributions—shifts in policy, mindsets, or culture. In many communities tourism development represents a form of change that promises both potential benefits, such as increased tax revenues or employment opportunities and costs, including increased costs of living or loss of cultural and natural resources. I wish here to address briefly an issue at the core of all purposeful social change, leadership. However, initiating and implementing efforts to secure change inevitably results in resistance. This requires leaders to face challenges, such as those discussed by Sabith Khan in the development of responses to crises (see Khan's commentary "Crises in the Middle East: Exploring the Shaping Role of Leader's Perceptions" in this volume).

These difficult tests are intensified by both the complexity of the environments in which change occurs and by social forces, including privatization. Those leading efforts to catalyze new ways of thinking or acting must be able to address these factors to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved. While it is crucial to gain an understanding of how leaders address these concerns in all efforts to obtain change, I believe such inquiry is especially important for tourism. The tourism system is composed of a broad variety of stakeholders and leadership is vital to ensure that its benefits are maximized and its costs are minimized.

Tourism involves a wide group of actors, ranging from those who directly benefit from its economic impacts such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, and transportation providers to those that gain indirectly from travel-related spending, including governments. The residents of destination communities are vital stakeholders, as both the positive and negative effects of tourism will directly affect them. Whether residents, service providers or indirect beneficiaries, all of these actors shape tourism's success. Therefore, it is vitally important that leaders find ways and means to organize and integrate their efforts appropriately, while ensuring that they share in the economic, social,

cultural, and environmental costs and benefits that travel generates. Such leadership often emerges from state, county, or municipal tourism offices, such as our own Montgomery County Tourism Development Council. However, the tourism industry has lately been the subject of growing privatization efforts, as illustrated by the recent decision to eliminate funding for the Washington State Tourism Office. This agency was formerly responsible for supporting tourism development and marketing for all of Washington state, but those duties are now the province of the Washington Tourism Alliance, a nonprofit group of industry members.

> "While there are idiosyncrasies related to the tourism system's complexity that must be considered, a great many lessons in leadership can be learned from other community and economic development efforts aimed at change." *–Whitney Knollenberg*

While formal organizations such as the Montgomery County Tourism Development Council or the Washington Tourism Alliance serve as one critical source of leadership for tourism-related development efforts, potential for vision and energy in the sector also arises from other sources whose original impetus may not come from the tourism industry itself, but whose purposes and efforts create travel destination possibilities, as seen in the work conducted by HandMade in America, a nonprofit organization dedicated to growing Western North Carolina's economy through handicrafts. HandMade's efforts to create a network of artists resulted in development of "craft trails," driving tours featuring local artisans that have attracted many visitors to its region.

What is not fully understood, however, is precisely how those in leadership roles develop in the tourism industry. Little is known about the attributes of leaders in this sector, the styles of leadership they embrace, or the strategies they are now using to address the challenges of complexity and privatization. It is important to the field and to the profession to explore which leadership characteristics tourism system stakeholders' value and why as well as how they rank those in identifying sectoral leaders. The decentralized and rapidly evolving character of the tourism system suggests that these qualities may be quite contextual in character. However, attaining such insights

will aid both in charting the forms of leadership now in evidence among tourism stakeholders while also helping to identify strategies that future leaders may employ at the local, state, national, or international levels to encourage cooperation among stakeholders.

While there are idiosyncrasies related to the tourism system's complexity that must be considered, a great many lessons in leadership can be learned from other community and economic development efforts aimed at change, such as those discussed previously in this space by Erwin and Kirakosyan. Tourism today, like international and community development efforts more generally, faces the challenge of continuing efforts to decrease government involvement in it. Both complexity and changes in public sector roles in development at all levels can have a major impact on efforts to build and also to exercise leadership for the field.

Re-framing Social Change: What Questions Should Guide Today's NGO Leaders and Social Entrepreneurs?

Sarah Hanks

(Originally published December 6, 2013)

Popular mythology concerning them notwithstanding, any effort to come to grips with the purposes and desired outcomes of today's nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) requires a thorough examination of the complexity of the problems they face, the social systems in which they operate and the tensions that exist among the aims that animate them. Nonprofit and NGO leaders particularly, are expected to empower communities to identify gaps between their current and desired states of being, to ask the right questions, and to develop networks that resource, implement and evaluate progress toward individual and scalable change.

This reflection argues that nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations are charged with creating social change by addressing wicked problems. That is, these civil society entities are expected to develop the strategies and obtain the resources necessary to design and implement intentional, collaborative, values-based activities or ongoing processes that seek to advance groups, communities, social structures, and services and that result in increased social capital and resilience.

The challenges facing leaders within the sector are ever changing. However, identifying and understanding the types of problems NGO leaders and social entrepreneurs must address provides scholars and practitioners with a framework in which to support their efforts to create lasting change. Such awareness is vital lest our society fall into a complacency born of an unwillingness to address creatively and collectively the issues we must confront. As John Gardner (as cited by Wren, 1995) has warned:

> Could it be that we suppress our awareness of problems — however ominous — because we have lost all conviction that we can do anything about them? . . . Suppose that our institutions have become so lacking in adaptiveness that they can no longer meet new challenges? (p. 5)

Grint (2005) has argued that the types of challenges many NGOs now face may be characterized as wicked problems —they are more than complicated. They are complex, novel, intractable, poorly structured, without any apparent solution and they have no clear endpoint (Grint, 2005). That is, these concerns, including poverty, addiction, and mental illness, for example, have no known "solutions." Moreover, such "answers" as are developed to address them often generate other "problems" without obvious solutions. This scenario should lead prudent leaders not to abandon their aims, but instead to realize that what they are seeking is "just better or worse alternatives" (Grint, 2005, p. 147).

Gardner (1995) and Grint (2005) have both suggested that as the uncertainty of the problem and potential strategies to address it multiply, leaders are required to ask more and better questions. As Grint (2005) has observed, "The leader's role with a wicked problem is to ask the right questions rather than provide the right answers because the answer may not be self-evident and will require a collaborative process to make any kind of progress" (p. 147). Meanwhile, Gardner (1995) has asked whether our society any longer possesses the shared social mettle to confront the complexity that accompanies social change efforts noting, "I do not find the problems themselves as frightening as the questions they raise concerning our capacity to gather our forces and act" (p. 4). Gardner's (1995) emphasis on the imperative to stimulate collective action and the necessity of ensuring a popular willingness and capacity to address big questions and wicked problems without expecting that these will shortly cede to technical or other solutions, neatly captures the environment in which NGOs and social entrepreneurs presently find themselves.

> "During the coming years, nonprofit leaders will need to develop and employ new strategies and continue to ask hard questions in order to ensure the sector's capacity to address the complex and often wicked challenges wrought by continuous social change."
> –*Sarah Hanks*

Social entrepreneurs serve as catalysts for change by deconstructing targeted problems and framing initiatives to address them focused on human needs and relationships. Critical to the success of the social entrepreneur is an understanding of the complex networks in which relevant stakeholders are enmeshed and a disciplined discovery process that remains focused and open to both small scale and sweeping change.

The systems in which change may be catalyzed are embedded in issue networks that are "designed to deal with a problem — drug abuse or domestic violence or homelessness — rather than a person" (Goldsmith, 2010, p. 28). Shifting the frame from such "problems" to people, and engaging stakeholders in hearing, understanding, and responding to individual and collective voices, is essential to securing sustainable social change.

Today's NGO leaders must balance the claims that come along with our cultural devotion to individualism, garner and manage resources effectively, discern allies and possibilities, collaborate appropriately to promote shared action, ensure accountability to funders and define and measure success meaningfully and transparently as they press initiatives. And this list is hardly exhaustive. Leaders operating in this reality must demonstrate perseverance, vision, commitment, patience, and vulnerability. None of these is easy to attain and there are surely tensions among them as aspirations, but all have been made more difficult to achieve as the nonprofit sector has shifted its focus to systems that, in many cases, undermine an essential focus on individual needs in society.

During the coming years, nonprofit leaders will need to develop and employ new strategies and continue to ask hard questions to ensure the sector's capacity to address the complex and often wicked challenges wrought by continuous social change. What questions are the right questions for these purposes? What queries have gone unasked and unanswered regarding the state of NGOs, communities, and social entrepreneurship? What must be true for a deeper, richer dialogue to begin or continue in pursuit of lasting social change?

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Nonprofit Chief Executives and Board Members

Sarah Hanks

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The complexity of executive director-governing board relationships, coupled with the rapid rate of change confronting the nonprofit sector invite an examination of the roles and responsibilities of these major actors. The relationship between the chief executive of a nonprofit and his or her governing board members is multi-faceted and often shapes the organization's effectiveness. The trust-control nexus, internal and external environmental forces, power, accountability, and managerial-mission orientation capture a strong share of the factors that shape relationships between boards and executive directors. Ongoing changes in the operating environments of nonprofits include a continuing imperative to obtain financial support, oversight, and accountability by public grant-making and regulatory agencies, as well as increased demand for resources and services at the individual and community level (Bridgeland, McNaught, Reed, & Dunkelman, 2009) are now requiring executive directors and their governing boards to approach their responsibilities in new ways.

Nonprofit organization leaders daily face the task of achieving their institution's mission-related goals while also maintaining a healthy financial portfolio and ensuring a working relationship with their entity's governing board (Carroll & Stater, 2008). Scholars have articulated the last named, the relationship between nonprofit chief executives and their boards, in several ways. Historically, many analysts have viewed the ties of these actors as hierarchical in character, in which the director is a subordinate who reports to the board. (Heimovics, Herman, & Coughlin, 1993) Other scholars have suggested the board and executive director should be seen as partners, equally engaged in and responsible for an organization's successes and failures. This description implies a, "resolution of the tension that often underscores the dynamic relationship [between the executive director and the board], rather than the complex shifting of power" from the board to the executive that is commonly noted by scholars and practitioners alike. (Golensky, 1993, p. 179)

Heimovics, Herman, and Coughlin (1993) meanwhile, have asserted that the executive director is central to nonprofit governance:

> We explain the psychological centrality by recognizing that the chief executive is often at the center of the organization's information flow and can have an informational advantage over the board. Professional expertise and experience that comes with special organizational knowledge and intelligence may give the chief executive the potential to influence the organization. (p. 420)

This perspective, a variant of agency theory, which suggests that board monitoring activities

must be separate from staff leader's management efforts (Miller, 2002), is underpinned by the view that the executive director may have more at stake in career terms than individual board members do. (Heimovics et al., 1993) Furthermore, it is common for executives, with unlimited access to organizational information and professional expertise, to develop a broadly salient identity in their role while serving as a key ambassador of their nonprofit's mission and services. (Heimovics et al., 1993)

"This brief survey of executive-board governance dynamics raises the question of under what conditions nonprofit board and executive leaders will finally widely embrace a view of this relationship as a form of shared leadership. That leadership, however useful or appropriate, is nonetheless itself characterized by several persisting tensions that must be successfully addressed if nonprofits are to be effective." –*Sarah Hanks*

Given the relative autonomy and power of executive directors, tensions may arise with their boards, particularly when staff leaders emphasize a mission-orientation to organizational governance and their board members adopt a managerial focus. As Reid and Turbide (2014) have explained:

> Boards may counterbalance such expert leadership perspectives by relying on external proxy assessments such as granting agencies' peer juries or knowledgeable donors to substitute for their own lack of mission knowledge. On the other hand, a strong managerial orientation by the board could divert the organization from its mission for a greater emphasis on efficiency. The tensions between managerial and professional expertise can influence the board's ability to assess risk for mission-orientated projects and decision-making. (p. 165)

Applying agency theory to the executive director-board relationship and positing that, "the board's role is to act on behalf of the owner(s) (principal) to control the manager's (agents') opportunism," results in a clash of the managerial and professional expertise of board and staff members. This "trust-control nexus" must be examined as an influential force in nonprofit governance and as a significant factor shaping an organization's capacity to learn. (Reid & Turbide,

2014, p. 165) This endemic tension requires the development of trust between board members and their executive directors if it is to be ameliorated. (Reid & Turbide, 2014, p. 165)

Norman et al. have defined trust as a, "'willingness to be vulnerable' in one's relationship with another person based on positive expectations regarding that person's behavior" (Norman, Avolio, & Luthans, 2010, p. 351). Trust implies an expectation of predictability and dependability in another person's actions (Norman et al., 2010). BoardSource (2010) has highlighted the importance of trust for effective nonprofit organization governance observing:

> Any collaborative effort relies on trust among team members, and building this trust is critical to the team's ultimate success. Board members must be able to rely on each other — as team members — openly and without reservation. The chair, individual board members, and the board as a body must develop a trusting relationship with each other and with the chief executive to consolidate mutual efforts and objectives. In short, when trust is present, everyone is driven by a common goal and shares information openly, accepting positive interdependence. (p. 318)

Creating a culture of trust poses a challenge for board chairs, executive directors, and board members, as their relationships are shaped by loyalty, power, and individual diversity. (BoardSource, 2010) When a trusting culture can be developed, however, "board members feel free to debate, question, openly examine, and even argue with each other's points of view… Respect for each other's contributions is the true foundation for professional reliance and interdependence" (p. 318). Reid and Turbide (2014) have argued that trust, "generates horizontal relationships that enable communication, collaboration, and learning but control ensures the relationships remain well structured" (p. 166). Trust among board members and executive staff is essential for information sharing, communication, and the development of shared conceptions of the board's governance role.

In the absence of organizational trust, board members and staff leaders may find it difficult to navigate the various internal and external responsibilities necessary to ensure mission attainment. As Reid and Turbide (2014) have suggested:

> The internal governance work of monitoring and coaching is closely linked with the executive leadership and involves knowledge of the mission, management, and financial structure of an organization's business. External governance work involves advocacy, influence and negotiation with an orientation to environmental players and networks. Boards may find it difficult to maintain both an internal and an external regard when asked, for example to simultaneously critique management performance and advocate in the community for the organization's mandate and needs. (p.167)

Setting priorities and monitoring their internal and external governing tasks requires that board members carefully consider the organization's mission, resource streams, and strategy. In addition,

any effort to balance these claims necessitates a discussion of power and accountability as constructs that span and link an organization's internal and external governing environments (Reid & Turbide, 2014).

Obtaining a full understanding of the dynamics of power and accountability as these relate to nonprofit organizations requires that executives and board members alike understand the dependence of their entities on exchanges with actors in their external environments. Heimovics et al. (1993) have asserted that nonprofit organizations, "are open to and particularly dependent upon the flow of resources from outside … [Therefore, learning to think and act politically] is an essential factor underlying both an organization's viability and its leadership effectiveness" (p. 425). These authors found that the most successful nonprofit executives, "exercise their personal and organizational power, and are sensitive to external factors that may influence internal decisions and politics" (Ibid). This capacity or set of capabilities enhances their ability to mediate environmental dependencies and diminishes a key tension facing their organizations (Heimovics et al., 1993, p. 421).

A board, whether all or a share of its members, gains and loses power vís-a-vís its executive director as social structures, contexts and organizational resources change over time. Thus, who possesses specific power and authority within a nonprofit entity is ever changing. The fact that nonprofit organizations cannot exist outside of a sociopolitical context implies the need for further research regarding the role of power and its influence on nonprofit organizational and governance effectiveness.

The complexity of power as a factor influencing governance processes must also be explored in the context of organizational roles and responsibilities, as staff members transition among management and leadership activities. Chait, Ryan, and Taylor (2005) have argued strongly that board actors, especially, must shift the roles they play in nonprofit organizational leadership and governance if they are to navigate the tensions implicit in their ties with their organizations' chief executive, "While nonprofit managers have gravitated toward the role of leadership, trustees have tilted more toward the role of management. The shift has occurred because … trusteeship, as a concept, has stalled while leadership, as a concept has accelerated" (p. 4). Balancing this tension requires that institutional leaders, "enable organizations to confront and move forward on complex, value-laden problems that defy a 'right' answer or 'perfect' solution" (Chait et al., 2005, p. 134). Additionally, nonprofit executives must be committed to investing time to aid in board development efforts. Herman and Heimovics (1990) suggested a correlation between the time an executive spends with board members individually and as a governing body, and that group's overall effectiveness.

Leadership, in this sense, becomes the responsibility of the collective, relationally expanding the process beyond the central figure of the executive director (Herman & Heimovics, 1990).

This brief review of insights from the academic literature addressing the nonprofit organization executive-board relationship suggests the usefulness of continued study of these questions and especially of more thoroughgoing board development initiatives. As Heimovics et al. (1993) have suggested, a "with and through" approach to board growth requires the cultivation of trust and empowerment that has the power to reform board governance and oversight, resolve questions of accountability, and enhance mission-attainment throughout the sector. Overall, this brief survey of executive-board governance dynamics raises the question of under what conditions nonprofit trustees and executive leaders will finally widely embrace a view of this relationship as a form of shared leadership. That leadership, however useful or appropriate, is nonetheless itself characterized by several persisting tensions that must be successfully addressed if nonprofits are to be effective.

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Part 5: Democracy, Citizenship, and Ethics

Many different ideas of citizenship govern the relations among people in contemporary societies. The essays in this section investigate some of the challenges that existing power relations pose for the possibility of democratic action within populations. Collectively, these authors argue that the essence of democracy lies in civil dialogue, equity, and diversity. The contributors outline an ethical vision of citizenship that can secure unity amidst diversity, thereby laying the groundwork for a truly egalitarian politics.

Examining the implications of Alabama's recent state immigration law that sought to redefine identity and belonging in that state and was justified as a barrier to undocumented immigrants, Elizabeth Jamison draws on Michel Foucault to reflect on what it means to be an American citizen. Jamison urges America's political leaders and people to engage in a country-wide conversation concerning national identity to prevent the piecemeal adoption of uninformed policy promoted by a share of the lawmakers of Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, and several other states. In his essay, Marc Thomas examines racism in society with the help of cognitive science. Thomas contends that the active exercise of empathy, along with continuing efforts to promote equitable social interactions among members of different groups, and at all ages provide hope for a shift in unjust racial frames over time. In his essay, Eric Hodges explores the meaning behind the popular phrase "support the troops." As a Marine Corps veteran, Hodges relates his reflection to his personal experiences and suggests that for most who employ or embrace it, "supporting the troops," amounts to backing a notion of the common good.

Christian Matheis turns to Henry David Thoreau, a 19th century political philosopher, in his essay examining questions of contemporary ethics and politics. Matheis finds Thoreau's political ethics to be a helpful diagnostic resource for deciding whether a state is acting in its citizens' best interests. In her second essay in this section, Elizabeth Jamison evaluates the implications of Starbucks' corporate decision to request that its patrons not carry weapons into its shops. Jamison argues that the firm's expressed desire to remain neutral in the gun control debate along with its policy choice created a space for a civil dialogue that could ultimately contest existing power relations, which often support individuals' right to carry guns in public spaces. Finally, Andrea Hamre reflects on "respectability politics" towards three distinct groups: African Americans, women, and cyclists. Hamre underscores the importance of critical dialogue in each domain, resulting in focused actions that address the root causes of systemic problems, including racism, sexism, and aggressive driving.

Who Are We, and Who Belongs Here?

Elizabeth Jamison

(Originally published March 21, 2013)

I have been pondering a question provoked by a recent Reflections and Explorations commentary by Sarah Lyon-Hill entitled, "How Do We Move beyond Rhetoric?" (see Lyon-Hill's essay in this volume). How do we generate public rhetoric about the questions that matter? I want to suggest we need more rhetoric, but of a different sort, about questions that have no perfect answers; in fact, I want to advocate for answers likely to be "good enough." My logic is, by asking better questions and acknowledging at the outset that proposed solutions are likely to be only "good enough," perhaps our popular rhetoric can shift *from* how the solution to any given public concern fails as a political strategy *to why* it falls short of representing what we think it means to be an American. Without public discussions, arguments, and agreements about who we collectively believe ourselves to be, we continually risk settling on answers that may not even be "good enough."

Put differently, I mean to suggest that by skipping the discussion of "what does this mean as an American," we subtly redefine our national identity by omission. For example, in the 2008-2010 health care debate, no meaningful public rhetoric addressed what rights and responsibilities the United States has to the *health* of its populace. Instead, we debated and passed a law framed primarily as a means to pay for treatment of *sickness*. As a result, experts contend we missed opportunities to incentivize healthy living, which would increase Americans' quality of life while helping to control escalating costs. Still, perhaps the outcome we achieved was "good enough." Alternatively, in the recent "sequester" controversy no one asked how our national sense-of-self was reflected in a fiscal policy choice widely acknowledged to be a "self-inflicted wound" (Grier, Trumbull, & Thomas, 2013) that imposed avoidable suffering on the American people. Though some analysts have predicted the "sequester" will be negotiated into submission in coming months, I wonder if that outcome is "good enough"?

As individuals with limited time and resources, we make "good enough" choices all the time. Our daily decisions inherently question and contest who we believe ourselves to be. In the now ubiquitous musical, Les Miserables, Jean Valjean asks in song, "Who am I?" reflecting his internal deliberation about saving a condemned man. Valjean knows that assisting the person will lead to the unenviable choice of returning to prison or to life on the run to save his daughter (spoiler alert: he runs). Like Valjean's, our individual identity is regularly adjudicated by the daily choices we make

from a slate of less than optimal possibilities. Do I accept a demeaning job offer or risk continued unemployment? Do I attend my child's school ceremony or stay at work to meet tomorrow's deadline? Do I keep my job, risking the security of my undocumented parent, or do I pack up my life and start over in another state? Each decision [re]defines who we are in the face of who *we believe ourselves* to be. Sometimes, as in the last case, we also define who we are as citizens.

> "Some states have already redefined citizenship in ways that imperil the immigrant body regardless of legal notions of 'belonging.' In this context, what does it mean to be an American citizen?"
> – *Elizabeth Jamison*

The 2012 presidential election thrust the issue of national immigration policy reform onto the political stage, as the *immigrant body* became a new power broker in national politics. However, I was struck that this supposed argument took for granted the answer to the question, "*Who are we* as a nation?" For Democrats and Republicans alike the issue was, rather, how we should reconcile that past with current immigration challenges. Nonetheless, the mythology of the United States as a "nation of immigrants" was publicly dissimilated by state-initiated "reforms" when several states asked, "who am I?" and answered with very different definitions of "who belongs here." Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Indiana, and Utah have now very clearly asked and legally answered, who does and does not belong in their states, and in so doing, distinguished state "citizenship" as something separate from United States "citizenship." The consequence? If we do not soon engage in a national conversation concerning what it means to be an American citizen, these states will do it for us willy-nilly. Is such an outcome good enough?

Alabama offers a particular cautionary tale. In 2011, that state passed what is widely regarded as the most restrictive, some say "mean-spirited," and detailed immigration law in the United States, and Alabama continues to battle in court to secure its full implementation. Essentially, the state's immigration law has one goal: to make life within its bounds completely untenable for a person living there illegally. And it has one sub-goal, to make it likewise impossible for a *legal citizen or permanent resident* to support an undocumented immigrant. A critical intention of the law was to change the conditions of residence for undocumented people while also redefining the

responsibilities and duties of Alabama's citizens. Virtually no aspects of community life were left untouched by the statute, and for an immigrant or anyone who looks like an immigrant (i.e., citizen, legal resident, or not), the policy created a new, visual burden of proof for belonging.

The state's law constructs an idea of what it means to be a citizen with characteristics distinct from those of how being American has long been defined, thereby queering the understanding of citizenship. Martin Parker (2002) has defined queering as "an attitude of unceasing disruptiveness" (p. 148). The Alabama legislature queered the definition of "citizen" literally and physically through its intentional, continual disruption of the term's function. In Alabama, the public rhetoric, if not the language of the relevant law, makes clear that the targeted *immigrant body* is Latino/a, and the statute enables other "citizens" to see who belongs through an implicit criterion of whiteness. In effect, this law created two dichotomous categories of meaning: "illegal immigrant" and "Alabama citizen." Each requires *visible recognition*, and with that standing now negatively equated with the Latino/a body; this is the body that does not belong, regardless of "legal" status. The citizenry and the immigrant body is a discursive text upon which power is inscribed through law enforcement; a Foucauldian disciplining of the communal body (1977). "Citizens" not *recognizable* as Alabamians (using the assumed criterion of whiteness) risk being targeted for punitive action by police and *other citizens* alike. The body of the "Latino/a other" is the notion against which state citizenship is now framed. Recognition, the Latino/a body as a discursive text, is a queered feature of the new Alabama citizen.

With the mandate of citizenry enforcement, Alabama has been transformed into a contemporary version of Bentham's "Panopticon," where surveillance is unseen yet constant and constitutes an "all-seeing" omnipresence in daily life (Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006, p.44). The law requires racial profiling of all citizens, by all citizens, through recognition of those who do not belong. This queering of citizenship, the transference of policing from the state to citizen, is a unique feature of Alabama's law. However, it is a direct result of a legislative discussion about *who belongs here* (in Alabama), during a time of no counter-rhetoric exploring *who belongs here* (in the United States).

The cautionary tale of this turn for national immigration reform is this: some states have already redefined citizenship in ways that imperil the *immigrant body* regardless of legal notions of "belonging." In this context, what does it mean to be an American citizen? It strikes me that this is a question that matters, and we need a national conversation and rhetoric that considers an answer that is "good enough." If we do not develop that response, other states will, as Alabama has already

done, redefine citizenship across the nation, on a state-by-state basis. Is this "good enough" for an issue so fundamental to national identity? More deeply, do we wish to define that character around fear and exclusion as Alabama has done? If not, how do we have a national immigration reform discussion in "the land of immigrants" without simultaneous public rhetoric about what being a citizen of the United States means? I am very sorry to say that I am afraid we are about to find out.

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Do Neurons Hold the Key to Understanding Racism in Society?

Marc Thomas

(Originally published April 4, 2013)

The common wisdom is that the United States is now enjoying a "post-racial" era. So strong is this view that it is presently being employed to justify efforts to roll back the Voting Rights Act and to end affirmative action programs. Nonetheless, it is a myth. Let's set the record straight: almost every serious academic study reveals racism to be alive and well in the United States. Indeed, prejudice towards blacks by whites actually has increased in recent years according to a 2012 study by scholars from Stanford University, the University of Michigan, and the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. This commentary examines some evidence of this situation and argues that is it not irremediable. I do this by adopting an interdisciplinary approach to understand racism in society while drawing on recent findings of cognitive science. I argue that some whites are intentionally seeking to maintain their privilege in society by strategically popularizing belief in a black pathology, while simultaneously promoting the idea that America is a post-racial society.

One might want to remove oneself from the discussion in these sorts of arguments; "I am not so easily manipulated" you might say. Consider then NOT thinking about an elephant, when the idea of that animal is introduced. Really, try doing it. As it turns out, you cannot and that is because 98% of thought is not conscious and is more reflexive than reflective, according to George Lakoff (2008), a well-known cognitive scientist. Neural modeling has revealed that the brain creates event structures or executing schemas to understand the world in terms of what the body can do. These frames exist as narratives with both an intellectual and an emotive content facilitated by neural binding circuitry. For example, there is an established frame in the United States and England for pulling yourself up by your bootstraps (the Horatio Alger myth). Parents, teachers, and the media reinforce this narrative with no corresponding contrasting dominant frame for those who work hard, but are nonetheless not able to achieve financial independence due to a myriad of structural forces beyond their control (Lakoff, 2008). Racial frames in this country are similarly potent and have a long history, with the earliest claiming the biological inferiority of blacks. This contention has fortunately been debunked, but it has meanwhile been replaced with a frame that suggests blacks are culturally inferior. Other narratives simultaneously facilitate the minimization and masking of racism. Let us start with the latter.

Recording artist Kanye West famously called President George W. Bush a racist in 2005 and

in his memoir, Bush later referred to the incident as the worst moment of his presidency. Bush was outraged because he perceived that he held no particular ill will toward blacks. This outlook defines (and minimizes) racism as antagonism or as isolated incidents of discrimination. Meanwhile, scholars such as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2001) have argued that racism is better conceptualized in structural terms. Doing so allows analysts to identify racialized social systems in which groups participate as either beneficiaries or subordinates. When so viewed, it becomes clear that the interest of the dominant group lies in preserving the status quo. Princeton University Professor emeritus Cornel West argued on the radio show, *Democracy Now*, in November 2010 that Kanye West was right: "His (Bush's) policies were racist in effect and consequence" (Democracy Now, 2010). West's central point was that when racism is embedded in everyday life it becomes invisible.

"Where racial frames keep people separated, empathy reconnects them by ensuring that whites not only become aware of but also feel the impact of racism." – *Marc Thomas*

There is perhaps no more powerful frame in such terms today than that of the cultural inferiority of blacks. Older readers might recall President Ronald Reagan's unfounded claim about a Cadillac-driving black welfare queen. The president employed such rhetoric to attack social insurance programs that supported the poor. Similarly, Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) along with colleagues from both sides of the aisle during a debate on welfare policy that ultimately resulted in the removal of an entitlement to support for the indigent (142 Cong. Rec. S8076 ,1996) chastised poor, African-American teen-aged girls who purportedly wound up on welfare after having illegitimate children. Studies from the period, however, revealed that 69% of all nonmarital births occurred to older women, not teens, and that 70% of all teen births were to white women (Sparks, 2003). Dorgan's remarks nonetheless reinforced the "immoral Blacks on welfare" frame to which President Reagan had given voice. The media plays a role in supporting these narrative myths through what Jan Pieterse (1995) has referred to as the social rhetoric of images. This argument underscores the point that it is difficult to use facts to dislodge the frame of blacks as culturally inferior and a dangerous "other." The outcome is glaring.

Studies reveal that when a "white" neighborhood reaches 7% black, a massive white exodus often

ensues. Blacks charged with the murder of a white victim receive the death penalty more than any other combination of crime and race (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Teachers are trained to avoid race-based bias, yet Parks and Kennedy (2007) have tested the views that a sample of teachers held on beauty and competence, based on race. Their analysis showed that teachers considered black, "unattractive" children (both boys and girls) less competent than youngsters in other categories. In sum, these frames are powerful, resilient and often operate subconsciously to ensure that those being "othered" remain in their assigned social place.

This resilience of views and norms explains why efforts to eliminate misinformation with facts have not yielded rapid and desired results. While the process of changing social frames is difficult, Lakoff has argued that they can indeed be supplanted as the brain responds at an intellectual and emotional level to empathy. Halpern and Weinstein (2004) have similarly suggested that, "empathy serves as a normative ideal for a rehumanized view of the other" (p.583). Decety and Jackson (2006) have defined empathy as "an interaction between any two individuals, with one experiencing and sharing the feelings of the other" (p.54). Where racial frames keep people separated empathy reconnects them by ensuring that whites not only become aware of, but also feel the impact of racism. That consciousness may lead them to act differently. Several studies have demonstrated the impact of evidencing and experiencing more or less empathy. Edgar C. J. Long and colleagues (1999) have shown that marriages are more likely to be stable when the couple expresses empathy for one another while Arsenio and Lemerise (2004) have argued that psychopathy and bullying arise from a lack of empathy.

We may have greater confidence in the power of empathy since neurophysiological research has found that there is a shared representational network in all human beings. Scientists first recognized this phenomenon in monkeys, as the "mirror neurons" in the animal's ventral premotor cortex were found to discharge both during the execution of goal-directed hand movements and when the monkey observed similar hand actions by another being (Rizzolatti et al. 1996). Other studies in humans have demonstrated that children come to understand that others are similar to them through imitating them. Meltzoff and Moore (1983, 1989) found that 42 minute-old babies can imitate facial expressions, which suggests that this ability comes preprogrammed in all human beings. On this basis, Decety and Jackson (2006) have surmised that people have the ability to match each other's perspectives mentally, the essence of empathy.

These experiments imply that the tendency to imitate is strongest during social interaction.

Kilner et al. (2006) showed that when eye contact is made with another while engaging in some activity there is the production of intense neural activation. There is less activity when a person's back is turned. Researchers have seen a similar increase in pro-social behavior after being mimicked, such as a higher likelihood of contributing to charity for example (van Baaren et al. 2004). Further research is needed to unlock precisely how empathy can re-frame social interaction, but such an effort seems likely to bear fruit. Finally, this research on mirroring suggests that diversity education should include a focus on interactions between members of different racial groups, and at all ages. The active exercise of empathy, coupled with continuing efforts to promote the facts of social conditions provide hope for a shift in unjust racial frames in time.

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Can the Platitude "Support the Troops" Validate a Narrative that Promotes the Common Good?

Eric Hodges

(Originally published September 12, 2013)

Steven Salaita, an associate professor of English at Virginia Tech, recently has come under scrutiny for a commentary he wrote, "No, thanks: Stop saying 'support the troops,'" published in *Salon*, an online magazine (Salaita, 2013). Salaita argued that uncritically supporting the troops is not helping the men and women in the Armed Forces, but rather supporting the militaristic agenda of the corporate elite. In the heated debate following publication of Salaita's essay, some commentators have suggested that he should be deported, fired, or even killed for expressing his thoughts. As a current doctoral student at Virginia Tech and a Marine Corps veteran, I would like to state unequivocally that I believe any such notions are extremely reckless, undemocratic, and offensive. I believe Salaita is genuinely concerned about the welfare of our troops, and I commend him for his stance. In a recent interview, Salaita observed, "I want us very much to support the human beings who comprise the military. I want us to question and challenge the platitude, "support the troops," and think about who that platitude, whose interest that platitude actually serves." However, Salaita has not served in the military, nor experienced the difficult transition back to society that follows such service. I have had that experience and I would like to share my perspective of how the notion of "supporting the troops" has helped me navigate the process.

Salaita began his critique by observing that the term "troops" in the phrase, "support the troops" spans "vast sociological, geographical, economic, and ideological categories," and that "it does no good to romanticize them as a singular organism." In essence, Salaita argued that the American military population is so diverse that the term "troops" is too broad to have any significance. In response to Salaita's observation, I would point out that there is indeed one thread that unites those who serve, irrespective of their demographic or other characteristics, their commitment to public service. Since our nation has an all-volunteer force, every single serviceman or woman has at one point willingly committed him or herself to public service and defense of the Constitution of the United States. If these individuals did nothing else during their tour of duty, this single and singular act of commitment should be worthy of broad social support. Based on my experience, it is not an empty gesture to affirm those who have committed their lives to protect the American people, even if that support is, in fact, often uninformed, as Salaita observed.

When I completed my service in the Marine Corps and reentered civilian society, I suffered a major culture shock. Simply because I had served in the Corps, I quickly became known in my undergraduate classes as the "guy who could kill you with his pinky finger." However, what allowed me to attend the University of Virginia and survive there was the support I received from society through the G.I. Bill and from the local community. I experienced an even stronger outpouring of assistance from Virginia Tech in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. President Charles Steger and the Virginia Tech administration have been extremely supportive of veterans on campus. Meanwhile, for its part, the Town of Blacksburg recently hosted a parade for veterans, during which Main Street was lined with local residents vigorously supporting the troops. I can say personally that these public expressions of thanks have been deeply appreciated by veterans at Virginia Tech.

"While individual liberty is a pillar of American democracy, so too is a stated commitment to promoting the general welfare. In this sense, the current narrative of supporting the troops could more accurately reflect an enduring and equitable notion of democracy in America."
–Eric Hodges

Salaita also argued that by supporting the troops, citizens are actually supporting corporate elites who wage unjust wars to further their own economic agenda. This point is more difficult to address. When one examines our nation's most recent wars and the socioeconomic disparity between those who undertook those conflicts and those who actually fought them, Salaita's assessment merits serious consideration. However, the prevailing mindset in America, which has allowed corporate elites to exert such influence in our government's policymaking and decision processes, is based on an unbridled individualism that promotes personal gain above all else. I contend that by affirming and supporting, even symbolically, those who have voluntarily committed to serve the public good (our troops), by making such statements and gestures, large and small, individuals are validating an alternative discourse. Any narrative that does not merely champion individual gain, but rather celebrates service on behalf of the common

good, may represent a small stride away from the individualism now otherwise so pervasive in our culture. While individual liberty is a pillar of American democracy, so too is a stated commitment to promoting the general welfare. In this sense, the current narrative of supporting the troops could more accurately reflect an enduring and equitable notion of democracy in America.

In sum, I agree with Salaita that the phrase "support the troops" requires more critical reflection from American citizens than it now often receives. Salaita's observation that there are many paradoxes implied in this oft-used phrase in contemporary American society is apt and needs to be addressed. The current discourse surrounding those who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces is superficial, due in good part to the large disparity between those who have served in the military and those who have not. An overwhelming majority (93%) of Americans have little or no familiarity with military life or the men and women who comprise that world. How to remedy this lack of understanding is a larger question that Salaita does not address. Where I depart from Salaita's argument is his contention that supporting the troops, even in an uninformed way, implies compulsory patriotism or simply represents an ultimately meaningless gesture. My personal experiences of transitioning from the military to civilian society, and those of many veterans I know, were greatly aided by such expressions of concern. Furthermore, I would suggest that this mentality of "supporting the troops" in the American psyche might validate, possibly even at a subconscious level, the notion of a common good, a narrative that opposes the self-serving and destructive forces Salaita rightly criticizes.

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"To Live on the Soil We Cultivate": Legitimacy and Expediency in Thoreau's Political Ethics

Christian Matheis

(Originally published September 26, 2013)

Questions of ethics and morality help to elucidate important limits to politics and in particular serve to provoke discourse on popular governance and legitimacy. More specifically, stirring political theorists to address questions of ethics and moral theorists to consider political concerns remains an underutilized strategy of encouraging public and scholarly dialogue. Can scholars and activists (and perhaps politicians, too) develop an ethics specific to politics? Or, how shall we consider political responses to moral problems and moral reactions to political problems? Political institutions afford access to resources and opportunities, and yet one must question whether the expediency of political institutions corrupts or interferes with moral norms and ethical practices. In what follows, I discuss political ethics in the context of Henry David Thoreau's criticism of political expediency and his arguments suggesting that individuals use personal integrity to evaluate and regulate contingencies of policy and governance.

But, before I go too much further, let me explicitly suggest how I differentiate among questions of ethics, morality, and politics. I tend to consider ethics to refer to the ways that people treat one another. Morality, in my view, typically refers to sets of laws, norms or rules by which we may evaluate behaviors and beliefs (in ourselves and in others) as good, bad, right, wrong, and/or inconsequential. Generally, I think of politics as how people employ power, force, and authority in the context of social relationships. This typology is hardly precise, but it does at least indicate how I consider these concerns here.

Writing in the mid-1800's during the early stages of the development of United States (U.S) politics, Henry David Thoreau offered a challenge to policy and governance processes that he perceived as largely unregulated by ethics. For Thoreau, the people collectively in a democratic society must take responsibility for evaluating the public policies that govern us. More specifically, citizens must decide the terms of their own political governance and do so on the basis of an ethical integrity based in the cultivation of natural human purposes. Because a society's political institutions function contingently and are impermanent in comparison to the enduring characteristics of human nature, Thoreau contended that meritorious political action will necessarily issue from the primacy of ethics in public official decision-making.

Thoreau argued that we must evaluate the consequences and merits of both our formal political

institutions as well as informal political relationships against a criterion of personal integrity. He grounded his perspectives on state and government on his conception of political relations among people, that is, in terms of their ethical social relations. The phrase, "To live on the soil we cultivate" illustrates Thoreau's understanding of the ethical opportunities and consequences inherent in politics (Thoreau, 1849a, pp.52, 60). Notably, that stance implies an ethical justification for resistance should political institutions or choices result in negative consequences or otherwise require individuals to violate their natures.

"If Thoreau's thinking has merit, contemporary political theorists, activists, and politicians should give little or no credence to arguments that treat governance and policy as mechanisms of mere expediency. His political ethics yield to no such conveniences and permit no such shirking of responsibilities to personal and social integrity."
–Christian Matheis

That is, for Thoreau, politics depends on ethics, but does not reduce to ethics. His paradigm for political ethics rejects abject expediency, the amoral use of political institutions as means to attain a defined end (Thoreau, 1854, para.38). In arguing from this perspective, Thoreau reveals his principled pragmatism (Ibid). Perhaps borrowing from Aristotelian thought, he appeals to the use of righteous convictions gleaned from grappling with lived experience while also insisting on the freedom represented by individual conscience (humans choose whether and how to cultivate the quality of their lives, and may do so more or less fruitfully and more or less in accord with nature's designs).[1]

In the context of politics, this results in an argument for the immanence of individual self-respect, understood as personally ethical choice-making that overcomes and supplants, when necessary, the vices of selfish ambition and immoral compromise (Thoreau, 1854, para.33). When he applies this conception to political institutions, Thoreau rejects ideologies that anthropomorphize government documents (e.g. constitutions, charters, codified laws, etc.), and refuses to endorse abject

trust of individual public agency representatives, rejecting the idea that elected authority is superior to the self-respect of individuals affected by their choices.[2]

Politics of regulatory regimes. Thoreau understood political institutions as contingent and temporary and therefore their merits arose ultimately not only from how people operating them treated one another, but just as deeply, by how those subject to institutions behaved toward each other. For the author of "Civil Disobedience," how individuals treat one another outside of public office suggests how they would behave in public service. It followed for Thoreau that one may not judge a given institution's political worth apart from the characters of those who administer it (Thoreau, 1849a, pp.35-40). Put differently, one cannot call a state and its institutions ethical if it creates conditions in which people may live comfortably, but nonetheless dishonestly (Ibid, p.38). Consistent with this argument, he suggests that states do not inherently warrant our allegiance as patriots, except to the extent that they adopt policies that encourage living honestly as nature intends. Thus, a government by and for honest people may not force conformity to the contingencies of governance merely for the sake of political order, where the ruling concept of order arises from, or inheres in, expediency (Ibid, p.41).

For Thoreau, government authority remains "impure" without the sanction of those governed (Ibid, p.51). That is, state power arises only from the power of individuals and a state establishes justice only when in harmony with the integrity of the individuals it governs (Ibid, pp.71-72). Thoreau constructs his argument on the notion that when one acts as a state agent and merely executes the expedient functions of institutions, one tends toward corrupt judgment since the very activity of administering political conditions tends to alter consciousness. Therefore, in terms of political ethics, "representative government" must characterize the noblest faculties of the mind—those in accord with general laws of propriety, God, humanity, and justice (Ibid, pp.47-48, 71). In evaluating the character of his peers, particularly concerning matters of slavery, taxation, and principled disobedience or rebellion, Thoreau conceives of people as imbued, inherently, with features indomitable by governments (Ibid, p. 72).

Living one's life solely as a citizen, merely as a political subject in accord with institutional rights and formal freedoms, implies a regime characterized by corrupted use of power. "The character of voters is not staked," he argued (that is, there is nothing truly at stake in the votes cast by people in corrupt regimes) (Ibid, p.28). A political system that absolves moral responsibilities, in which people can trade such obligations for expediency, is immoral. Such a regime operates not

on the authority and with the regulation of democratic votes, but merely counts those cast as if responses to an opinion poll; they possess no emancipatory powers by which citizens can govern their society's institutions (Ibid, pp.28-29). Thoreau illustrated this point by asking his readers to consider the following: if slaves voted to end slavery and the majority of those votes cast actually ended their forced servitude, the result should be counted an example of ethical politics. The votes would wield moral and political power and count as legitimate since the institutions would have acceded to the collective will of those who voted for their own emancipation. In contrast, institutions and authorities primarily concerned with expediency will tally votes as suggestive and not as substantively imperative.

Politics of social life. What, then, does Thoreau make of politics as it concerns life with one another, such as shares of power and responsibilities to one's community or nation? For Thoreau, narrow economic interest cannot supplant personal integrity. Thus, he argued that we should do what we would do if we lived poor (Ibid, p.37). His latent appeal to asceticism reveals his belief that individuals cannot derive political ethics from property rights, as commonly assumed following Locke. Rather, just social arrangements arise from ethical treatment of one another. Thoreau offers a heuristic for evaluating the moral worth of politics—a diagnostic resource for deciding whether a state is acting in its citizens' best interests (Ibid, pp.46-47).

For Thoreau political processes cannot supplant conscience and, reminiscent of Rousseau, he argues we are "men [sic] first, subjects afterward" (Ibid, p.23). Mundane politics leaves us as "dyspeptics" (complaining) (Thoreau, 1863, pp.140-141). Conversely, he might agree that ethical politics leaves us as "enpeptics" (celebrating). In Thoreau's formulation, humans naturally feel violations of their freedoms intolerable. That axiom produced his famous conclusion: "The law will never make men [sic] free; it is men who have got to make the law free. They are the lovers of law and order who observe the law when the government breaks it" (Thoreau, 1854).

We may think of Thoreau's diagnostic hallmark as a form of conscientious objection or, more appropriately, as an ethics of refusal in the interests of dignity and human nature (Thoreau, 1849b, pp.52, 66, 78-79). Refusal serves as an ethical litmus test for the legitimacy of political systems. First, we can only respect politics established by principled persons, by peers who act on principle (Ibid, pp.67-68). People without the conscience one might find in good neighbors cannot he contended, carry out social good as politicians. Second, institutionalized political freedoms (rights and laws) remain secondary to, and derive from human freedom, a fact of nature. In other words, political

freedom in the form of laws and rights administered by regimes deserves human deference only in so far as the institutions overseeing them serve moral freedom (Thoreau, 1863, p.136). Politics as the legitimate sharing of power among people will rise and fall on these terms.

Implications for contemporary political ethics. It is challenging to cull a readily accessible conception of political ethics from Thoreau's various rhetorical projects. Nonetheless, given what I outline above, I consider the following as (some of) Thoreau's principal theses on political ethics:

> A just political system derives from just people–if the people are not just, one may not expect just politics. (Thoreau, 1849a, p.23)
>
> Government should not interfere with what nature has created. (Ibid, p. 33)
>
> Individual self-respect (integrity) justifies civil disobedience, and those who disobey do so justifiably in order to preserve their integrity. (Ibid, pp.22-23)
>
> Politics designed around people as citizen-subjects cannot induce ethical politics; persons who act ethically must precede ethical governance; people cannot act wholly as citizen-subjects and yet retain integrity as persons. Governmental expediency remains accountable to ethics and, therefore, political justice remains secondary to how people treat one another. (Ibid, pp.26-27)
>
> People should not suffer a government that demands or compels complicity in mean-spirited treatment of one another. (Ibid, p.30)
>
> A government independent of interpersonal ethics moves from immoral to unmoral, and once unmoral it cannot meet the needs of those it seeks to govern. (Ibid)
>
> Principled minorities represent a political justice superior to majorities who live by legality alone. (Ibid, p.34)
>
> An unjust political system cannot morally abide the true nature of persons and will, therefore, eventually fail. (Ibid, p.32)
>
> Political institutions must accept people as nature designs them, and cannot both violate those claims and maintain legitimacy. (Thoreau, 1863, p.123)

If Thoreau's thinking has merit, contemporary political theorists, activists, and politicians should give little or no credence to arguments that treat governance and policy as mechanisms of mere expediency. His political ethics yield to no such conveniences and permit no such shirking of responsibilities to personal and social integrity. If a person involved in the administration of political institutions must choose between principles and expediency, but cannot discern how to act on principle, Thoreau's ethical framework requires that individual to resign. Otherwise, the result will

involve incompetence at best, and disaster at worst. Theorists who adhere to mere expediency do so by denying their natural conscience and politicians who follow suit do so by pursuing their vanity. That is, and put bluntly, one cannot trust those who salt the earth and expect to cultivate it at the same time.

Notes.

1. Thoreau consistently appeals to nature and naturalistic imagery in explicating his points. He contended that we should "strive first to be as simple and well as nature ourselves" (Thoreau, n.d.).
2. Note, among other comments, "The city does not *think* much" [emphasis in original] (Thoreau, 1854, para.24).

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Engaging Backlash and Finding Common Grounds at Starbucks

Elizabeth Jamison

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This fall, I have found myself dwelling on "backlash," in no small part because the political and economic environment of recent months (and years) has seemed consumed by rhetoric of the "fear of backlash" or the "threat of backlash" or the "consequences of backlash"—it has been enough to give the interested observer a case of whiplash. However, as just such an individual, I am equally struck by how, for all of the attention lavished on the idea that Americans will soon react to debates about Congressional inaction, gun violence, NSA privacy misdeeds, budget impasses, sequester cuts … (and the list goes on), how little citizen/voter 'backlash' there seems to have been. For example, in March of this year in response to the federal sequester expenditure cuts, Republican Senator John McCain (AZ) predicted that there soon would be a significant hue and cry from the military and from those in the business community closely aligned with the armed services protesting those budget reductions (Ward, 2013). However, no organized protest of any magnitude ensued and the cutbacks remain on the congressional bargaining table for this year's budget negotiations.

More recently in Virginia, political pundits asserted that Tea Party darling and GOP candidate for governor, Ken Cuccinelli, was the victim of a political backlash directed at the national Republican Party in response to the October partial federal government shutdown, when he was found trailing Democrat Terry McAuliffe by 9 percentage points in polls leading up to the recent November state election (Burns, 2013). Perhaps Cuccinelli's eventual loss was evidence of the cited electoral backlash, although it is hard to ignore the fact that the final outcome of what became a hotly disputed race separated the winner from the loser by only 2.5 percentage points. Few predicted this contest would be so close. With an alleged political scandal and a significant ideological divide marking Virginia's recently concluded gubernatorial campaign, the relatively small difference between the eventual winner and loser hardly seems like a major backlash, if such it was at all, to me.

In short, predictions citing electoral 'backlash' on various grounds abound in the current media landscape (a quick Google search makes this clear). However, I am beginning to wonder if the term means what I had understood it meant:

- Some sort of consequence
- Exacted by a particular citizenry
- In reaction to decision(s)/action(s)
- By identifiable political or economic actor(s).

In essence, those predicting electoral backlash view it as a mechanism for ensuring accountability to the affected populace. In so doing, electorate action re/de-stabilizes some existing or desired "state" of the social world. In this sense, such citizen action at the polls is a discursive social structure that disciplines individual and collective behaviors (Foucault, 1977) through its panoptic ability (Bentham, as cited by Foucault, 1977) to serve as a social corrective (or disruption) when the rules of the social field (Bourdieu, 1998) and power relations are in contest.

"When individuals are unmediated by lobbies and interest groups, they can collectively agree to create a literal, physical 'common ground' in which conversation concerning even extremely contentious political issues may occur."
–Elizabeth Jamison

Toby Ditz, an early American historian, has demonstrated how attending to backlash as an analytic lens on power reveals "instabilities in the dynamics of gendered power" in 17th and 18th century United States (U.S.) society. Ditz's account outlined how "instabilities" shaped and changed the social order of the time as individuals and collectives responded to real and perceived dangers of "manliness under threat" (Ditz, 2004). The Johns Hopkins University scholar argued that voter backlash, as a form of resistance, is a potentially important measure of social response to existing power relations.

Shifting back to the contemporary moment, we now appear to be confronting a different situation: what happens when such a backlash does not occur? More specifically, what happens to our democratic processes if we can no longer count on the fear/threat/consequences of backlash by the citizenry at the polls to serve as a corrective to political behavior otherwise collectively considered unacceptable? As evidence of this anomaly, I point to reports of the historically low approval ratings Americans now offer of Congress as an institution. But that standing seems to have had little impact on the recent political tactics of individual Members, safe in gerrymandered districts, concerning issues such as immigration and judicial appointments post-government shutdown. These positions and emphases remain unchanged, or, as in the case of immigration, some

Representatives have actually imposed new barriers to bipartisan negotiation.[1]

The point here is not to lament the possibly insurmountable chasm between and among the individuals currently serving in the U.S. Congress. Instead, I want to suggest that analysts examine critically what backlash means as a political accountability mechanism in practice today. I suggest we reimagine the concept as a necessary "risk opportunity" that in some cases may exist outside of electoral politics, but which may nonetheless create a possibility for collective dialogue to contest existing power relationships. Accountability in this context would manifest in the actions of the affected community through the changed contexts and/or relationships that enable or stymie the potential for dialogue. In our current heated political environment, perhaps a realistic step toward open exchange of perspectives is to create additional spaces where people can safely agree to disagree. To illustrate, I point to a recent example of how Starbucks entered the gun rights/gun control debate.

On September 18, 2013, National Public Radio reported Starbucks' corporate decision to *request* that guns no longer be carried into its coffee shops. The decision, communicated by an open, public letter by CEO Howard Schultz addressed to "Fellow Citizens," was published in select, major newspapers across the country.[2] The executive's letter essentially expressed Starbuck's political disinterest in the gun control debate. However, Schultz took note of recently staged "Starbucks Appreciation Days" organized by gun rights advocates at various of the firm's locations and shared his concern that these events erroneously created the impression that Starbucks supported "open carry" laws. Open Carry Demonstrations are reportedly on the rise across the country (Lithwick &Turner, 2013) and the Starbucks Appreciation Days became one such site of protest. Escalating tensions between gun control and gun rights advocates had marked these events at the company's shops immediately prior to Schultz's letter. This increasing rancor generated corporate concern for the safety of staff and customers in their stores, and detracted from the environment of "public space" that Starbucks strives to create in its locations. Importantly, the corporation's letter and decision did not ban firearms in its stores where individuals are legally permitted to carry them. Starbucks' employees will not ask gun-carrying patrons to disarm or leave when the law allows customers that privilege. Instead, the CEO's letter was framed as a sincere request from one (corporate) citizen to another (private) citizen to leave their firearms in the car when planning to enter a Starbucks' property.

Commentators reporting on this story speculated about the coming economic "backlash" against Starbucks by gun advocates in response to this request, including negative comments on the

Starbucks Appreciation Day Facebook page and predictions of mass customer defections to Dunkin' Donuts (and other vendors).[3] However, two weeks after Schultz's letter was published, commentator Jeff Jacoby of the Boston Globe investigated actual public reaction and discovered overwhelming and cross-demographic support for Starbucks' position as reflected in a Quinnipiac University Poll. Even more than the evidence cited by Jacoby, I was particularly struck by his assessment:

> The lack of an anti-Starbucks backlash isn't about brand loyalty and it doesn't reflect hostility to guns. It suggests to me instead that Americans appreciate the civility of Schultz's request, and instinctively sympathize with the right of a private company not to be turned into an ideological battleground against its wishes. (Jacoby, 2013)

This is Jacoby's judgment, of course, but he does point to an interesting possibility for creating a different route to a civil discourse concerning political choices. In this case, despite Starbucks' professed disinterest, the firm nonetheless civilly and respectfully engaged in a direct *political* discussion with specific members of the communities of which it is a part. Despite articulating a desire to remain neutral in the gun control debate, by requesting that individuals refrain from pressing an otherwise lawful claim on its premises, Starbucks engaged in a political act. While the company's request was limited to creation of a space that could exist apart from competing political mobilization efforts, its initiative appears to have elicited a de facto decision by the broader body politic, including especially those most exercised about the issue of guns in our culture, to respect certain boundaries when a share of its members are otherwise engaged in policy advocacy efforts.

I am not suggesting that Starbucks holds the key to ending the divisiveness marking the national gun control (or any other policy) debate. In fact, this example changes nothing in policy terms, and it represents only a baby step in creating a neutral space for a collective dialogue that could ultimately contest existing power relations. However, without creation of these sorts of places, civil civic dialogue has little opportunity to materialize. In this case, the competing stakeholders' apparent consent to Starbucks' action reveals that when individuals are unmediated by lobbies and interest groups, they can collectively agree to create a literal, physical "common ground" in which conversation concerning even extremely contentious political issues may occur. Even if that shared place is just café spaces free from warring demonstrations and protests aimed at persuading those targeted that some sort of economic or political (or both) "backlash" awaits those who disagree with the favored positions of those protesting. This is welcome physical evidence that contradicts the pervasive media rhetoric that says the "political partisanship (evident in Washington and state capitals) mirrors the public"[4] and that implies there are no spaces for people to explore opposing

views without being subject to the rancor and catcalling of advocates of specific perspectives.

This request could have gone really wrong for Starbucks. The company risked the possibility of significant economic backlash for asking to remain apart from advocacy group efforts concerning a divisive political issue. Indeed, recent events had suggested that relatively small actions viewed by advocates as contesting second amendment rights could quickly elicit both economic and political forms of backlash from that group (Lithwick & Turner, 2013). I cannot help but wonder, however, what would happen if more companies took this sort of direct approach to requesting that their properties be permitted to serve as apolitical zones of potential political conversation? How might we expand the bounds of public, community discourse if more corporations, as members of their community, asked to be treated similarly? Might we collectively begin to demonstrate to Congress a 'common ground' that its members claim is no longer possible to find? Might we ultimately reconstruct the social field such that some political discussions can actually have the space to encourage dialogue between and among citizens (corporate and private alike), rather than simply between interest groups and elected politicians alone?

With the national political process locked in a stalemate that appears no longer to be subject to any sort of backlash accountability claims by "the people," but rather to be dominated by extreme partisans and interest groups filtering communication in the political landscape, we must consider other routes to construct public discourses that might shift the social arrangement of power such that we can rebuild the space for civil discourse that has collapsed in the face of polemicized, partisan rancor. Perhaps we can locate a space for community discourse, one latté at a time.

Notes.

1. Historically low approval ratings of Congress cited in: http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/10/22/congress-has-lowest-approval-rating-ever. For Judicial appointment battles, see: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/01/us/politics/senate-republicans-block-2-obama-nominees.html?_r=0 . For recent immigration politics, see http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/politics/2013/11/09/house-majority-whip-mccarthy-says-no-immigration-reform-in-2013/.
2. http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/09/18/223652632/no-guns-please-starbucks-tells-customers?utm_medium=Email&utm_source=share&utm_campaign=
3. See these links for additional coverage: http://nation.time.com/2013/09/18/heres-your-vanilla-latte-but-would-you-leave-the-glock-at-home-next-time/ and http://www.businessinsider.com/

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The Renegotiation of Respectability Politics among African Americans, Women, and Cyclists

Andrea Hamre

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We are a nation engaged in painful conversations about the issue of police brutality and the value of Black lives, about sexual harassment and violence – on our neighborhood sidewalks, in the halls of Congress, and on our college campuses and military bases. Many in our country are also reflecting on the disproportionately high rates of injury and death suffered by pedestrians and cyclists traveling on our roads and streets each year. In light of these issues, I critically reflect on "respectability politics" as that term is presently manifest for three distinct groups: African Americans, women, and cyclists. Respectability politics encourages marginalized or oppressed people to focus on individual adherence to dominant or mainstream values, behaviors, manners, and ways of expression as a strategy for securing greater rights, protections, or concessions (Rosenberg, 2014; Smith, 2014). Evidence of this form of politics include admonitions for African Americans to pull up their pants and clean up hip-hop lyrics, for women to lean in at business meetings, dress modestly, stay sober at parties, and take self-defense classes, and for bicyclists to wear helmets and follow traffic rules.

While many might support the promotion of a personal and communal creed of "good" behavior (recognizing the contested nature of what is considered "good"), respectability rhetoric is often offered to question legitimate claims by marginalized people for redress (Coates, 2008). That is, it is frequently accompanied by derision for efforts to protest or organize for institutional changes. As a result, the "signature of respectability politics is its disavowal" of rage "as an explicable and legitimate response to unjust" treatment and as a catalyst or "animating source of political action and revolutionary change" (Smith, 2014). As critics of respectability politics have suggested, "if you want to undermine a movement to dismantle sexism, racism, or homophobia, a very effective way to do it is to get people to focus on their personal advancement instead" (Rosenberg, 2014).

Indeed, while "respectability politics seeks to realize collective aspirations whether grand (justice, equality, full participation) or more [quotidian] (balanced budget, community policing, bike paths)" it also reflects "a distinct worldview" that "marginalized classes will receive their share of political influence and social standing, not because democratic values and law require it, but because they demonstrate their compatibility with the 'mainstream' or non-marginalized class" (Smith, 2014).

Recognizing and respecting their unique histories and experiences, I seek to explore the ongoing renegotiation of respectability politics across each of these three groups. I see this process as

including:

- A rejection of the primacy respectability politics places on individual actions;
- A refutation of the notion that marginalized individuals should choose between respectability and opposing systemic problems, and that organizing for systemic change detracts from personal responsibility; and
- An assertion that respectability politics in its current form is sophistic and obfuscatory.

That is, increasingly, marginalized groups are shifting the onus of respectability back to the mainstream, challenging dominant groups to examine their own behavior and values critically while contesting the notion that those typically targeted for opprobrium should change their conduct. That is, if we focus on pulling pants up, wearing longer skirts, and wearing helmets instead of taking action to address racism, sexism, and the unbalanced design of our streets, we will fail to address the systemic causes of racism, sexual harassment, and violence, and traffic injuries and deaths that now challenge us collectively.

> "Both African Americans and women are underrepresented in U.S. cycling. While the lack of bike infrastructure and separation from traffic is a broad barrier to cycling for many groups, it is also important to consider the role that racism and sexism may play in shaping how individuals feel as they travel through our communities and in helping to explain these persistent trends."
> *–Andrea Hamre*

The renegotiation of respectability politics among African Americans. The prominent African-American actor and comedian Bill Cosby has long been a fervent purveyor of respectability politics and the promise of "discipline, moral reform, and self-reliance" (Coates, 2008).[1] Ta-Nehisi Coates has been a nuanced critic of Cosby for many years, and is an important voice critiquing the politics of respectability as often applied to race relations. Coates has suggested that, "Cosby's gospel of discipline, moral reform, and self-reliance offers a way out – a promise that one need not cure

America of its original sin in order to succeed" (Coates, 2008). Yet "sagging pants aren't the reason why police profile black boys" and this is "a dangerous and irresponsible message to send; it's like blaming a rape victim for wearing perfume that smells like peaches and cream" (Norris, 2014). As Coates makes clear, "Cosby often pits the rhetoric of personal responsibility against the legitimate claims of American citizens for their rights" and "chides activists for pushing to reform the criminal-justice system, despite solid evidence that the criminal-justice system needs reform" (Coates, 2008).

The renegotiation of respectability politics among women. A *Rolling Stone* story detailing a rape on the campus of the University of Virginia (Erdely, 2014) and its subsequent fact-checking controversy (and the magazine's ultimate retraction of the article) is but the latest installment in an ongoing national conversation about the troubling nature of gender relations at all levels of our society, including among our nation's top lawmakers. For example, former Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO) referenced so-called "legitimate rape" during his failed 2012 bid for the United States (U.S.) Senate, while Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) recently shared her experience of sexual harassment by several of her fellow lawmakers. In a *Ms. Magazine* article responding to the controversy surrounding the recent Rolling Stone story concerning an alleged rape at the University of Virginia, Emily Shugerman (2014) recounted that a man who sexually assaulted her told her she was at fault for being "too beautiful to resist." Shugerman went on to argue that, "the national obsession with proving or disproving [the UVA campus rape] story only serves to obscure [the] point" that "the real devil is the rape culture that pervades college campuses" (Shugerman, 2014). Earlier this year, an image went viral on the Internet that pictured a young woman holding a sign that read, "Vivimos en una sociedad que enseña a las mujeres a cuidarse de no ser violadas en vez de enseñar a los hombres a no violar/We live in a society that teaches women to be careful to not get raped instead of teaching men not to rape."[2]

The renegotiation of respectability politics among cyclists. The bicycle has been described as a mode of transportation that "quietly challenges a system of values which condones dependency, wastage, inequality of mobility, and daily carnage" (Worldwatch Institute, 1989), and "a symbol of humane technology . . . [that] offers the gains of advanced technology but does not threaten the environment with poison, damage, and dispossession" (Sachs, 1992). Peter Furth (2012) has also observed that, "bicycling can make important contributions to societal goals related to public health, energy independence, climate change, air quality, traffic congestion, mobility, economy, and quality of life." Nevertheless, cycling, especially in urban settings, is often a lightning rod for controversy.

Many conflicts arise due to shifting design standards and the reallocation of public rights-of-way (e.g. bike lane installation, car parking removal, and the narrowing of travel lanes), and devolve into an "us versus them" shouting match about scofflaws and a purported "war on cars." For example, last summer, *Washington Post* journalist Courtland Milloy wrote a piece on bicyclist bullies and raised eyebrows with the implication that some drivers might consider paying a $500 fine to hit a cyclist behaving egregiously (Milloy, 2014). Indeed, as Carl Alviani (2014) remarked at the time, "few topics besides Israel, healthcare, and gun control stir up as much debate" (para.8).

Alviani went on to offer an excellent argument debunking the commonly held belief that cyclists think they are above the law, suggesting that such contentions take "the very broad problem of traffic violations and [limit] it to a single minority, ignoring the millions of car and truck drivers who flout the law every day, not to mention those scofflaw pedestrians" (Alviani, 2014, para.4). Bike planner Mia Birk, in her 2010 memoir *Joy Ride* (Birk & Kurmaskie, 2010), also critically engaged with respectability politics as it relates to cyclists:

> For the burden of safety must be squarely placed on the more dangerous vehicle operator. Yes, of course, cyclists need to do our part. But drivers, we've got to hang up, stay sober, keep our hands on the wheel, slow down, focus on what we're doing, and yield to more vulnerable road users. Period. (p.201)

There has also been a significant shift in U.S. engineering and design guidelines during the past decade, away from the "vehicular cycling" philosophy and toward street design guidelines that create separation for bicyclists from other traffic (Furth, 2012; National Association of City Transportation, 2011). This change has been reflected in recent statements by Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx, who has observed that, "teaching pedestrians and bicyclists to make good choices doesn't work if our streets are not safe for them" (Roskowski, 2014).

Racism and sexism as foundational barriers to cycling. Both African Americans and women are under-represented in U.S. cycling. While the lack of bike infrastructure and separation from traffic is a broad barrier to cycling for many groups, it is also important to consider the role that racism and sexism may play in shaping how individuals feel as they travel through our communities and in helping to explain these persistent trends. The League of American Bicyclists (2014) has a new "Seeing & Believing Project" that seeks to highlight the concerns and perspectives of diverse communities. One participant in that initiative has remarked, "it's important for our profession to hear that people of color in the U.S. have good reasons to fear being physically unprotected in our public right-of-way, and to hear that there may be good reasons that people of color feel

biking/walking projects should have lower priority than, say, police brutality and lack of economic opportunity." Women also routinely endure more street harassment—as highlighted recently on *The Daily Show* by Jessica Williams in several segments on catcalling—and often harbor significant safety concerns while riding bicycles, especially at night. Leaders seeking to increase walking and biking must recognize that bike lanes and crosswalks will help, but additional steps will be needed to ensure African Americans and women enjoy a fundamental sense of security in their communities.

Conclusion. I have sought in this essay to explore the renegotiation of respectability politics for African Americans, women, and cyclists, which could be summarized for each of these groups by this pithy Tweet from the Virginia Bicycling Federation (2014), "Should it be: 'You should be careful, I might hurt you' or 'I should be careful, I might hurt you'?" The critical dialogue emerging in each domain is highlighting the dubious capacity for respectability—and its admonitions to pull pants up, wear longer skirts, or wear helmets—to make the world a better place, especially when such actions enervate social energy to focus on the root causes of systemic problems, including racism, sexism, and aggressive driving on unbalanced streets.

Notes.

1. In a painful irony, he is himself now under intense scrutiny as a result of a number of sexual assault allegations.
2. See http://www.tumblr.com/search/vivimos%20en%20una%20sociedad

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Part 6: International Politics

The essays in this part share critical insights into global issues, including migration, development, democratization, governance and human rights. The world's rapidly changing economic and political context poses major challenges for both domestic and international actors, affecting their identities, institutions, and policymaking priorities. Sarah Lyon-Hill reflects on observations shared by Paul Smith, Director of the British Council in the United States and Cultural Counselor at the British Embassy in Washington, D.C. during a visit to Virginia Tech. Lyon-Hill agrees with Smith that his organization's work is about building relationships, and argues that most development or cultural exchange programs should concern themselves foremost with just such activities if they are to succeed, instead of pursuing artificially contrived outcomes.

For her part, Jamie Sanchez examines China's one-child policy change, announced in Fall 2013. Sanchez connects the government's shift to the economy, as the regime continues to focus on growth in the four industries it identified as priorities decades ago. China's political leaders now view people as a necessary resource to increase and sustain their nation's international economic standing. Christian Matheis analyzes the contentious issue of asylum granting by wealthy industrialized nations and suggests that such countries, including the United States, should adopt a specific notion of respect first developed by liberation scholars, as a guiding criterion for their choice processes, instead of relying principally on the perceived credibility of petitioners.

Saul N'Jie investigates the strengths and weaknesses of international organizations involved in global governance in peacekeeping, development, and humanitarianism, among other domains. N'Jie points out that these institutions have developed new policy ideas and programs, managed crises, and set priorities for shared activities that would not exist otherwise. Sofia Rukhin draws on the Afrobarometer dataset and questionnaire to probe Egyptians' views of democracy and how various determinants of social status shape individual perceptions of self-governance in that nation. Rukhin's long-term research goal is to construct more comprehensive indices capturing respondents' attitudes toward several dimensions of democracy.

In her second essay in this section, Jamie Sanchez seeks to understand what it means to be Chinese, as many individuals in the country embrace identities that do not align with the state constructed ideology of a "unified" multinational state. Sanchez concludes that China's government needs to address the divisive question of identity in much more effective and just ways if it

wishes the nation to remain "harmonious." Finally, Johannes Grow challenges the character of the cosmopolitan ideals that the European Union and the United States seek to project via their immigration and asylum policies. Following an analysis that highlights multiple inconsistencies, Grow concludes by emphasizing the need to acknowledge the historical complexities that underlie the sociopolitical and economic impetus for migration and asylum seeking.

Does Society Have Unrealistic Expectations of Development and Philanthropic Agencies?

Sarah Lyon-Hill

(Originally published September 11, 2013)

On September 3, Paul Smith, Director of the British Council in the USA and Cultural Counselor at the British Embassy in Washington, DC came to the Virginia Tech Blacksburg campus, thanks to the efforts of the Virginia Tech Language and Culture Institute (LCI). During an afternoon discussion hosted by the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance, I had the privilege of listening to him discuss his work and outline the goals and experiences of his organization as well as the difficulties it faces in a simultaneously globalizing and localizing world. I was particularly struck by his description of the relationships involved in the work of the Council and the many accountability claims that the organization must balance to maintain and nurture those ties. His description of the Council's strategic environment reminded me of an August 23rd National Public Radio Planet Money broadcast segment on development aid (NPR, 2013). In both discussions, I was left thinking of the many and unrealistically high expectations that our society places on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such that these entities are left discussing their goals and work in rather convoluted, seemingly idealistic ways.

The British Council is a national charity in the United Kingdom (UK) governed by a Royal Charter and charged with promoting British culture and education overseas. The Council engages in "cultural relations," which, as described by Paul Smith, differ from public relations in that they rely less on soft power and emphasize instead the quality and equality of relationships among cultural partners. Similar to institutions such as the United States Peace Corps, the British Council works only in countries from which it has received a formal invitation. The organization has adopted this stance to avoid imposing ideas and practices on residents of other countries. The British Council website describes the institution's work this way:

> By teaching English, changing the way we see each other through the Arts, offering international education opportunities and sharing the UK's ways of living and organising our society we create opportunity, trust, prosperity and security for the people of the UK and the many other countries we work in around the world. (The British Council, n.d.)

In response to participant questions following his remarks, Smith agreed that the Council's work was less about bringing British culture to other countries ultimately, and more about opening space for dialogue among groups and nations. Yet, he also emphasized that his organization is charged with disseminating and supporting certain Western cultural ideas, including the central significance

of basic human rights.

The Council's work seems to exemplify a growing understanding that development and/or international work should be concerned less about transforming the lives of participants than about sharing values and knowledge, including democratic norms and applicable skills. The British organization's efforts offer opportunities for residents of the nations in which it operates to engage in cultural exchange, build trust and develop certain skills, including, particularly, the English language. Nothing is guaranteed, however. In creating opportunities or opening space for dialogue, the Council does not and cannot ordain specific learning outcomes for participants. Instead, it offers possibilities and must accept such outcomes as may arise as residents engage as they wish.

"The [British] Council's work seems to exemplify a growing understanding that development and/or international work should be concerned less about transforming the lives of participants than about sharing values and knowledge, including democratic norms and applicable skills."
–Sarah Lyon-Hill

Meanwhile, and paradoxically, the *Planet Money* broadcast highlighted the growing pressures being placed on international development organizations by funders and individuals alike to define their objectives and evaluate their outcomes in clear, quantifiable terms. A new NGO called GiveDirectly is requesting that long standing NGOs such as Heifer International be more forthcoming and evaluate their work more openly for the public. GiveDirectly argues that in taking such steps these organizations would become more transparent and accountable to their stakeholders. In this view, purportedly more precise and stringent evaluation will permit the international community to determine "best approaches" and thereby invest in strategies that garner the most impact.

While "stringent" evaluations and clearly defined goals (particularly ones that include spreading cultural beliefs of some sort, e.g., democracy) may sound like positive steps, these sorts of efforts can just as readily complicate or hamper NGOs' work as assist them. This is so because such claims often oversimplify the contexts confronting organizations as they go about their work. Success and

failure in the world of community and international development are highly contingent on time and circumstances, which are often not adequately accounted for in evaluative processes constructed on the basis of technical measures. An emphasis on already determined specialized criteria of evaluation also limits the ability of NGOs to approach other cultures and nations openly without specific immediate expectations concerning the outcomes of their activities. Technical evaluative criteria inevitably restrict what is possible amidst a stipulated need for "right results." Consequently, certain power dynamics may unavoidably exist, contrary to Paul Smith's emphasis on ensuring equal standing within Council partnerships. Power imbalances, whatever their origins, are not conducive to trust and relationship building. If the British Council, for instance, embraces its role as promoter of the UK's culture, particularly say, its democratic and human rights beliefs, those that have felt persecuted or judged by others holding those views in the past will be less likely to form relationships with the Council. In these scenarios the British cultural organization and such groups will likely continue to view each other as "others."

Moreover, the limited resources and access that various cultural institutions possess may hinder their abilities to reach out to different groups. Much of the work Smith described seemed to involve interacting with an elite minority within nations and then crossing one's fingers that what is learned or discussed with that group percolates or is disseminated to a larger population. Of course, this aspiration is not what stakeholders want to hear when they demand "program evaluation" strategies. They want definitive claims that this approach or that program they support not only touches, but also transforms the lives of many different people throughout the targeted community and beyond.

According to Smith, several groups within his home nation view the Council's work as simply political posturing designed to illustrate how "nice" British culture can be. Others see it as promoting democratic or Western political beliefs. Still others understand it as a form of capacity building for other country nationals. In fact, Paul Smith points out that the British Council's work is about building relationships. I would agree that this goal makes sense and argue that if most development or cultural exchange programs are to succeed, they should concern themselves foremost with relationship building. That said, constructing enduring ties is far more complex than the tasks society generally envisions for such organizations. While clearly understanding one's goals and evaluating one's work is important, creating and nurturing an appropriate relational foundation for future activities and interaction is also essential. I came away from Paul Smith's remarks pondering how societies engaged in these sorts of programs might most effectively balance

these twin imperatives. How might practitioners further explore and experiment with relationship building without being weighed down by unrealistic and inapt expectations of their work and its outcomes?

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China's One-Child Policy Change: Sustaining the Four Modernizations

Jamie N. Sanchez

(Originally published February 6, 2014)

"In order to grow the four modernizations, have just one child."[1]

The above quotation and others like it were used in propaganda posters the Chinese national government developed to promote the launch of its "One Child Policy" (the Policy) more than 30 years ago. The *four modernizations* referred to the fields of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology. Deng Xiaoping, leader of the People's Republic of China (PRC) after Mao Zedong, set goals to develop each of these political-economic spheres in 1978 (Schwartz, 1996, p.264). One barrier to economic growth was China's growing population, which emerged as a concern for leaders in the PRC by 1953 (DeLong & Wong, 2013). After other initiatives to control the population failed, and in order to achieve those aspirations connected with the *four modernizations*, Deng established the One-Child policy in 1979 (Potts, 2006, p. 361).

The Policy has been the main form of birth control in China since its inception, and that statement is meant to include general reproductive education. I lived in China for more than eight years during the 2001-2012 period. While there, one of my closest friends was shocked to learn she was expecting a child shortly after she was married. She was nearly 30 years old and a university educated teacher, but genuinely did not have any idea how she became pregnant. Her lack of knowledge and understanding of human sexuality is very common, especially for those in smaller cities or rural areas since this topic has not been a focus of education.

"The Family Planning Policy," as the One-Child dictum is called in China, combined with a historically rooted cultural preference for boys rather than girls, has created several society-wide challenges. That list includes gendercide, bride abductions, incest, lack of female representation in education and the workplace, an increase in the female orphan population due to the abandonment of girls, and the phenomena of "little emperors" and "bare branches," to just to name a few. The term "bare branches" is used to describe the large population of unmarried young men in China, due to a relative lack of women to be partners. The descriptor Little Emperors refers to the spoiled behavior of some children, arising from the fact they grew up as an only child and, as a result, the center of their families' attention.

After more than 35 years, the PRC announced a change in the Policy in Fall 2013. In brief, the

change mostly affects Han families, the majority ethnic group in China, whose members may now have two children, rather than just one (Buckley, 2013). There is not much debate today in the PRC concerning whether the Policy should have been altered. Many citizens are pleased with this significant shift in the government's stance. When I read about the modification, however, my question was not why, but why now?

"People have been and continue to be key to China's success. Without a growing population to continue to drive its economic growth, the country will not be able to sustain the thrust of its four modernizations. It is clear the country's leaders understand the significance of this fact."
–Jamie Sanchez

The answer is easily connected to the economy. Not much has changed in the perspective of China's political leaders since 1978. The government is still focused on economic growth in the four industries identified decades ago. However, the definition of what is included in those areas has shifted and now includes: industrialization, informatization, urbanization, and agricultural modernization (Youngs, 2013, p. 40). Further, whereas, in 1978, the government's leaders viewed people as a detriment to economic growth, they are now viewed as necessary to increasing and sustaining China's economic standing.

During the past few decades the PRC has surpassed every forecast regarding its growth and development to become a global economic leader. This rise can be credited both to government leadership and to the hard work and sacrifice of the nation's people. Indeed, let me restate that with more emphasis: People have been and continue to be key to China's success. Without a growing population to continue to drive its economic growth, the nation will not be able to sustain the thrust of its four modernizations. It is clear the country's leaders understand the significance of this fact.

Thus, the PRC altered its one-child policy to bolster the country's population. This shift in orientation will eventually lead to a larger pool of labor to address each of the four areas of emphasis identified. A larger population with money to spend also implies increased consumerism. Families that have a second child will certainly spend money on their children, helping to sustain the

economy. Perhaps in the long run, the new policy can eliminate some of the unintended consequences of the original law, especially the disturbingly low ratio of girls to boys in the population.

Population growth also has negative implications: growing stress on each of the industries mentioned, rising enrollment in the university education system, which is already facing challenges, increased pollution, and natural resource depletion to name only a few. In fact, these drawbacks suggest that the policy change may have come too late to deliver the results the country's leaders envision. And, in any case, China's government now confronts the formidable challenge of convincing its citizens to have more than one child. It is useful to keep in mind that for 35 years Chinese families were daily told it was their duty, as good citizens, to have only one child. Nationwide, the government constantly reminded its citizens, through propaganda posters and other means, of how costly having an additional youngster would be. The result of this long-term proselytization campaign has been a society-wide "group think" in favor of one child per family. But, like the sustained misinformation barrage that helped create a nation of families with only one child, I am confident there will soon be new government campaigns to convince citizens that, now, "The Four Modernizations can only be Sustained through Families of Four."

Notes.

1. Translated from: http://pic2.997788.com/pic_search/00/07/75/50/se7755097a.jpg

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Refuge, Refusal, and Consent: How Should Resettlement Agencies Treat People Seeking Refuge?

Christian Matheis

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In Spring 2013 Eskinder Negash, director of the United States Office of Refugee Resettlement, visited Virginia Tech to meet with graduate students and faculty. During his stay he shared current estimates of the worldwide population of people living displaced, stateless, in temporary asylum and/or seeking permanent citizenship (Resettlement, 2013). The more conservative appraisal Negash offered suggested that group numbers approximately 50 million people worldwide, while less strict assumptions concerning "who counts" in these categories yields a total of upwards of 65 million individuals. Irrespective of which startling figure one accepts, it is clear that at any given time, tens of millions of people worldwide live in perpetual precarity. It is also evident that the physical safety of many of these people is mediated by the graces of a neighboring state that can turn them away at any time. Another truism of the world's refugee situation is that many children have grown from birth to adulthood in refugee camps. That is, these young people have lived their entire lives in austere conditions with few resources.

These realities have prompted most wealthy industrialized countries to develop policies and institutions to respond to petitions for asylum and permanent residency. These agencies possess neither the remit nor the capacity, however, to plan comprehensively to address the global increase in refugee populations. That is, despite these nations' humanitarian efforts and the coordination of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the population of people seeking refuge continues to grow rapidly (UNHCR, 2013). Consider, for example, the flight of 2 million people leaving Syria during the time span of 2011 to 2014 alone.

Since the establishment of the United Nations in the 1940s, its wealthiest member nations have made commitments, on moral grounds, to grant refugees asylum. Such status is usually provided on documented evidence of persecution, genocide and/or war. To some extent, too, these countries began this practice as a form of political posturing during the Cold War as they sought to present themselves as more generous than their competitors. Nevertheless, the moral arguments for granting asylum on humanitarian grounds keep the commitment to provide succor public and, therefore, subject to scrutiny. After all, nations could—and sometimes do—refuse to admit those seeking protection. This may occur in various forms, such as outright closure of borders, severely

limiting the number of approved petitions within a set timeframe, and sometimes requiring would-be refugees to relocate and resettle in other countries. However, for the most part, the moral argument for offering refuge is given important weight in national deliberations concerning specific cases.

This fact notwithstanding, moral justifications for allowing protection provide only limited guarantees. For example, I count my home nation, the United States, as one that considers and grants petitions for asylum a matter of moral import, but once petitioners begin to interact with the institutions that will adjudicate their claim, what standards guide the treatment of asylum seekers? This process implicates public agencies in two related ways: elaboration and application of the terms of treatment of people deemed non-citizens as well as in how the circumstances surrounding a non-citizen's status influences decisions to provide or deny sanctuary.

> "Displacement leading to refugee claims arises more often from random factors than as a result of any specific steps states may control. Whether a person seeking sanctuary works incredibly hard or with casual interest matters very little when compared to the broad array of influences that condition the lives of most such people."
> –*Christian Matheis*

As it turns out, the moral argument on which my country relies to justify continuing to grant asylum does not necessarily regulate directly how agents of the state actually do so, nor does that overarching claim specify standards for assisting asylum-seekers. Instead, the way people are treated while petitioning for protection, even by the wealthiest and most generous of nations, is shaped strongly by political expediency and a concern that claims in petitions for aid be verified (Matheis, 2013). A case in point is the recently published manual, "Credibility Assessment in Asylum Procedures," by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (Gyulai, 2013). In the words of Michael Kagan, one of the effort's co-authors,

> this is now probably the state of the art in capturing best practices in one of the hardest and high stakes challenges in refugee status determination [RSD]. Doubts about credibility probably lead to more rejections of refugee claims than any other issue, but such denials are often only thinly justified. Moreover, if an adjudicator doubts someone and refuses he or she asylum and they later prove to be telling the truth, a person in danger of persecution will be put in harm's way. (Kagan, 2013, para.1)

"Credibility assessment" and "refugee status determination" refer to the criteria and processes by which decisions concerning whether to grant an individual refuge are reached – primarily whether the person actually endured the claimed conditions of genocide, war, persecution, etc. for which asylum was designed as a response. Here is how the authors of the Helsinki manual framed the status determination context:

> Before discovering the scope, limits, and methodology of credibility assessment, it is crucial to understand the general evidentiary framework of asylum procedures and its specific characteristics. In particular, this chapter will help to understand:
>
> - Why, and to what extent asylum procedures differ from other procedures with regard to evidence assessment and the establishment of facts and circumstances?
>
> - Who has the duty to substantiate facts and circumstances in asylum procedures and what does this mean in practical terms?
>
> - What is the level of conviction an asylum decision-maker needs to have regarding the existence of relevant facts and circumstances in order to make a favourable decision, and what does this mean in practical terms? (Gábor Gyulai, 2013, p.9).

These sorts of assessment criteria seek principally to protect national security interests and to prevent fraudulent refugee claims. In short, those actually charged with making refuge decisions do so on the basis of guidelines aimed foremost at assessing the risk that a potential refugee is not telling the truth, and secondly at avoiding immediate harm to the lives of people seeking protection. Even if one agrees this statutorily mandated orientation is important, do the policies and procedures used to investigate refugee claims employ published criteria such that people seeking asylum and other interested individuals can evaluate them?

Overall, I could not find any criteria justified on specifically moral, rather than risk-associated, grounds that a person seeking refuge could use to evaluate and, if necessary, call into question the practices of people administering/enforcing asylum procedures. Nations may have criteria for assessing refugee probity, but, so far as I have discerned, major countries have no similarly weighted operative norms for gauging the morality/ethics of their asylum decisions or for monitoring agency treatment of people petitioning for sanctuary.[1] Somewhat ironically, perhaps, manuals like the recent guide prepared by the Helsinki Committee, cite morality and moral decisions as cultural factors

about which those interviewing refugees should remain aware. Notably, however, that report did not provide criteria for evaluating either the justness of its proposed processes or of their outcomes.

Perhaps undue emphasis on evaluating the supposed credibility of people seeking refuge misrepresents the relative significance of causes; that is, how people ended up in need of asylum in the first instance. Typically, such situations have arisen for several reasons, including the fact that no single institutional entity has the resources or authority to manage the massive and ever-increasing population of asylum-seekers. Likewise, no nation or coalition of countries enjoys such authority, either. At best, individual countries, coalitions, and the United Nations currently triage the cases they can while the vast majority of people live at the mercy of random chance that events will create a scenario that might result in their becoming refugees. The efforts and credibility of a petitioner, however hard she may strive for asylum, may nonetheless count for little in this overarching context.

Displacement leading to refugee claims arises more often from random factors than as a result of any specific steps states may control. Whether a person seeking sanctuary works incredibly hard or with casual interest matters very little when compared to the broad array of influences that condition the lives of most such people. That is, by the time an asylum-granting nation evaluates a refuge seeker and schedules a hearing on their petition, it may be fairly said that the circumstances that created that person's flight have more to do with the situation they confront than their credibility. Believability serves as an administrative proxy for sussing out past causal factors employed in lieu of an evaluation of the overall circumstances facing individuals seeking refuge. Presenting credibility out of the context of the random chance that created the circumstances for flight in the first instance—again, something no state currently seems to have any plan or procedure for addressing—employs that factor as a purportedly reasonable means of bringing moderation and predictability to decision processes and to a social phenomenon that asylum-granting nations do not want to admit: the chaos, precarity, and vulnerability now afflicting growing numbers of people worldwide.[2]

Our nation's officials would do better, instead, to start from the assumption that events well beyond the control of those seeking sanctuary now dominate their life circumstances. Granted, various factors may have led to their situation of precarity. Nonetheless, by the time people petition for asylum they likely live in conditions of vulnerability better understood as random—the fact of the matter as they confront the conditions of their daily life—than as something resulting from specific prior events. As refugees, these individuals live at the whim of events and factors that may or may not line up in their favor (or against them). That reality seems far more pressing and verifiable

than seeking to ascertain and validate how each ended up in such circumstances and determining whether their recounting of those factors appears to be "true."

In short, asylum-granting nations, including the United States, might take a cue from scholars of liberation, including Enrique Dussel, who have suggested that protection decisions be guided by a specific conception of respect rooted in what displaced individuals can feasibly refuse (Dussel, 1985, para.2.6.2.3, para.5.3.2, para.5.4.5; Dussel, 2008, para.2.3). That is, *whatever someone cannot feasibly refuse* in order to attain asylum should count as the criterion/a by which to evaluate the efficacy of the entire administrative scheme of status determination. I offer this rubric as a conceptual guideline for evaluating the institutionally administered conditions that people must address while seeking refuge, specifically, the requirements over which sanctuary nations possess reasonable control. Theories of this sort might offer a means by which to evaluate the ethos of the asylum-related decision processes typically employed by wealthy industrialized nations.

Put differently, I propose that analysts assume that the wars and injustice that produce refugees are unlikely to end any time soon and that sanctuary nations should therefore take steps to ensure the best possible treatment of individuals petitioning for refuge or asylum. I want to raise questions concerning how to assess the processes by which nations grant asylum. What criteria should guide those seeking to determine whether these arguably vital choice processes are fair, ethical, or at least decent? Considering this question forces one to ponder whether the judgments now employed to decide whether to offer sanctuary are appropriate and just as well.

Notes.

1. A 2007 U.S. Congressional committee report (2006) stated that the central focus of the refugee program is, "to achieve a balance between humanitarian commitments and national security concerns" and to "protect honest asylum seekers" (p.55). The authors of the report acknowledged that "all refugees endure extreme hardship and suffering" but did not include any specific criteria for treatment of refugees on moral grounds.

2. For additional information about credibility in refugee petition processes, and the dominance of this factor compared with other concerns, consult: Verdirame et al. (2005).

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Global Governance is Here to Stay

Saul N'Jie

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Defining global governance can be very difficult. Dingwerth and Pattberg (2006) have argued that this is so because "global governance is all over the place!" (Dingwerth & Pattberg, 2006, p. 185). This concept can be associated with many things, whether an observable phenomenon, such as an international nongovernmental organization's (INGO) worldwide campaign against corruption, or political visions expressed as calls for a more powerful international legal system, or simply through ubiquitous references (Ibid). In a market system in which financial institutions are internationally connected and funds and investments flow around the world electronically, a debt crisis in the Aegean or the Antipodes can immediately affect far-flung sites and actors. In a world in which diseases can become global challenges in a matter of days, and in which ethnic wars are no longer simply domestic crises, proponents of global governance argue that, "the unique dangers created by globalization can be solved by a gradual strengthening of existing international institutions and organizations" (Ibid, p. 188). However, this contention has not gone unchallenged, especially by scholars from the Global South, who are very skeptical of the power and strength of existing international institutions and organizations. One such analyst is South African Peter Vale, who has argued that the policies and actions of those institutions coupled with the arrival of global neoliberalism have meant only the intensification of 'market-driven poverty' in developing nations (Murphy, 2000, p.798).

Other scholars, meanwhile, have contended that, "contemporary global governance remains a predictable institutional response not to the interests of a fully formed class, but to the overall logic of industrial capitalism" (Ibid, p. 799). In the end, and despite the ongoing debate concerning what global governance means, most close observers agree that the concept involves the interaction and regulation of activities at the international level. All evidence points to the fact that events of the past two decades have created a need for more governance capability at the global scale, so this controversy is unlikely to abate any time soon.

Indeed, international organizations (IOs) have never been more central to world politics than they are today. At least 238 IO's are currently at work on nearly every imaginable global issue (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004, p. 1). Recent years have witnessed a rapid rise in the need for global governance institutions to address major challenges that cannot be managed by nation-states:

border conflicts, pandemics, and the quest for liberalization—be it political or economic—among other concerns. In their book, *The Politics of Global Governance*, Diehl and Frederking (2010) have suggested that, "global governance is a concept necessary to address the complex issues of a globalized world; a world where sovereign nations cannot individually respond to problems that span national borders" (p.313). These authors have argued further that, "the globalization of diseases, the shifting in power structures of government, the concern for security in a politically unstable world. ... And the increasing roles of civil society and the commercial sectors in global health" are reasons why there is a high demand for global institutions to manage these problems (Ibid). All of these trends have surely contributed to the rise of global governance, but one phenomenon that has spurred this trend particularly is the amalgamation of the international economic sector, spearheaded by the Bretton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank (WB). In this regard, Craig Murphy has observed that if there is one global polity, its dominant ideology now is surely liberalism, both economic and political, spurred by the activities of these organizations (Murphy, 2000, p. 792).

> "[Besides IMF, WB, and the UN], there are the NGO workers in the Third World, who go to places like Gunjur, The Gambia, to undertake efforts to assist women and families there to become entrepreneurs. While these NGOs are not often seen as agents of global governance, in truth, they are. Whatever one thinks of international governance, we are all globally governed now, in one way or another."
> *–Saul N'Jie*

Most of Eastern Europe, Russia, and parts of Latin America and Africa, whether as a result of IO dictates or choice, joined the neoliberal capitalist bandwagon in the 1990s. A majority of them opened their borders and liberalized their markets, ushering in a new wave of globalization. Nearly all of the restructuring of these economies was and is still being overseen by the International

Monetary Fund and the World Bank, two of the most powerful of the public institutions of global governance. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the IMF recognized that some low-income countries needed highly concessional financial support on a longer-term basis than it was able to provide through its existing financing mechanisms. It therefore set up the Structural Adjustment Facility and the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (IMF, 1997). The IMF and the World Bank set out certain preconditions to receive loans via these entities and lately have systematized criteria that nations must meet to be considered for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt forgiveness program.

To qualify for the HIPC, a country must implement a supervised structural adjustment program for three years (previously six years) prior to receiving such support. These policies were implemented as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). The SAPs called for drastic reductions in social expenditure, export development, broad opening of markets through the elimination of customs barriers, and general liberalization of economies. Adjustment Programs also routinely have called for the abolition of capital movement and exchange controls, protection of capital revenues, and massive privatization of previously public institutions. Structural adjustment has fundamentally transformed the roles of developing nation governments, thereby directly and indirectly increasing the involvement of nongovernmental organizations in the governance of these countries. Critics of these efforts, including Murphy, have argued that, increasingly, as a consequence of neoliberal marketization, the services once provided by government institutions are now contracted to private, nongovernmental, often "social movement"-style, organizations (Murphy, 2000, p. 792).

In addition to expressions of concern among many scholars regarding this trend, other events have highlighted the need for more effective global governance. A good example would be the inaction of the international community in the wake of the Rwandan genocide. Almost 1 million people were hacked to death by their fellow countrymen, despite the fact that ,"ample early warnings [were] provided to the UN Secretariat and the Security Council by its own officers in the field" (Ibid, p. 791). The international community's failure to act in this horrific situation raised the issue for many of the moral sufficiency of contemporary global governance.

These important concerns notwithstanding, international organizations have pressed ahead with key responsibilities in global governance in peacekeeping, development, and humanitarianism, among other domains. These entities have developed new policy ideas and programs, managed crises, and set priorities for shared activities that would not exist otherwise (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999,

p. 156). International organizations such as the United Nations today play a very important role in global governance: they develop policies, rules, and regulations that seek to protect the rights of minorities, children, and women, just to name a few. Some argue that the United Nations can and should do more than what it is doing now—that the organization should work more with states to make sure that the policies for which it is responsible are actually fully implemented.

All of this said, whatever one thinks of global governance, it is likely here to stay, for good or ill. Some detractors have pointed to the IMF and WB's neoliberalization of the Global South as evidence of the staying power (and, in their view, negative repercussions) of international governance efforts. Other critics have argued that the United Nations has been shown too often to be ineffectual and point to the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides as examples of that body's lack of efficacy. And finally, there are the NGO workers in the Third World, who go to places like Gunjur, The Gambia, to undertake efforts to assist women and families there to become entrepreneurs. While these NGOs are not often seen as agents of global governance, in truth, they are. Whatever one thinks of international governance, we are all globally governed now, in one way or another.

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The Role of Age, Gender, Education, and Income in Shaping Egyptian Citizens' Perceptions of the Most Vital Features of Democracy

Sofia Rukhin

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Late January and February 2011 marked a giant step in the history of Egypt toward a previously unknown, but for millions, desperately desired, democratic future: bloody and violent revolutionary protests, remembered for brutal killings of ordinary Egyptians during 17 days that led to Hosni Mubarak's resignation. In an attempt to analyze the impact of social status characteristics on the perceptions of the most essential features of democracy among Egyptians, I here share a few preliminary results of my master's research project, *Is Democracy Essential in the View of Egyptian Citizens? The Influence of Respondents' Status Characteristics on their Attitudes toward Core Democratic Values*. Using quantitative data from an Afrobarometer survey, I explore the impact of age, gender, income, education, type of residence, interest in public affairs, and several other individual characteristics on Egyptian perceptions of the most essential characteristics of democratic government. The Afrobarometer survey is an international research project collecting public opinion data from African countries concerning the quality of governance and democracy (Afrobarometer, International Research Project). A sample of 1,200 Egyptian men and women participated in round 5 of the survey in 2013.

Every research project focusing on an important, widely discussed and quite "overloaded" concept, such as democracy, has to conceptualize its main subject seriously. My major concern in this respect is not to oversimplify the idea to measure it empirically, but at the same time not go to an extreme by scrutinizing a wide array of dimensions of democratic values. Since I have based my study on the Afrobarometer dataset and questionnaire, it is logical to use that survey's understanding of democracy as a starting point for my analysis pursuing understanding of the impact of various determinants of social status on individual perceptions of democratic governance. However, as my study progresses, I plan to construct indices capturing respondents' attitudes toward several aspects of democracy so as to capture their orientations more fully. In any case, the questionnaire emphasizes the following features as vital indicators of democracy: "Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. If you have to choose only one of the things that I am going to read, which one would you choose as the most essential characteristic of democracy?"

1. Government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor
2. People choose government leaders in free and fair elections
3. Government does not waste any public money
4. People are free to express their

political views openly. (Afrobaromter, Round 5 questionnaire, p.13)

It is not an exhaustive list of factors that might be linked to democracy, but I used this particular question as a starting point for my analysis to examine how *age, education, gender,* and *income* shape (or do not shape) respondents' views on the characteristics that define a democratic regime. Age is among basic, but at the same time, key factors influencing positions not only in relation to democracy, but other important issues as well:

> "Every research project focusing on an important, widely discussed and quite 'overloaded' concept, such as democracy, has to conceptualize its main subject seriously."
> *–Sofia Rukhin*

> According to the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 'a mid-decade public opinion poll conducted in several Muslim countries (although Egypt was not included) revealed that attitudes towards democracy are changing across age groups as well. For instance, Indonesia is the only predominantly Muslim country in which there is a significant age difference in these opinions, with more respondents under age 40 than older people expressing the view that democracy can work there (44% vs. 34% of those age 40 and older). (Pew Research Center, 2005)

The role of *gender* in shaping opinions cannot be underestimated either. For instance,

> in the case of Egypt, women were granted suffrage in 1956, but still their positionality in the Egyptian society does not let them exercise as much freedom as male members of their society do. Therefore, the influence of gender on perceptions of democracy is thought to be a significant one, however, we cannot be absolutely sure what kind of impact gender will have. (Rukhin, 2014, p.6)

Education, as demonstrated in a series of similar studies of attitudes toward democracy by Jamal, Tessler, and Ciftci, is a critical factor in determining citizens' perceptions. As I have argued,

> Traditional view on the connection between democracy and the education of citizens seemed to be direct—the more educated citizens are, the more democratic the state is because education is seen as a guarantor of effective functioning of social institutions supporting the democratic environment. (Rukhin, 2014, p.19)

In addition, a prominent democracy theorist, Adam Przeworski, has argued that one's class

position greatly determines one's view on democracy: "preferences about economic systems have class bases" (Przeworski, 1991, p.104). Consequently, it makes sense to include this independent variable in the model and to simplify the task I have employed income as a proxy for class.

According to the descriptive statistics,

> Data indicates that almost 50% of respondents thought that the most essential characteristic of democracy was that government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor. A little more than 24% of respondents agreed that the most important feature of democratic governance is free and fair elections in which citizens are able to exercise their right to participate in the political life of their country. At the same time people are less likely to say that government should not waste any public money because only about 12% of respondents agreed with that answer. Valuing democracy as an opportunity to express one's political views openly also did not seem to be very important in the view of responding Egyptians in 2013: only about 9% identified this principle as the main characteristic of democracy. (Rukhin, 2014, p.11)

The first model in the multinomial regression analysis included *age, gender,* and *education* as independent variables, and the data showed a significant result only for the variable "*government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor.*" Education and preference for this characteristic of democracy were negatively related. Thus, the higher the educational level of a respondent, the less likely they were to think of this aspect of democracy as a vital feature compared to "expressing political views openly" which was employed as a reference group. Age and gender did not prove significant in this respect. The explanatory power of this model was extremely low and equaled approximately 3.1%.

The potential importance of *income* in shaping respondents' views must also be evaluated. However, the Afrobarometer dataset does not include this variable directly. Instead, the authors asked the question, "*if a respondent or member(s) of his family have ever gone without enough food.*" In a second model I added this variable as a control along with *interest in public affairs*. The rest was the same as in the first model. Higher levels of education are still significantly and negatively associated with the choice of "*government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor*" compared to "*expressing political views openly.*" We also see another significant result: respondents who are not interested in public affairs are less likely to claim that the most important feature is that "*people choose government leaders in free and fair elections*" compared to "*expressing political views openly.*" This model still is quite weak at explaining the variation in the opinion of respondents as it explains only 5%.

The third model observed the influence of such independent factors as *education, employment status* and *satisfaction with how the Egyptian democracy works*. Education was still negatively and

significantly correlated with "*choosing government leaders in free and fair elections*" vs. "*expressing political views openly.*" "This model also predicted that Egyptians who find themselves less satisfied with how the Egyptian democracy works were less likely to choose the option '*people choose government leaders in free and fair elections*'" (Rukhin, 2014, final paper). Model 3 explains only 7.4% variation of the opinions of those responding to the Afrobarometer Egyptian survey. The data indicate that not all variables of interest (age, education, gender, and income) have an impact on the perceptions of Egyptians on the most essential features of democracy. The outcome variable was formulated on the basis of one question from the survey. Thus, it might not reflect different dimensions of views on democracy. This fact can explain why there was almost no significant relationship found and reassures me that in order to study the issue properly an index embodying several characteristics of the concept of democracy is crucial.

Despite the imperfections these test models contain, it still seems reasonable to argue that education is negatively correlated with the choice of socioeconomic equality as an essential characteristic of any democratic regime among Egyptians surveyed. Educated people on average earn more than less well-educated individuals. Differences in educational level lead to accumulating and, probably, escalating economic inequality between these two groups. It also seems quite likely that high-income people are against narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor because they do not have a desire to share their wealth with their less well-off counterparts. In turn, the significant negative relationship found between the variable "*interest in public affairs*" and "*people choose government leaders in free and fair elections*" may be interpreted as suggesting that people who demonstrate little interest in public life are less likely to participate actively in voting. The third model yielded another interesting result: citizens who are not satisfied with Egyptian democracy do not tend to value "*free and fair elections*" as the most important component of a democratic regime. This result should probably be interpreted as arising from individual disbelief and frustration caused by the nation's political system.

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Seeking Identity in the "Chinese" Nation

Jamie N. Sanchez

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As I have watched the recent "Umbrella Revolution" in Hong Kong unfold, I was once again reminded that China is not the "unified" multinational state that nation's government leaders portray it to be. Civil unrest is not uncommon in Chinese territory and intermittent protests have continued in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia during the past several decades. While demonstrations in each of those areas, as well as those now in Hong Kong, have arisen on the basis of different grievances, identity can be seen as a common link among the concerns of the aggrieved groups in each location. Many individuals in the country embrace identities that do not align with the state constructed ideology concerning what it means to be Chinese.

Zhongua minzu, which means "Chinese nation" in Mandarin, is a concept by which all of the people in China can (or should), according to the government, imagine themselves as part of one country. Benedict Anderson has examined the processes by which citizens imagine themselves as part of the same nation through shared experiences. Historically this shared construct was essential in uniting "the Chinese nation" against outside aggressors, including Japan and the West. The function of the idea of the Chinese nation remains the same today; it represents a way to connect the vast number of different peoples living in the country under one broad identity. By imagining themselves as part of the *zhonghua minzu*, the state hopes that China's citizens will develop a strong sense of nationalism that will trump any other potential identity. Further, the country's rulers expect those who are part of the zhonghua minzu to help secure a "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*), a term introduced into China's political discourse in 2005 when Hu Jintao, president of the nation at the time, applied Confucian thought to justify and describe domestic policies (Li, Sato & Sirular, 2013). The nation's leaders have emphasized *zhonghua minzu* and *hexie shehui* since in their efforts to create a "harmonious society" and strong national identity. Nonetheless, even a cursory review of unrest among several of the country's ethnic minority groups suggests that Chinese society is anything but congruous.

In March 2008, protests concerning Tibetan sovereignty erupted in Lhasa (Smith, Jr., 2010). Just a year later, in July 2009, demonstrations concerning the death of two Ugyhurs in Southern China erupted in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region and quickly escalated into violence. A long history of unrest had preceded these protests in Xinjiang, but the July 2009 riots gained the West's attention.

They also occasioned a strong response from the Chinese government, including a total Internet blackout in the province (Staff, 2014).

"This fresh challenge to the regnant national identity of a supposed 'harmonious society' suggests that the government's strategy to quell internal rifts may now be fraying in entirely new ways."
–Jamie Sanchez

I lived in Inner Mongolia during the July 2009 protests in Xinjiang. At that time, much of the discussion amongst the expatriate community regarding the unrest there and in Tibet addressed the question of whether Mongolians would soon protest. In May 2011, our amateur political forecasts proved true when a Mongolian shepherd was struck and killed by a Han truck driver in rural Inner Mongolia. That tragedy resulted in spontaneous protests that eventually spread to the capital city of Hohhot.

Part of the outrage in each of these situations arose from the fact that the *zhonghua minzu* reflects a largely Han identity. Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians have a strong ethnic character that is both informed by history and formally recognized by the Chinese state. When Mao Zedong developed the list of the 56 officially recognized ethnic groups (*minzu*) in China, he adapted the Soviet model of categorization to the Chinese situation, but did so with the caveat that to be so designated, an ethnic group had to be distinct from the Han, the largest such population in China. In doing so, he set the precedent that China's ethnic groups would thereafter be viewed relative to the dominant Han identity. Since Mao's edict, aggressive urban development in the Western part of the country, Han migration to many ethnic minority-regions, and a cultural belief that venerates Mandarin above other languages spoken in the country, have created fears of Sinicization, or Hanization, amongst China's ethnic groups.

The Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong complicates this already politically and socially delicate issue because its identity claims are not linked with any particular minzu or recognized group. Those in Hong Kong claim to be "Hong Kong people," rather than "Chinese," and look to the city, rather than the state, for their identity (Wong & Wong, 2014). This fresh challenge to the regnant national identity of a supposed "harmonious society" suggests that the government's strategy to quell internal rifts may now be fraying in entirely new ways.

Ma Rong, professor of sociology at Beijing University, is one of the advocates within the Chinese academy calling for reform of China's ethnic policies. Ma is concerned that China has the same characteristics that the Soviet Union evidenced before its collapse, and these could lead to its eventual disintegration as a multinational state if current policies are not changed. In a 2012 publication Ma asserted, "At present, the biggest danger China faces in the 21st century is the breakup of the country" (Leibold, 2013). Whether China will confront the same fate as the USSR remains to be seen. But, one thing is clear: China needs to address the divisive question of identity much more effectively and in ways that its diverse ethnic and political groups perceive as just if it wishes to remain "harmonious."

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Between Conditional and Unconditional Hospitality: The Contradictions of European Union and United States Immigration Policy

Johannes Grow

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Immigration, especially along the border between the United States (U.S.) and Mexico as well as at the point where the Mediterranean and the "Schengen" zone meet (e.g., Italy and Greece), is increasingly marked by instances of violence and securitization. The utilization of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and the construction of sections of walls and fences by the U.S. as well as the Frontex maintained by the European Union (EU) represent ongoing Western nation-state efforts to shore up their borders against various perceived threats from the Global South: refugees, drugs, weapons, smuggled goods, poor people, workers, and asylum seekers (Brown, 2010; Robbins, 2013).[1] EU rhetoric particularly, evidences a basic tension among positions espoused by neoliberals, cosmopolitans, and liberals. While European Union and U.S. narratives appear on their face to suggest a willingness to assist various refugees and immigrants, both nonetheless simultaneously have enacted policies and positions that undermine their globalization and cosmopolitan rhetoric. That is, these nations' actions undermine their normative vocabulary that is nominally based on increasing freedom of movement, the reduction of barriers and borders, and a promotion of "universal" human rights. Their actions also contradict the view that nation-state borders are becoming more porous or, indeed, that the nation-state itself is waning (Brown, 2010; Ypi, 2008).

In an essay titled "On Cosmopolitanism," Jacques Derrida critically engaged with the "cosmopolitan" ideal that has been adopted by countries' foreign policies within the European Union to signify a self-image of an open, *hospitable*, and inclusive society (Peters & Papastephanou, 2013). Despite this self-understanding, reactions to child migration along the U.S border, responses to the recent terrorist attacks in Paris on the satirical news magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, the continuing refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, and the subsequent horrendous human cost of the European Sovereign Debt crisis (especially in Greece), has only further undermined this cosmopolitan rhetoric (Ibid). Indeed, Derrida argued that the concept of hospitality is characterized by an internal contradiction, or double imperative. On the one hand, the idea connotes a "right to refuge" to all immigrants and refugees. On the other hand, hospitality must be conditional; there has to be some limit on the "right of residence" (Derrida, 2001). Derrida contended that,

> This tendency to obstruct is extremely common…to the countries of the European Union; it is a price that is oftentimes paid as a consequence of the Schengen Agreement … at a time when we claim to be lifting internal borders, we proceed to bolt the external borders of the European Union tightly.(Derrida, 2001, p.13)

Although Derrida wrote in 1977, this double imperative nonetheless characterizes immigration policy within the EU and U.S. today. The European Union's inability to solve the migration crisis in the Mediterranean is perhaps an example of the core "impossibility" of reconciling these competing claims (Travis, 2014). Yet, Derrida elucidates the seeming "impossibility" of this task not to paralyze politics, but to enable it (Derrida, 2001). Indeed, the contradictions of the EU's immigration stance are further complicated by the fractures and lacunae that dominate and separate European Union-level tenets (although far from being homogenous themselves) from the immigration policies of its respective member states.

"In order to fulfill the potential of the open, democratic, and plural, promises espoused by the EU and U.S., the language of immigration and asylum must change to recognize the historical complexities that underlie the sociopolitical and economic reasons for migration and asylum seeking."
–Johannes Grow

According to Adam Luedtke, the 2001 "Tempere Conclusion," represented an ambitious attempt by the European Council to establish a common EU-level immigration policy approach, because, "it would be in contradiction with Europe's traditions to deny … freedom to those whose circumstances lead them justifiably to seek access to your territory," the Council "requires the Union to develop common policies on asylum and immigration," which would result in "an open and secure European Union, fully committed to the obligations of the Geneva Refugee Convention…and be able to respond to humanitarian needs on the basis of solidarity" (Luedtke, 2009, p.130).

The September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, the train bombings in 2004 in Madrid, and in 2005 in London, and, I argue, the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, have dramatically changed the picture of immigration in the European Union (Luedtke, 2009, p.131). Although these incidents

were not the sole impetus for more restrictive immigration legislation, these acts of violence surely played a central role in the increasing securitization of the EU Schengen border. This shift calls into question the example of the Tampere Conclusion as an affirmation of the EU's cosmopolitan since that declaration has remained only a potentiality and never a concrete established and effective policy (Ibid. p.130).

Yet, arguably, the Conclusion represented an attempt to find a balance between complete conditional and unconditional hospitality. This impossibility is predicated on a:

> Historical space which takes place *between* the Law of an unconditional hospitality, offered *a priori* to every other, to all newcomers, *whoever they may be*, and the conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without *The* unconditional law of hospitality would be in danger of remaining a pious, and irresponsible desire, without form and without potency, and even of being perverted at any moment. (Derrida, 2001, p.23, emphasis in the original)

United States immigration policy has also continued to undermine a similar cosmopolitan rhetoric. For example, despite the increasing securitization of the Mexico-U.S. border, language emanating from the American government nonetheless suggests an inclusive and accepting society open to immigration from all corners of the earth. Yet, the Ebola scare here in the United States illustrated the extent to which the U.S. Government would go to secure its border against a perceived "dangerous" Other. Popular public concern over the security of the U.S. territory, already heightened by the surge of migrants from Central America, increased significantly following the outbreak of Ebola in Western Africa in conjunction with three high-profile Ebola patients who were flown into the country for medical treatment. In fact, the American reaction to the Ebola outbreak, which included the tightening of border controls in general, elucidates the weaknesses of cosmopolitan rhetoric. As Thomas Nail has observed, "More often than not, cosmopolitan institutions composed of nation-states exist to protect the interests of citizens and states above and at the expense of migrants and the stateless" (Nail, 2013). Moreover, there were calls from Congress not only to enforce a travel ban from migrants traveling from Western Africa, but also warnings from certain Congressman that "illegal" migrants entering the United States would spread the disease (Chishti, Hipsman, & Price, 2014). It is this type of narrative that continually undermines the cosmopolitan claim formally espoused by the United States.

In order to fulfill the potential of the open, democratic, and plural, promises espoused by the EU and U.S., the language of immigration and asylum must change to recognize the historical complexities that underlie the sociopolitical and economic reasons for migration and asylum seeking. Whether this is possible remains to be seen. I do not wish here simply to criticize the entirety of

United States or EU democratic and inclusive goals, yet current laws and immigration policies in each continue to undermine their oft stated cosmopolitan ideals. Derrida's analysis suggests that these laws and policies should be transformed and improved within "historical space" in order to prevent, as the British Refugee Council chief executive recently noted concerning EU policies ad practice, "more people needlessly and shamefully dying on Europe's doorstep" (Travis, 2014).

Notes.

1. According to its website "Frontex promotes, coordinates and develops European border management in line with the EU fundamental rights charter applying the concept of Integrated Border Management." Retrieved from http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/mission-and-tasks/.

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Part 7: Issues in Local and International Development

The essays in this section address development issues at both the local and international scales. While historically, these concerns have been viewed predominantly through an economic lens, analysts have recently begun to contend that those seeking change must encourage human development, quality of life, and well-being if they wish to realize economic shifts. Brendan Halloran guides the reader though the debate concerning international development initiatives and their outcomes, calling attention to the critical significance of politics to aid results. He concludes that international development organizations will continue missing opportunities to tackle chronic poverty successfully in emerging nations until they recognize that the principal barriers and obstacles to reducing impoverishment are political, not technical. Gardner Burg is fascinated with change in the evolving city and the role that artifacts, often viewed as barriers to development, play in the processes that result in such shifts. In particular, Burg critically reflects on the relationship between urban objects and collective memory, recognizing that although such memories are often fragmented and incongruous, they must have a role in the sustainable development of cities since these form the frames through which residents understand their lived experience.

Renee LaSapio is passionate about cycling, especially in cities, a growing trend throughout North America, from major metropolitan centers such as Washington D.C., Chicago, and New York to smaller urban communities, such as Roanoke and Christiansburg in Virginia. LaSapio explores a number of local bicycling initiatives and highlights the conditions necessary for communities to succeed in integrating cycling as a safe alternative mode of recreation and transport in the New River Valley region, such as appropriate transportation infrastructure, available and well connected bike lanes, plentiful parking, and safe and reliable facilities for parking and storage. She argues that such initiatives, well crafted, will inspire and permit more people to ride bicycles. For her part, Whitney Knollenberg analyzes power dynamics in tourism development. In particular, her essay discusses public-private partnerships and their challenges and calls on public officials to take steps to improve such efforts by recognizing and ensuring the value of equal standing among those engaged in them.

Selma Elouardighi questions the assumption that solar power is always “green,” which has garnered support from both the World Bank and the European Union. She examines a case in which a European company installed a large solar energy array in the North African desert and channeled that energy back to Europe while using 4 million cubic meters of water per year in an already water-

scarce region to do so. She calls on environmentally sensitive customers in Western nations to assume responsibility for ensuring that corporations behave ethically and responsibly everywhere around the world so that the sorts of "hidden" costs her case example revealed will not occur.

Anna Erwin draws parallels between problems associated with indoor open fire cooking in Kenya, which accounts for approximately 2 million deaths a year in that nation, and the challenge of achieving food justice in the United States. She analyzes local initiatives to provide nutritious and affordable food for all and concludes that achieving that goal will require more than simply providing a new stove or planting a garden, and that social learning and innovative economic structures should be seen as integral parts of any devised solutions. Lorien MacAuley shares her three-years experience of seeking to live as a hunter-gatherer, which taught her how much work, strength, persistence, and ingenuity it takes to provide food for oneself. She questions our population's collective reliance on the existing food system, given the immense resources it consumes and environmental degradation it imposes, and concludes by suggesting that food system practitioners need to conceive agriculture as a complex and interdisciplinary set of problems, and not just another industry in order to develop appropriate solutions to secure food justice in a sustainable way.

Politics, Political Change, and International Development

Brendan Halloran

(Originally published January 31, 2013)

The challenge of poverty reduction as a part of international development initiatives has preoccupied individuals, nonprofit organizations, and governments for more than half a century. Addressing poverty has proved to be a difficult undertaking and one replete with a host of ideological prescriptions, good intentions gone wrong, popularized "best practices," and critics damning the whole enterprise. Making sense of the diverse efforts and arguments that fall under the umbrella of international development is a complex task. Yet critical thinking about those initiatives and their effects on poverty is essential as aid comes under increased political pressure from critics. The continuing global economic malaise and the increasingly difficult fiscal circumstances of many donor countries have put development budgets at risk. Aid critics, such as Dambisa Moyo and William Easterly, have compiled evidence of the failures of international development efforts over the past decades to argue it should be discontinued. Moreover, and as an overarching trend, growing trade volumes, foreign direct investment, and remittances now dwarf aid budgets in many developing countries.

Could it be that the time for international development as an undertaking and an industry is coming to an end? Or are changes in order instead? I argue for a third option, that we must rethink foreign aid in order to focus on the single most important factor driving continued poverty and underdevelopment in much of the world, politics.

Scholars have begun to recognize the political nature of chronic poverty. David Mosse (2010), for example, has argued that sustained deprivation is a product of political, economic, and social relations and structures that have developed over time, rather than a characteristic of any single individual or group. Hickey and Bracking (2005) have suggested similarly that, "politics and political change remain the key means by which [chronic] poverty can be challenged" (p.851). Meanwhile, empirical evidence suggests that development aid has had little impact on poverty reduction and income growth in poor countries. Instead, the quality of public institutions appears to be a more decisive factor in securing positive community change than such assistance (Booth, 2011). But attaining the changes need to develop such government institutions is an intensely political process, often characterized by conflict among state and nonstate actors, rather than a linear process of formal administrative and institutional reform based on "best practices" (Leftwich & Sen, 2010).

A recent report by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) that summarized a decade of research concerning development highlighted this conclusion:

> To understand development we must understand the politics that shape it. Ultimately it is political decisions that will shape whether or not the Millennium Development Goals are reached, revenues are raised to fund investment, and growth occurs. (DFID, 2010, p. i)

> The key message from all four research programmes has been the centrality of politics in building effective states and shaping development outcomes. It shows 'politics' not as an abstract concept, but as an essential determinant of the Millennium Development Goals – that is, better educated, healthier, more prosperous people. The research has delivered this message in many ways. It provides evidence of politics as the 'driver of change' and as the ultimate cause of people's security and access to justice. (DFID, 2010, p. 3)

Despite this clear message from the research community (and some development agencies), donors have struggled to reconcile a political understanding of development challenges with the predominantly technocratic approaches they have long embraced and employed. According to Sue Unsworth (2009), "While most donors readily acknowledge (when pressed) that development challenges are political, not just financial and technical, there is a disconnect between the rhetoric about politics and the mainstream operational agenda" (p. 884). Unsworth has offered three mutually reinforcing barriers that prevent the integration of political considerations into development work:

> "International development organizations have yet to recognize that the principal barriers and obstacles to poverty reduction are political, not technical. Until they do, international development work will continue to miss opportunities to improve the lives of those living in chronic poverty in developing nations."
> *–Brendan Halloran*

> Intellectual barriers: getting people to take politics seriously requires them to change their existing mental models of how development happens. Institutional incentives within aid agencies (and development NGOs) that reinforce the status quo. Political analysis highlights the stark reality that there may be very limited local ownership of a development agenda. (p. 889)

She notes that political and political economy approaches do not readily offer definitive answers to the questions they raise. Thus, development agencies, to the extent that they do so at all, tend only to incorporate political considerations at the analysis stage, with subsequent interventions reflecting familiar technocratic and "best practices" formulas, particularly those arising from the "good governance" agenda.

Thomas Carothers (2010) has also addressed the ongoing challenge of attaining a more politically informed practice of development:

> Taking politics seriously in development aid implies not just carrying out good political-economy assessments but actually incor¬porating those insights into innovative, politically nimble programming. Learning that a country's development is being crippled by the entrenched hold of a close circle of corrupt power holders rooted in a particular ethnic sub-community is one thing; doing something about it using external aid is another…And still further, honestly facing the underlying political constraints on reform tends to entail accepting greatly reduced expectations about what aid is capable of achieving—another difficulty for donors, especially in this era of heightened pressure to show results. (p.23)

These authors make clear the need to take politics into account in the design and implementation of international development initiatives. Some aid agencies and organizations are taking tentative steps toward addressing this lacuna by making increased use of political and political-economic analyses. Yet, to date, those efforts have not been strongly integrated into thinking concerning the design of interventions to address continuing poverty and underdevelopment. That is, international development organizations have yet to recognize that the principal barriers and obstacles to poverty reduction are political, not technical. Until they do, international development work will continue to miss opportunities to improve the lives of those living in chronic poverty in developing nations.

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Is Collective Memory a Myth?

Gardner Burg

(Originally published February 14, 2013)

As a Master's of Landscape Architecture Degree student at Virginia Tech I have had an opportunity to develop my understanding of the dynamics of the urban landscape. In particular, I am intrigued by the role of artifacts within the processes of the evolving city. Aldo Rossi, one of the most significant thinkers in architecture during the second half of the 20th century, has suggested that the city is one of the most dynamic and least understood of human environments. In fact, the urban landscape is typically transformed completely approximately every 40 years. The result of this constant change is a growing number of artifacts left on the margins of development. These objects consisting of buildings, landscapes, and even whole urban districts, are often viewed as barriers to development. I wonder, however, if these supposed relics could possess a more active and positive role in the communities of which they are a part, and if so, what qualities might inform that stance?

My research into the role of urban artifacts within the city has revealed a number of debates related to the definition and value of these objects. One of the most interesting of these controversies revolves around the relationship between artifacts and memory. There is very little disagreement concerning whether urban objects are defined, at least partly, by memory. Rather, the discussion focuses on the question of the presence of a collective memory attached to urban artifacts. Collective memory refers to the informal history of a social group and it consists of customs and/or significant historical events.

Some thinkers who have reflected on the urban landscape, Rossi among them, have argued that collective memory is part of what defines artifacts and makes them valuable. According to this perspective, objects give locus to collective memory, meaning the artifact is so firmly rooted in a specific place, both physically and historically, that it gives memories a defined location. The power of monuments to evoke a specific event is an appropriate example. Other examples are historic theatres that define an arts district or the preserved homes of historic icons. Many visitors to George Washington's estate at Mt. Vernon have likely felt this effect. It is hard not to sense a connection to the simpler way of life and honest leadership that those grounds represent.

These illustrations of collective memory associated with artifacts are comforting and easy to relate to because we have all experienced them in our own communities. This perspective is not without its critics, however. Many Post-Modern thinkers believe that collective memory does not

exist in today's increasingly diverse urban centers. Even Rossi conceded that individual perception of artifacts is significantly affected by contemporary culture and preference. This argument has lost some momentum within the design world since the 1980s as interest has shifted to the global phenomenon now placed under the banner of "Green Design."

> "The question of whether urban artifacts can house collective memory remains. The issue is not easy to address, much less answer with certainty, but the fact that such a question is being raised at all shows that elite-prescribed narratives are no longer simply accepted without consideration."
> *–Gardner Burg*

Outside the design professions, however, there is considerable continuing interest in this issue. Although urban geographers and sociologists typically do not refer to places of memory as artifacts, these disciplines employ the terms fragment, archive and monument to deal with closely allied issues. Fragments are interesting because they represent both object and void. What distinguishes these urban objects is the fact that the missing whole of which they are a part cannot be completely rebuilt. As a result, attaining a consistent interpretation of them is almost impossible. Instead, individuals may create their own visions of the past through the objects they experience. A collage of individual interpretations, therefore, defines fragments, which do not yield the kind of common narrative that creates a collective memory.

Archives and monuments are trickier. The relationship between archives and memory is complicated because archives contain objects of the past deemed worthy of preservation. Thus, these artifacts are defined as much by the culture that created them as by the objects they contain. Moreover, the inherently narrow focus of formal archiving creates a significant problem. Annals tend to represent past elites who had the power and resources to ensure that their version of history persisted. Consequently, while collections represent a collective memory, that remembrance is often plagued by misinformation and omission.

Monuments are problematic for a similar reason. They are often initiated and constructed by

social elites prescribing a certain version of history. The result is a very clear image, but one that aligns memory with a selected historic accounting.

Together these issues present an important question for analyzing the urban landscape. In the case of artifacts as fragments, analysts generally agree that a collective memory is not possible because of disconnects between the culture that the object represents and the modern context in which it currently exists. In the case of artifacts as archives and monuments, however, there is some indication that each creates collective memory, but it is not always clear whether the images are fair and accurate as such overarching narratives often omit more than they include.

This said, the question of whether urban artifacts can house collective memory remains. The issue is not easy to address, much less with certainty, but the fact that such a question is being raised at all shows that elite-prescribed narratives are no longer simply accepted without consideration. Urban artifacts at the individual level do house memory, that much is clear, and even if that collection of memories is fragmented and incongruous, those memories must have a role if the development of cities is to become both self-conscious and "sustainable." The exact relationship between memory and artifacts is not clear, but acknowledging their ties certainly represents a step in the right direction.

Bringing the Benefits of Cycling to the New River Valley and beyond

Renee LoSapio

(Originally published February 21, 2013)

The quintessential symbol of the American Frontier, the cowboy, is often depicted riding a sturdy steed in a saddle in a pair of worn leather chaps and a ten-gallon hat. Riding on a more contemporary-style saddle, today's modern "metal cowboys" ride congested streets on two wheels in attire ranging from cycling jerseys to business suits. City cycling is growing throughout North America, including major cities such as Washington D.C., Chicago, New York, and Montréal. Some cyclists are fueled by the same kind of adrenaline their ancestors possessed while living dangerously in the Wild West. However, the typical commuter rides to attain health benefits, time and cost savings, or for the simple enjoyment of biking for recreational use.

Residents of smaller urban and rural communities are also recognizing the benefits of cycling for commuters, visitors, and the local economy. David Verde, Founder of the annual Roanoke (VA) Tweed Run and local community advocate in the New River Valley is eager to lead efforts to ensure favorable conditions for cycling in the Town of Christiansburg. Verde explained that while living in Charleston, SC, the city worked diligently to connect existing greenways and provide a safer environment for cyclists.

This past October Verde joined local organizers and other visitors at the second annual City Works (X)po in Roanoke at which community members and other conference attendees shared ideas to promote civic education and engagement for small cities. Discussion topics included historic preservation, urban forestry, public theatre, and sustainable transit, including cycling. Mike Lydon, leader of the Street Plans Collaborative, presented a series of strategies communities could adopt to engage local stakeholders and boost outreach initiatives. Research, writing, and communication are at the core of the Collaborative's mission to influence community-planning processes, especially for cycling.

How to secure greater resident use of more sustainable forms of transportation is an increasingly significant topic of discussion among local stakeholders and public officials in the New River Valley (NRV). The NRV Planning District Commission (PDC) has begun to take steps to respond to the demand for a less auto-centric transportation system. In 2011, the PDC created a Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan that incorporated an integrated system of bicycle facilities, river access points, and pedestrian walkways into the existing transportation system.[1] The plans stressed improvement of

regional assets such as multi-purpose trails, shared roadways, hiking and mountain biking trails, and blueways.

The cycling community in the NRV is still relatively small and only a tiny fraction of the total population commutes to work by bicycle. Ride Solutions, a regional ridesharing program operated by the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission in cooperation with the New River Valley Planning District Commission, hosted several events in 2012 to boost cycling awareness and ridership. The Shadowbox Microcinema and the Taubman Museum joined forces with the organization to host a film festival. The event featured directors from around the region and previewed films that highlighted local cycling enthusiasts. Ride solutions also worked with Roanoke Parks and Recreation and the City of Roanoke to host the Mayor's Ride. Led by Mayor David A. Bowers, the intent of the event was to honor those who supported the region's cycling initiatives.

> "How to secure greater resident use of more sustainable forms of transportation is an increasingly significant topic of discussion among local stakeholders and public officials in the New River Valley. […] Although the New River Valley has a sometimes challenging geography and weather patterns, a strong bike culture in the region is nonetheless possible."
> *–Renee LoSapio*

Programs at Virginia Tech have also surfaced to support local and regional efforts to encourage safe cycling on campus. The Virginia Tech Bicycle Ambassador Program, led by the university's Alternative Transportation Coordinator Kathryn Zeringue, encourages the responsible use of bicycles by educating new and experienced cyclists on law-abiding behavior and providing resources for creating a bicycle culture on campus. In addition, Transportation and Campus Services at Virginia Tech has been awarded funding by the U.S. Department of Transportation's TEA-21 Enhancement program for a bicycle pathways project called "Hokie Bikeways."

Although the New River Valley has a sometimes challenging geography and weather patterns, a strong bike culture in the region is nonetheless possible. Cycling communities succeed when transportation infrastructure is focused on modes beyond the automobile, bike lanes are available and well connected, and appropriate parking is plentiful. Safe and reliable bicycle facilities are key, not only to alleviating vehicle congestion on high-traffic roadways, but also to inspiring more people to ride bicycles. The initiatives outlined here represent a hopeful sign that our region is now taking steps to assure just such an infrastructure for area residents.

Notes.

1. Detailed 2011 plans developed by the NRV PDC can be found here: http://www.nrvpdc.org/Transportation/bwwwbw.html

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RE: How Do We Move beyond Rhetoric?

Whitney Knollenberg

(Originally published April 24, 2013)

In the spirit of this commentary's title I write to build upon Sarah Lyon-Hill's discussion of the challenges associated with developing effective partnerships (see Lyon Hill's "How Do We Move beyond Rhetoric?" in this volume). Lyon-Hill proposed that the act of partnering has too often become a rhetorical exercise that does not facilitate its intended outcomes, including resource sharing or the development of creative solutions. To combat this orientation toward partnerships, she pointed to the need for a culture in which citizens feel responsible for both themselves and their community. I fully agree with Lyon-Hill's thesis that as a society we need to re-conceptualize our role in partnerships. In addition, I wish to argue that other forces are also undermining the potential effectiveness of partnerships. These include the use of tokenistic approaches to stakeholder involvement and the fact that collaborations necessitate a sharing of power. I will illustrate these concerns with examples from environmental management and tourism development.

Public input? Check! As Lyon-Hill noted, there are many forms of partnership, including the democratic relationship between a government and its citizens. Citizen engagement, and indeed the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in public decision-making processes, serves as an example of such a partnership as it necessitates a sharing of ideas and resources (such as time and energy) to facilitate an improved outcome for all engaged parties. Scholars have touted partnerships involving broad stakeholder involvement as a means of making more informed decisions and ensuring that all parties are aware of a decision's potential impacts.

Congress and the President enacted the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), among other laws, to ensure that that the intended benefits of citizen involvement are in fact attained. Signed into law in 1970, NEPA requires that prior to Federal government actions that will result in environmental impacts a specific process to gauge their likely effects must occur (NEPA process). That method includes public review and comment on the proposed actions. By creating opportunities for stakeholders to voice their views this policy asks the public to serve as partners in the decision-making process. Although the NEPA consultation process guides actions related to environmental impacts, the necessity of partnering with stakeholders has been integrated into policies that influence other actions as well, such as tourism development. Often utilized as a form of community development, tourism is typically governed by state-level offices or public private partnerships.

A common role for these entities is the creation of a state tourism plan, which guides product development and marketing decisions. From my experience in examining many state tourism plans, stakeholder input is a vital component of the tourism planning process.

> "The strongest partnerships in the planning process are often found between decision-makers and tourism industry actors that generate the highest tax revenue. […] [Consequently], public officials may place less emphasis on partnerships with those who evidence different motivations for tourism development or whose activities provide fewer tax revenues."
> *–Whitney Knollenberg*

The fact that policymakers and planners now consider public participation to be a crucial part of any decision-making process provides stakeholders with many opportunities to engage as partners, should Lyon-Hill's proposed shift in citizens' viewpoints occur. However, if stakeholder input is mandated through policy, decision-makers may develop the perspective that while they do not want to build partnerships, they must nonetheless do so. This perspective may help to enforce the rhetorical approach to partnerships with citizens as they are not seen as a valuable component of the decision-making process, but rather as one more item to check off the "to do" list dictated by policy. Should this mindset among decision-makers prevail, stakeholder input can become a token act, one in which potential partners are asked to give their time and energy to the process of collaboration only to have that input disregarded.

As I have observed in the context of tourism planning, such actions by decision-makers leads to resentment among stakeholders who could have been partners in the planning and implementation processes. Those who provide input and are subsequently ignored feel disempowered and in some cases may even work against the actions they were asked to inform. These observations suggest it is crucial that both citizens and decision-makers change the way they consider partnerships, in order to move beyond the rhetorical (and artificial) employment of partnerships Lyon-Hill described.

More partners, less power. Although the impacts of policy-mandated collaboration may be detrimental to the quality of partnerships, the inherent nature of these relationships may undermine their effectiveness. By nature, collaborations necessitate a sharing of power and control among those involved. As the number of collaborators grows, any single actor's capacity to influence final decisions is diluted. This may not sit well with those giving up their power to dictate the outcome of an action as partners request changes to fit their needs or desired outcomes. This may result in a tokenistic approach to stakeholder involvement as previously discussed, or it could lead to selective partnerships in which only those with similar objectives are involved as partners.

Tourism planning often illustrates this partnership challenge. As a form of economic development, tourism success is often measured by the amount of tax revenue it generates. Therefore planners often emphasize increasing tax revenue and may support any means necessary to do so. Consequently the strongest partnerships in the planning process are often found between decision-makers and tourism industry actors that generate the highest tax revenue. Put differently, public officials may place less emphasis on collaboration with those who evidence different motivations for tourism development or whose activities provide fewer tax revenues. Such actions may lead to frustration and resentment among less privileged stakeholders.

In her discussion, Lyon-Hill called on citizens to reconceptualize their responsibility as community members to improve partnership outcomes. This is certainly one step in gaining the full benefits of partnerships for all stakeholders, and the avenues for their participation may already be in place thanks to an inclusive orientation to actor involvement in many decision-making processes today. However, we must also address the fact that for a variety of reasons, not all collaborations are created equal. Public officials and stakeholders alike must take steps to ensure that when stakeholders do recognize the value of participating in partnerships, they are not given token consideration or ignored because their involvement is seen to reduce the standing of other participants. The onus of improving partnerships falls not only on elected leaders and citizens, but also on the stakeholders initiating them as well.

Exploring the Wellsprings of the "Virtue" in Markets of Virtue

Selma Elouardighi

(Originally published May 9, 2013)

A growing number of Western consumers, increasingly aware of the environmental impacts of business operation, are now using their purchasing power to signal their preference for greener products. In order to preserve their market share, corporations adopt greener practices and report their performance accordingly. Ideally, companies that ignore environmental imperatives will pay dearly with a compromised reputation, a drop in the value of their stock, and/or a loss of sales. The increase in the number of so-called "markets of virtue" is testimony to the extent to which this dialectic between consumers and producers has been successful in influencing business ethics.

As significant as it may be for their own nations, Western consumers' awareness of the environmental consequences of businesses' operations is especially important for the greening of industry in less developed countries. Given limited economic prosperity, and weak political, technical, and administrative capacities, these countries often fail to impose, enforce, and/or maintain environmentally sensitive standards of production successfully. As a consequence, corporate environmental stewardship in these nations rests mainly on the goodwill of firms, which is strongly influenced by the preferences of those who consume their products.

Markets of virtue then, are supposed to provide a space for the exchange of greener, more ethically produced goods. Unfortunately, they do not always live up to the claims made of them. For instance, solar energy is often presented as a greener alternative to polluting and increasingly scarce fossil fuels. Advocates promise it will play a key role in resolving our climate related challenges. However, these potentials come with an important caveat. To generate and store electricity, solar technology uses either large numbers of relatively expensive photovoltaic batteries, whose disposal may prove problematic to the environment, or massive amounts of water. Recently, for example, a European company installed a large solar energy array in the North African desert. The energy generated through this endeavor will be channeled back to Europe to serve communities there. Instead of using photovoltaic (battery) technology, the firm employed equipment that requires water. In fact, research has shown that 4 million cubic meters of water will be needed per year to maintain the facility if it is to generate its postulated electrical output (Belkhayat, 2013). And the current plan is to draw that water from the region's already scarce resources.

Superficially, this solar power initiative appears "green" and it has garnered support from

both the World Bank and the European Union (Belkhayat, 2013). However, in fact, it places a delicate ecosystem at risk by routinely removing a large volume of water in an already water-scarce environment. The livelihood of native tribes and the population's cultural and historical heritage, and even survival, may be jeopardized by this operation. The crucial, but to date at least, unasked question seems to be: What would happen if these native groups no longer have sufficient water to maintain their traditional communities? What choices would they have to make in order to survive? And how would those decisions change their values, norms, and livelihoods?

"If these [Western] consumers are motivated by a genuine sense of environmental responsibility, justice, and fairness to all, the behaviors described here should not be tolerated. Those purchasing goods and services in developed nations must be explicit and vocal about their wishes, and be proactive in supporting truly green companies."
–Selma Elouardighi

The affected tribesmen should not have to sacrifice their ways of life to assure "green" electricity for those of us living in the west far less simply. The ethical question this scenario reveals is, how is this action of encroaching on the lives of these native peoples justified? This situation necessitates a judgment call concerning whose consumption and ways of living are worth preserving. In fact, this particular firm is already undermining residents' culture and economy and there is no evidence it has made any effort to make plain to the members of local tribes that such will be a consequence of its operations.

The enormity of the social and environmental impacts imposed on the communities in this example are unjustifiable even in economic terms alone, because the tribes will in no way benefit from the production imposing those costs. Theoretically, local residents could challenge this company under the auspices of provisions of international law aimed at protecting the cultures of indigenous peoples (UN, 2007). However, such steps would require that the tribesmen both understand the full consequences of the company's operations and advocate for themselves in

a manner otherwise alien to their values and norms. Hiring lawyers and lobbyists and seeking media coverage to raise the salience of concerns may be commonplace in developed nations, but such actions are foreign to this population's way of life. Consequently, as has often been the case in history, the affected tribes will have to adapt, as their environment changes, assuming such is feasible, or relocate or even perish as their water supply dwindles. Put bluntly, the very existence of these communities is now endangered by the ethically untethered and environmentally corrosive notion of "progress" underpinning this "green" energy production facility.

This is not an isolated case, and therefore environmentally sensitive customers in Western nations, as the instigators of markets of virtue, should assume responsibility for ensuring that corporations behave ethically and responsibly everywhere, and not simply "in their own backyards." This company's African solar installation will provide electricity to European households, or to power production plants across Europe. If these consumers are motivated by a genuine sense of environmental responsibility, justice, and fairness to all, the behaviors described here should not be tolerated. Those purchasing goods and services in developed nations must be explicit and vocal about their wishes, and be proactive in supporting truly green companies. That is, their demand (consumer choices) and the economic incentive it represents for firms must be deployed boomerang-like, to provide companies increased cause to change their behavior in less-developed nation settings where they are otherwise unlikely to confront such clear and present motivation.

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Kenya to America – Tackling Problems at the Crux

Anna Erwin

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I recently conducted research on the wicked problem of indoor open fire cooking in Kenya. Although experts have been aware of this challenge for more than 50 years, indoor air pollution still accounts for approximately 1.6-1.8 million deaths a year, and the majority of those who die as a result of this cause are women and children. These population groups are the most adversely affected by these technologies as they spend the most time in the kitchen near the family cooking fire. In addition to their negative health impacts, the practice causes deforestation and releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere (Jerneck & Olsson, 2012).

Through the development and installation of cleaner burning wood stoves, researchers, development professionals, doctors, other concerned professionals and citizens are working hard to improve these statistics, but there are still many hurdles to address as more than two billion people worldwide continue to cook indoors over open fires. Today, the most difficult obstacles are not technological but social in character, as communities must first understand the issues they are confronting and the advantages of new technologies before becoming more open to adopting them. Recent research shows, however, that community-based participatory processes aimed at allowing residents to become thoroughly acquainted with new stoves can conduce to social learning and increase the rate and sustainability of stove adoption among families.

NGOs, universities, governments, public-private partnerships, and other aid organizations have introduced these new efforts to increase community engagement in the consideration and adoption of cleaner burning stoves. With the help of local social entrepreneurs, such projects are becoming more successful, as measured by their financial viability as well as family acceptance and sustained use of improved stoves. Project managers and researchers are using narrative and co-production to promote social learning, thereby enhancing community adoption of new stoves.

As Americans we are fortunate to take for granted our daily ability to cook with modern equipment. Nonetheless, we still confront major food security and justice issues. In the spirit of examining the global to local nexus, I decided to draw on the lessons I learned from my research in Kenya concerning community adoption of new woodstove technologies to explore the challenge of food justice in my own backyard.

Economic and social forces drive America's food justice problem just as they propel such

concerns in Kenya. According to the Food Empowerment Project and the United States Department of Agriculture, approximately 2.3 million Americans live at least a mile from a supermarket and do not own a car. The majority of the individuals who live in these "food deserts" also reside in low-income areas and/or communities of color. The food that is typically commercially available in these neighborhoods is high in sugar, salt, and preservatives. A number of nonprofits and small businesses are addressing this food justice issue throughout the nation.

> "Service providers in Kenya and here in the U.S. alike are realizing that simply providing a new stove or planting a garden is not enough, social learning and innovative economic structures have to be an integral part of the process of adoption of change and of diffusion of innovation."
> *–Anna Erwin*

One notable example, SEEDS NC, a nonprofit located in Durham, North Carolina, is working to promote gardens in downtown Durham by educating youth who reside there on how to grow fresh foods in an urban setting. The organization defines its mission broadly:

> Seeds teaches respect for life, for the earth and for each other through gardening and growing food. Located in the heart of Downtown Durham, we are an urban sanctuary focused on promoting principles and practices of sustainable agriculture, organic gardening, food security and environmental stewardship. (SEEDS, n.d., para.1)

SEEDS NC is approaching the problem of the availability of fresh vegetables in downtown Durham neighborhoods systemically by placing youth education at the core of their mission. This nonprofit is pursuing social justice by encouraging "bottom-up" social learning.

D.C. Central Kitchen (in Washington D.C.) offers a market-based solution to the food availability challenge. The collaborative is working to bring fruits and vegetables to corner stores throughout Wards 7, 8, and 9. By connecting local growers to neighborhood shops and allowing those businesses to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at a discounted price, the D.C. Central Kitchen Healthy Corner Store project is addressing the food desert challenge by changing the market structure in which neighborhood food provision is ensconced. This initiative is improving opportunities for people

living in parts of Washington D.C. to access fresh foods and vegetables that would otherwise be unable to do so readily. D.C. Kitchen also seeks to educate retailers and consumers alike concerning the health benefits of including a balance of foods and fresh vegetables in their diets.

Finding ways to provide nutritious and affordable food for all will continually be a challenge in a neoliberal economic system and social norms sometimes take generations to change. Although this is true, service providers in Kenya and here in the United States alike are realizing that simply providing a new stove or planting a garden is not enough, social learning and innovative economic structures have to be an integral part of the process of adoption of change and of diffusion of innovation.

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Getting to the Heart of Alternative Food Systems Work

Lorien MacAuley

(Originally published October 20, 2014)

In my twenties, I reduced all that I owned to fit into a backpack, moved out to the Pacific Northwest, and realized a dream of living primitively while teaching groups of adults and youths how to do the same, in a camp setting. I had read Daniel Quinn (1992), who famously attributed the beginning of the world's great social ills to the advent of large-scale agriculture, which made it possible to store food and control land, hence develop wealth, and create social class structures. I was determined to try to live in the world as a hunter-gatherer as I thought, "nature intended." For the next three years, our group of vagabonds (the instructors) attempted to conform our diets as closely as possible to what the indigenous Pacific Northwest Indians ate, which of course was comprised of what could be hunted, fished, or gathered. I led groups of adults and youths into the wild to simulate a wilderness survival situation, and we sought to meet our needs for food, water, warmth, and shelter from whatever we could find. Most of the clientele who participated in these experiences were middle-to-upper class white people, and I saw many of them face real, sustained hunger for the first time in their lives. There is a particular variety of panic that washes over you when you are hungry and have no food and do not know where you will obtain it, or you are engaged in a search for nourishment, but fail to trap, catch, or successfully harvest what you most require.

During my third year at the camp, an epiphany occurred in our small group: after acquiring an adjacent property, we decided to "do agriculture." We bought chickens, set up a garden, and acquired a small pond full of easy-to-catch bullfrogs (for tasty frog legs) and stocked it with catfish. All of a sudden, instead of walking miles to gather enough salmonberries for meals, we simply walked to the garden for rhubarb and strawberries. We could have much more food available on much less land, and it tasted delicious. It was a paradise.

The lesson I learned very well in the Northwest was just how much work, strength, persistence, and ingenuity it takes to provide food for oneself, and that it becomes somewhat easier with agriculture. But even cultivating vegetables is often no picnic, and the stakes are high. I now view my experience as a lesson in how difficult it is to attain true food security while realizing that my efforts were made considerably easier by virtue of their location within a region of economic and political stability and nearly pristine environmental abundance. However, if it is innately "this hard" to feed ourselves in such a scenario, then the continued existence of our civilization must depend, at least in

part, on the political and economic machinery to function sufficiently to provide food for the world. So, I ask two apparently simple questions: Can it? Will it?

"I recognize that there are no sure solutions to the problems so far posed to this still young social movement [alternative food systems]. Until food system practitioners begin to conceive agriculture as a complex, interdisciplinary and 'wicked' set of problems, and not just another industry, solutions are unlikely to be forthcoming."
–Lorien MacAuley

In recent years, food consumption questions have entered the public discourse within wealthy nations through authors such as Barbara Kingsolver (2007), Michael Pollan (2007), and Eric Schlosser (2012), who have written compellingly about how the choices consumers make affect health, agriculture, and the global economy. Many have indeed decided to adopt rules, such as "don't eat anything your grandmother wouldn't eat," or "if you don't know how to pronounce it, don't eat it" (Pollan, 2007), and similar adages in order to eat responsibly. And yet, it is still important to consider that many people do not have a choice in what they consume. Accordingly, Pollan and others have been criticized for their lack of consideration for those who live in poverty (Guthman, 2007). In order to acquire the type of food one's "grandmother would eat," consumers are connecting to farmers through farmers' markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). However, in the U.S. today, farmers markets and CSAs have been shown to be inclusive and inviting spaces principally for white members of the middle and upper classes (Allen, 2008; Guthman, 2008; Slocum, 2007).

Adages about the diets of grandmothers may have been a battle cry for many individuals seeking to transform our food system, but according to Allen, Guthman, Slocum, and others, it would seem that many who work on such issues in the U.S. are realizing that they must also address challenges of inclusivity. These concerns are myriad, even if one sets aside the question of affordability. Some contend that the food that Pollan and others advocate eating—full of salad greens, root vegetables,

etc.—is not appropriate for all cultures (Guptill, Copelton, & Lucal, 2013). Also, the "know your farmer" rhetoric is not appealing for cultures that view growers differently, even as unfriendly entities (Slocum, 2007). So, the alternative food system solution currently aims at only a small slice of the population. Meanwhile those active in that movement have trouble agreeing on a common set of values, with some advocates working on health and nutrition, while others are most concerned with farmworker rights, food justice, food security, or food sovereignty (Sbicca, 2012). It is a seemingly never-ending milieu of different scopes, levels, and frameworks.

At the same time, according to many projections, the global agricultural system will need to feed 9 billion people by 2050, within an uncertain and changing climate. That system currently too often employs methods that squander topsoil, contaminate and exhaust water supplies and rely on monocultures that breed superweeds and superpests that lead to crop failure (see Evan Fraser's video "Feeding Nine Billion"). This scenario is unfolding globally as our own nation's agricultural development research system has historically been co-opted by powerful commercial interests rather than smallholder and family farmers (Hightower, 1973). The picture emerges of an agricultural system in need of profound rethinking. Hopefully, such can involve many academic disciplines, including (but not limited to) agronomy, rural sociology, women's studies, crop and soil science, and my own discipline: agricultural leadership and community education.

Hamm (2009) has described this needed reworking of the global food system as a "wicked problem" (p. 241) that can only be addressed by means of a deep assessment of many factors. Analysts must confront this imperative first by recognizing that its problems are ill defined and will never yield to simple clear-cut solutions. For my part, I wonder if any issues with agriculture could ever be different. Agriculture, as Diamond (2005) and Quinn (2009) have written, is a fundamental part of our civilization, one that is interlinked with all other aspects and elements of our world. If our current sociocultural and economic systems arose in tandem with agriculture, it only makes sense that it is deeply embedded within many facets of our society. In the past 100 years, as the proportion of U.S. citizens involved directly in food production has decreased from approximately 60% to 1%, farmers have become less and less visible to their fellow citizens (USDA, 2005). As fewer individuals enter farming each year (Ahearn, 2013), U.S. farm sizes have become enormous, and those operating them have come to concentrate on only one kind of crop or animal (Dimitri, Effland, & Conklin, 2005), making them vulnerable to unforeseen risks (Doran, 2008).

Even among farmers and agricultural practitioners, there are few generalists who can see the

big picture in agriculture (Jayaraj, 1992) in order to think critically through the food system upon which we depend. Food production is poorly understood by the general public and consequently, agriculture is generally now regarded as just another industry that is expected to follow the same rules as other industries. Yet agriculture continues to defy such expectations because of the unique challenges it poses due to its reliance on weather, timing, risk, and a plethora of other factors. However, although we may be able to do without the next generation of widgets that some industries may produce, we cannot do without food. As Diamond (2005) has mused, is this the make-or-break issue of our time?

As we have seen, the challenges confronting agriculture in the United States and globally are as complex as the cultures of which food production is always an integral part. So, to revisit my original question: can we rely on this system to feed us, since we must, given the truly immense amount of work it takes to feed oneself? This question cuts to the heart of much of the alternative food system's rhetoric about the diets of grandmothers. I, for one, would like to see our nation further explore the possibilities implicit in community-based food systems (see Guptill, 2013, for further analysis). In saying this, however, I recognize that there are no sure solutions to the problems so far posed to this still young social movement. Until food system practitioners begin to conceive agriculture as a complex, interdisciplinary and "wicked" set of problems, and not just another industry, solutions are unlikely to be forthcoming.

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Part 8: Neoliberal Politics

The essays in this section investigate the implications of neoliberal politics in multiple policy domains, from pensions and higher education to military and civic action. Beginning in the 1970s, major Western nations, led by the United Stated and United Kingdom began to adopt neoliberal political-economic inspired policies, which call for the primacy of markets as social choice mechanism and minimum state intervention and regulation of those entities. As governments have sought to realize neoliberal aims, they have deregulated industries and banking, privatized many previously public functions, and withdrawn or reduced the state's role (read democracy's potential reach) from many areas of social life.

Concerned with governments' collective capacity to deliver on its retirement-related income promises in the future, Emily Swenson Brock investigates the dynamics of pension management today. She poses important policy questions aimed at positioning governments more successfully to honor prior commitments to their employees. Mary Beth Dunkenberger provides a brief overview of the history of this nation's land-grant universities and critically reflects on whether these institutions' global engagement should be driven by their educational tradition in lieu of market forces, as pressed by neoliberal advocates.

Further to the regnant neoliberal philosophy of recent decades, the United States' armed forces have shifted selected responsibilities to the private sector in the name of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Chris Price investigates the role of private military contractors in post-conflict reconstruction and suggests that these firms may help local residents assume ownership for statebuilding and reconstruction efforts, but such can only occur in specific contexts and circumstances that the military and its contractors must work deliberately to create. Anna Erwin discusses the impact of neoliberal policies on the nation's current environmental and social challenges and argues that to grapple with these concerns, the nation needs an active, articulate, and motivated citizenry that will learn, question, and search for prudent, broadly acceptable solutions by finding common ground and shared space for joint action. Paradoxically, neoliberalism actually works against the development of conditions conducive to such an outcome.

Whitney Knollenberg examines neoliberal justifications for reducing public support for tourism. To strengthen the argument for continuing state engagement, Knollenberg defends a broader examination of tourism's multiple positive impacts beyond its economic value, particularly those

related to protecting and preserving natural and cultural resources and improving citizens' quality of life. Finally, Priscila Izar explores the phenomenon of the financialization of the urban, which emerged through a series of mechanisms involving state-driven deregulation of the finance and banking industry. Her analysis underscores the need for understanding the multiple ways in which marketization, spawned by deliberate neoliberal policies, is manifest in different settings. Such efforts must be analyzed thoughtfully to determine whether they result in promised benefits, or instead reinforce or create additional forms of inequality and uneven development.

The Pension Puzzle and Practice Communities

Emily Swenson Brock

(Originally published November 7, 2013)

Crippled by a still-recovering economy and decades of underfunding, many local and state governments throughout the United States are struggling to make annually required contributions to defined benefit pension plans sufficient for these fiduciary funds to remain viable. In a comprehensive national survey of such state and local plans in the U.S., The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College discovered that these public entities hold $2.6 trillion in trust to satisfy an estimated $3.5 trillion pension liability. This equates to a funding ratio of available resources to an anticipated requirement of 77%.[1] These governments' capacity to follow through on pension promises in the near future looks grim.

Enter non-state financial professionals. Actuaries, accountants and credit rating analysts populate a highly complex and technical regulatory environment that governs the behavior of the country's massive public pension funds. When the standards for practice offered by these non-state financial professionals conflict, governments either seek to comply with all incompatible standards or rank one or some higher than others based on decision criteria responsive to their local socio-political and economic environments. In a country in which government regulates a substantial segment of activity, how did this non-state regulatory environment evolve and how is it sustained? How did a pluralistic mix of non-state actors come to occupy the pension and financial management landscape? I have been struggling with this question during the past several months and have concluded that practice theory provides a helpful analytical approach to this puzzle.

Practice theory. Pensions, for obvious reasons, have become a hot button issue in multiple statehouses in recent years. Some 43 states have enacted reforms in the last 3 years[2] aimed at reducing the overall costs of their retirement systems as well as the risk borne by taxpayers should existing funds prove inadequate. Actors in the pension management landscape, including the accounting, actuarial, and credit ratings organizations, are all involved in the continuous construction of the reality of annuities in the U.S. Proponents of practice theory contend that pensions are socially constructed through the dynamics of structure and agency. Structure can be found in social dynamics (Giddens, 1984) or in "habitus" or dispositions (Bourdieu, 1991). Agency, broadly defined as individual modes of action, both human and non-human, that affect "calculable" outcomes (Latour, 1987 as quoted in Callon & Muniesa, 2003), is not only shaped

by, but also "produces, reinforces, and changes its structural conditions" (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). In practice theory, structures are mutually constitutive with agency in shaping our social reality. Viewed this way, the pension landscape can be understood as the product of the daily efforts and decisions of those actors within it.

"The structure of information flows, shared understandings and norms among these institutions plays a critical role in pension policy implementation and management."
–Emily Swenson Brock

I next analyze a significant case that highlights competing practice norms among those active in shaping pension oversight policy: the conflict surrounding introduction of Statement 68 of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB)—the standard-setting body for government and nonprofit organization accounting practice. I outline the notions of agency and structure evident in this disagreement in the following sections.

GASB Statement 68 and agency. Until very recently, governments were not required to report the status of their pension funds on their statements of net assets. Recognizing that many defined benefit retirement plans have been grossly underfunded, the GASB decided to change the rule currently in place (Statement 27) to require such transparency. The GASB adopted Statement 68 in 2012 in an effort to address this concern. The new guidance effectively required governments to report the balance of their pension funds on their government-wide financial statements. In addition to this important obligation, the new rule contained two significant technical changes. The first removed a stipulation that governments report their annual required public contribution (ARC). The Board's directors crafted GASB's new statement on the basis of a fundamental belief that *funding is squarely a policy decision* for elected officials to make and therefore not within the scope of its mission. The second technical shift required pension fund managers to discount appropriated funds to their future value, using a rate that reasonably reflects the system's risk distribution.

The first of these changes, removal of a public official's obligation to report mandatory contribution amounts, stunned the professional actuarial community. Actuaries are called upon to calculate the ARC necessary for defined benefit pension plans to stay viable in the future. Many of these professionals were taken aback when the GASB not only left the decision concerning whether

to do so to elected leaders, but also went further to allow those officials not to share routinely as a standard of practice what they did elect to contribute.

For their part, the credit ratings agencies (CRAs) challenged the GASB's second technical change concerning discounting the value of contributed funds. Moody's Investor Services, for example, argued that identical discount rates are needed among all public pension funds to ensure the comparability necessary for ratings. These assessments yield risk grades on an ordinal scale for investors considering purchase of a government's bond. The credit agencies argued that consistency and comparability of discount rates are of paramount concern to possible patrons seeking to determine the risk associated with various public investment possibilities.

GASB Statement 68 and structure. As public pension adequacy has gained broader popular salience, partly as a result of these public disagreements, government officials have found themselves seeking to compile retirement fund information under conflicting guidance issued by the credit rating agencies, GASB, and actuaries. This difficult scenario is worsened by the fact that each oversight institution can wield powerful enforcement tools. Policymakers must follow the guidance outlined in GASB Statements to receive a favorable audit. Public officials must meanwhile also heed actuarial calculations to maintain minimum payments sufficient to sustain their defined benefit pension funds. Finally, government leaders must pay close attention to credit rating agencies to receive favorable debt pricing on their future bond issues. The structural question confronting public officials with responsibility for pensions therefore, is how to address all of these guidelines simultaneously while navigating the tensions embedded within them.

Another structure in this landscape is the fact that information flows between and among those participating in the policy domain. Both the GASB and CRA's schedule public notice-and-comment sessions for proposed standards changes. Moreover, the Accounting Standards Board seeks to ensure that due consideration is given not only to "constituents," but also to "the work of other standard setters"[3] as it addresses its responsibilities. The credit agencies meanwhile consider all the comments they receive internally and do not announce how those have affected their judgments, if at all. These three very active stakeholder communities all play substantial roles in the political and administrative environments of local government's defined benefit public pension plans. The structure of information flows, shared understandings and norms among these institutions exercises a critical role in pension policy implementation and management.

Conclusion. This commentary has offered a glimpse into the dynamics of structure and agency

that determine how pensions are managed today. I am encouraged by the attention the public pension 'crisis' has received. Nevertheless, significant questions still remain. For example, why not impose these same strictures on state pension agencies in addition to localities? What are public managers actually doing to balance the competing claims to which they are subject and how are they learning from their current (conflicted) environment? How and to what extent do risk and the social construction of numbers play a role in the pension policy environment? This is a field rich with substantial policy, organizational and public management questions. Moreover, the landscape continues to get messier and the range and number of competing purported explanatory narratives continues to grow. As an analyst of these significant public concerns I look forward to continuing to explore the puzzles that arise in this policy domain.

Notes.

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The Global Land-grant University – A Reflection of Market or Mission?

Mary Beth Dunkenberger

(Originally published on December 5, 2013)

Virginia Tech and several of its peer institutions are increasingly using the term "global land-grant" university as a means to describe and to garner support for their emergent international influence and presence. Virginia Tech's 21 page strategic plan references the "global" context seventeen times and its accompanying strategy for Global Engagement and Competiveness explicitly declares, "Virginia Tech is a global land grant university impacting (sic) the state, the nation, and the world" (Envisioning Virginia Tech 2012-2018 Global Engagement and Competitiveness 2012). Among Virginia Tech's 25 peer schools,[1] 16 are land-grant universities; of that number, seven have referred to themselves in public documents as "global land-grant" institutions, with Cornell, Michigan State, and Pennsylvania State universities most aggressively employing the moniker.

As one who embraces the ideal of the land-grant mission as linking new knowledge and understanding to its practical application for the collective good, I am inspired that we are framing the land-grant philosophy in ways appropriate to our increasingly interconnected global environment. However, I struggle with relating the historical foundations of the relatively localized engaged university concept to the global context without more specific assurances concerning the ultimate goals of the expanded model. A brief overview of the history of the land-grant institution and its evolution supplies the framework for an inquiry into whether the term currently conveys a catchy but vague concept for measuring a university's market reach, or a deliberate strategy for true global engagement in the land-grant tradition. The goal of this reflection is not to provide an answer to this question, but to begin establishing the scaffolding on which such an inquiry can adequately be conducted.

The Morrill Act of 1862 authorized the national government to give each state 30,000 acres of land for each member of their Congressional delegation. This property was sold or otherwise employed by the state to found public institutions of higher education with an initial focus on expanding agricultural science and the mechanical arts. The land-grant university concept emerged during the mid-1800s and was largely ushered to legislative success by Vermont Congressman Justin Morrill, a Republican, who faced Democratic opposition to the proposal on the basis that the act would expand federal influence on state level institutions. Initially passing both houses in 1858, the legislation was vetoed by President James Buchanan, but was reintroduced following the secession of

the Southern states. President Abraham Lincoln signed the act into law in 1862 (O'Hara, n.d.).

The principal aim of this public investment was to provide access to higher education to the masses as a means to stimulate economic growth as well as to create and disseminate knowledge, and to support its practical application. The land-grant university was to serve these ends by means of a threefold mission – teaching, research and extension (Schuh, 1986). Congress expanded the Morrill Act first in 1890 to support historically African-American universities, and most recently in 1994 to include Native American tribal colleges (Lee, 2002). Historians and scholars credit the statute and its later additions as among the great policy initiatives in United States history aimed at raising equity and mobility across socioeconomic, racial and cultural lines (Kerr, 1994; Green, 1999; Trow, 2000). Although not precisely delineated in the initial 1862 legislation or its later iterations, the overarching land-grant mission emerged as:

> "Assuming adequate support can be secured and our own university and its peer institutions maintain focus and expand globally in collaborative ways, we must be driven by mission, not market, if our collective efforts are to be productive and sustainable."
> *–Mary Beth Dunkenberger*

1. Increasing access to higher education for underrepresented and minority populations, and
2. Encouraging the development and application of knowledge to advance the common good

(Trow, 2000; Colasanti, Wright, & Reau, 2009).

For land-grant universities the "common good" has generally been defined as improving the overall well-being – health, security and economic status – of the population(s) served. Today, these institutions are expanding the reach of their activities across the globe at the nation state, regional and community levels, requiring a fresh look at their mission definition (Denuelin & Townsend, 2007).

The late renowned agricultural economist G. Edward Schuh called upon land-grant universities in a 1986 article to, "regain relevance" and to expand their salience internationally by refocusing

their three-part mission of teaching, research and extension to address the globalization of societal problems, and the rapidly increasing connectivity between national economies. Schuh pointed to the failure of U.S. higher education institutions to acquaint students adequately with the growing complexities and interconnectivity of the international economy. When one views his statements in the shadow of our recent deep global recession, Schuh's (1986) argument, offered nearly thirty years ago, appears prescient:

> Challenges related to international institutions are as great as those facing domestic institutions. Economic integration has far outpaced our political integration. Many of the international institutions which we helped design at the end of World War II have either broken down, disappeared, or grown increasingly irrelevant. We find ourselves in each other's way economically, with little or no means to resolve conflicts and make policy choices in a systemic way. In some respects we are like the 13 colonies at the time of the Articles of Confederation. We need a new world constitution to reflect the changed realities of the world. Who is to design it? Will we let these issues drift on – possibly until we suffer an international collapse on the order of the 1930's? (p. 9)

Schuh called for the dismantling of structures in higher education that promote specialization and isolation in favor of organizations and strategies that encourage the integration of disciplinary approaches and the application of the knowledge they produce to real world situations. The former Dean of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs also called for increased authority for university administrators to focus the combined talents of individual faculty members toward a shared, reimagined land-grant mission.

Nearly 20 years after Schuh published his call to action, Steven Brint offered fresh reflections on how research universities, including land-grants, might address the imperatives of globalization in "Creating the Future: New Directions for American Research Universities" (Brint, 2005). Based on 144 interviews with higher education institutional leaders, Brint (2005) argued that unprecedented financial growth among elite research universities during the previous two decades had allowed those institutions to circumvent a "market consciousness" that had otherwise emerged during the same time frame as a driving force shaping strategy and program development for less fiscally secure universities (p.1). Brint contended that elite private schools enjoyed an unprecedentedly strong financial position, which could and should be used to protect the standards of higher education from short-term consumer demand. He also suggested that our nation's finest public institutions must develop a similar "buffering capability," in order to safeguard the mission of higher education from fleeting market trends. However, just two years after publication of Brints' article, the great recession severely weakened the financial positions of both private and public universities and undermined

their ability to expand educational opportunities and engagement to underserved populations, or to new regions of the world on the basis of their long-term missions rather than on short-term "market-based" possibilities.

While both Schuh and Brint called for a reexamination of the roles and strategies of higher education institutions in the global context, Schuh suggested that such efforts be mission driven, while Brint argued that institutional goals could best be protected by the financial vitality of universities; a strength that depended in part on often unstable market forces. It is telling and ironic that much of the strategy Brint recommended has since been severely limited by the recession, which itself was largely fueled by the dysfunction of global financial markets, a turn that Schuh foretold.

Within this context, if United States land-grant universities are to seek to realize their missions globally, a prerequisite to such engagement should be the deliberate expansion of educational opportunities, research and outreach services to carefully targeted populations in ways that support the public good in that state or region. Colasanti, Wright and Reau (2009) have outlined criteria that should guide all land-grant interactions with potential community partners, wherever they may be located:

- Integrity,
- Community/common good,
- Insights/knowledge/education,
- Teamwork/collaboration/empowering people,
- Success/achievement outcomes,
- Entrepreneurship/innovation, and
- Stability/ sustainability.

While adequate financial support is necessary to initiate a global land-grant mission-driven initiative, consistent adherence to these guiding criteria will help to maximize such efforts' impacts. Assuming adequate support can be secured and our own university and its peer institutions maintain focus and expand globally in collaborative ways, we must be driven by mission, not market, if our collective efforts are to be productive and sustainable. Expanding global knowledge, collaboration, and engagement that is context-and mission-specific, promises to be not only challenging, but also immensely rewarding to the land-grant universities and stakeholders involved.

Notes.

1. Peer institutions designated by the Virginia State Council for Higher Education.

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Musings on Military Contracting and the Challenge of Alterity

Chris Price

(Originally published February 27, 2014)

As I was recently undertaking final corrections to my major paper and beginning to embark on the quest for a job that will allow me to make contributions that I deem valuable as well as to pay off student debt, a friend forwarded a call for proposals for a professional photography grant. I chose to apply and proposed that I receive support to introduce myself to the Pashto or Farsi languages, upgrade my gear, and piggyback with an experienced group, such as Bond Street Theatre, on their forthcoming return trip to Afghanistan. Once there, I would photograph daily life—highlighting similarities, rather than differences, between Afghani ways of life and those of the rest of the world. In addition to being an expression of my long love affair with photography, this proposal also represents an interesting extension of my research focus during the past three years concerning private military firms (PMFs) and their impact on statebuilding and reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq.

A recent TEDx Talk[1] by Peace Action Networks' Dick Simon concerning the concept of "THEM" addressed an issue that has become apparent in my research as well. Those I interviewed who had worked or served in Afghanistan and Iraq—military and state department personnel, diplomats, and contractors—discussed their experiences with the local residents of Afghanistan and Iraq. I asked each person I talked with how they would describe the average Afghans and Iraqis they had met in their time in those nations. One theme soon became apparent—that "they" are just like "us." The common person wants to provide food and a good home for their family, to work and feel appreciated, but most importantly they want their children to lead better lives than they have experienced. After hearing this the first time, it struck me that this described most people that I know. Each subsequent similar description simply drove home the fact that this is an underlying desire among all humanity and not unique to our own mental models or way of life.

Given this deep common claim, how does "THEM" relate to American statebuilding, reconstruction, and contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq? Simon has suggested that "THEM" is the most dangerous four-letter word in the English language (Simon, 2014) as,

> It is responsible for the suffering and death of millions … [it] is used to isolate, to insult, to marginalize. It has a devastating impact on geopolitical and societal levels, as well as within personal relationships, yet we continue to use it every day. (Ibid)

Simon also noted, "We label others as THEM rather than doing the hard work of trying to garner a more nuanced understanding of complex situations" (Ibid). Through long months, or in some cases, years, of working alongside their local host populations, many of our servicemen and women and others who work overseas have come to think in terms of "we" rather than "us" and "them."

"Unlike the last United States foreign conflict, the Persian Gulf War, these military missions [in Afghanistan and Iraq] evolved to include lengthy occupations complete with reconstruction and statebuilding efforts. While the local populations of these countries have yet to recover from conflict, the private firms playing roles in the long occupation have profited tremendously."
–Chris Price

Scholars have noted that after ten years and countless casualties among all involved, Americans have grown tired of waging war in Afghanistan (Slaikeau & Zarif, 2012). A working paper from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government has estimated that America's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq will ultimately cost between $4 and $6 trillion (Bilmes, 2013). And this, despite the fact the statebuilding and reconstruction mission has gained little ground and a share of the progress it had made was lost when the Taliban regained control of some areas in recent years. In Iraq, an insurgent group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant temporarily wrested control of major cities away from their populations and governments earlier this year. It is arguable that neither Afghanistan nor Iraq is more stable than either was before American occupation. Unlike the last United States foreign conflict, the Persian Gulf War, these military missions evolved to include lengthy occupations complete with reconstruction and statebuilding efforts. While the local populations of these countries have yet to recover from conflict, the private firms playing roles in the long occupation have profited tremendously.

With the rush towards neoliberalism in the 1980s, many government functions were privatized in the name of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. For the armed forces this meant shifting selected

responsibilities to the private sector. A share of military men and women found their roles disappearing. Many of these individuals—American and otherwise—found employment with various private firms. So, while the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) cut force levels, it did not actually reduce expenditures or its ultimate responsibilities. Instead, these simply changed character and hands and the DoD had to develop fresh oversight capabilities to monitor its new "assistants."

While the term "private military firm" (PMF) suggests a mercenary force, contractors actually fulfill a variety of roles. Peter Singer has described their functions using a "tip of the spear" typology (Singer, 2008, pp.91-100). Military provider firms, in layman's terms, are people with guns. Corporations and governments around the world hire them to provide valuable combat expertise. If rebels have taken control of your chief revenue source, for example, the for-profit firm Executive Outcomes can help. Closest to our concept of the mercenary, relatively few of these companies exist. More common are consulting firms, such as Military Professional Resources Inc., that use their skills to train other forces around the world, rather than engage in conflict directly. Military support firms, including Halliburton, comprise by far the largest number of PMFs and their employees drive trucks, serve food, build barracks, launder uniforms, and otherwise perform any number of tasks that armed forces personnel had previously done themselves in support of their missions.

PMFs grew rapidly in a post-Cold War world, in which 6 million veterans had found themselves displaced (Geddes, 2008, p.42). Meanwhile the global obligations of the nations affected by this shift to large-scale defense contracting have only increased too. The Logistics Civil Augmentation Program is the U.S. answer to this challenge: a roadmap for using the private sector as a force multiplier for the military (DoA, 1998, p.3). With the military mission in Iraq having ended in 2011 and winding down in Afghanistan, America has nearly eliminated its troop presence in Iraq and greatly reduced its force in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, as if part of a seesaw, the reconstruction mission remains and diplomatic efforts to assist both countries have intensified.

As I noted above, nearly all human beings share basic desires and needs, but in conflict and post-conflict societies, critical economic and educational requirements often go unmet. More than one member of the military I interviewed recounted stories of impoverished Afghans and Iraqis accepting money from individuals they did not know to undertake activities of whose purposes they were unaware.[2,3] Mostly, this was done without malicious intent and because it was often perceived as superior to, for example, selling one's youngest daughter to support the rest of the family through the winter. Desperation drives many to commit acts they would not otherwise perpetrate. A deep-

rooted fear of infiltration leads policymakers to offer many contracts to "third country nationals," contractors neither belonging to the occupying country or the occupied nation. One military official I interviewed described the animosity that many Iraqis felt towards contracted Indian truck drivers in his convoys, as the local citizens knew they were capable of driving the trucks themselves.[4] This example suggests that not only can contracting deprive local populations of any economic (and subsequently educational) opportunity it may also contribute to a divide between the occupiers and the host population—bolstering, rather than preventing the notion of "THEM" and reinforcing a cycle of violence.

No matter how efficient and effective PMFs are at performing their jobs, they "may set back the overall war effort and America's prestige in the world by employing mercenaries who appear to be out of control" (Bruneau, 2011, p.109). Specific cases of tragedies committed at the hands of contractors undermine the faith the local population may have in the statebuilding and reconstruction mission, while the tendency to rely on private military firms to provide skills that may otherwise be found locally weakens local citizen support by ignoring their needs. This scenario opens a wide gulf between people, as it isolates, insults, and marginalizes the population the U.S. is ostensibly there to help.

Nonetheless, re-imagining the application of the private sector's role in various defense missions around the globe may aid in overcoming this process of "THEMification" (Simon, 2014). To support programs promoting, "broad-based participation and civil society development … democracy and good governance, economic growth and free enterprise, sound environmental stewardship, and quality education and healthcare," the United States State Department has proposed cooperation with "citizens and civil society organizations at home and abroad … U.S. nongovernmental organizations, institutions of higher learning, and private sector partners who share our objectives" (U.S. DoS, 2004). Working as a skill multiplier with local populations rather than a force multiplier for the military, private contractors may assist in enabling local citizens to assume ownership of statebuilding and reconstruction efforts. Close cooperation with targeted country populations is likely to strengthen mutual understanding and aid in the deconstruction of "THEM."

Notes.

1. Simon's Ted Talk was retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Evi357e1spA.
2. Individual interview with military personnel on December 18th, 2012.

3. Individual interview with military personnel on February 15th, 2013.
4. Individual interview with military personnel on February 15th, 2013.

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To Think is to Give

Anna Erwin

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Albert Einstein once said, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." I was recently reminded of this observation when I read Max Stephenson's *Soundings* commentary, "Of Sea Turtles, Piping Plovers and Freedom," a piece inspired by his recent vacation on Topsail Island in North Carolina where I had the privilege of growing up. I was struck by how his commentary delicately articulated the paradoxes that not only have marred parts of the beautiful island that I call home, but also continue to stimulate me intellectually and motivate my work. Many of his insights are accurate and paint not just a picture of island life, but also of our country as a whole.

Stephenson's particular examples are of environmental degradation and the tense arguments that surround individual liberties and the conservation of the vital ecosystems that border the Atlantic Ocean. However, as he explains, this narrative could describe current political debates concerning employment or poverty as well, as the underlying, systemic issues are very similar. Southwest Virginia community leader and president of SCALE (Sequestering Carbon, Accelerating Local Economies), Anthony Flaccavento, also expressed this concern in his 2011 Community Voices talk at Virginia Tech addressing the challenge of sustainable development in southwestern Virginia. Although his remarks focused on solutions to that region's specific ecological concerns, he ended his comments by quoting Wendell Berry, who has suggested that the environmental crisis is not alone a calamity afflicting the environment, but is best understood as a crisis of politics and economics.

Both Stephenson and Flaccavento alluded to the impacts of neoliberalism, defined by political economy scholar David Harvey, as,

> a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. (2005, p. 2)

Our nation's politics have arguably only become more neoliberal since Ronald Reagan's presidency in the 1980s. Neoliberal policies not only allow companies to evade or bypass emissions standards, but the hegemonic character of that economic philosophy's discourse encourages and disposes Americans to think that they are all separate individuals and that their choices do not affect

other people. This is the modern thinking that touches on a deep strain of individualism dominant in some sectors and sections of the nation and that therefore underpins many of our current environmental and social problems.

So, returning to Einstein's observation, how might we address this concern? Ultimately, the way out of this thinking and the problems it has prompted and exacerbated is to understand the roots of it and make changes accordingly. First, citizens need to think more critically. Our populace is hindered by information overload and an educational system that is more and more oriented (by neoliberal policies) to preparing people for specific existing jobs than to equipping them with capabilities to innovate and to create the new positions necessary to address social and economic change. This situation has the potential to create an inactive, disconnected, apathetic populace that does not possess the analytical wherewithal, time, or money to grapple with many of the nation's problems. In order to understand those issues, the citizenry must learn, question, and search for prudent, broadly acceptable solutions. This set of capacities is difficult to attain for the aforementioned reasons, but it is nonetheless necessary for effective governance.

"In this day and age, when neoliberal thinking has persuaded many that individual rights and private property claims trump all else, sharing and giving are in many ways radical, political acts. In addition to interacting with people of like mind, it is also important for citizens to speak with and seek to understand individuals with different perspectives."
–Anna Erwin

In addition to thinking critically, it is also necessary for citizens to take action. In this day and age, when neoliberal thinking has persuaded many that individual rights and private property claims trump all else, sharing and giving are in many ways radical, political acts. In addition to interacting with people of like mind, it is also important for citizens to speak with and seek to understand individuals with different perspectives. There are many groups adopting this stance now

in the United States. Entrepreneurs embracing the "Maker Movement," for example, are offering people spaces where they have access to very expensive, shared machinery at an inexpensive price. People on both sides of the political aisle are also conducting dialogues throughout the U.S. in efforts to find common ground and shared space for joint action, including, for example, Conversation NRV in Blacksburg, Va.

I am heartened by this genuine demand for connection and creativity that is not predicated on a belief in the absolute primacy of the free market. Leaders who want to make political change should take note of these trends and align future actions with arrangements that allow citizens to rethink and, when appropriate, to challenge the status quo. It is on the basis of these insights that leaders can help to guide the populations of communities to work together so that we can face the present and forthcoming challenges of the 21st century.

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Making the Case for State Sponsored Tourism

Whitney Knollenberg

(Originally published September 18, 2014)

The tourism industry serves as one of the top employers and tax revenue generators for the Commonwealth of Virginia and many other states. Tourism's importance has been recognized for many decades and nearly every state has made an effort to support it. For example, the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is a public-private partnership that supports tourism development and promotion in the Commonwealth. Like most such agencies, the VTC is charged with maintaining the state's image as a tourism destination, often conceptualized through a brand. In Virginia that brand is the iconic catch phrase *Virginia is For Lovers*. The Corporation also supports the Commonwealth's Welcome Centers, plays a role in the development of attractions, and distributes grant funding for local and regional tourism projects and planning. The ultimate aim of its efforts is captured in its vision statement:

> To foster a spirit of partnership within Virginia's tourism and motion picture industries to develop and implement innovative and effective programs and initiatives that will grow the industry and increase economic impact and jobs, resulting in a greater tax base for localities and the state. (Virginia Tourism Corporation, 2014a)

This aspiration emphasizes the perceived economic value of the industry, which holds particular importance for policymakers. Tourism supports 213,000 jobs in Virginia, and visitors provided $2.8 billion in federal, state, and local taxes last year. Drawn by the state's reputation as a destination that offers beaches, vineyards, mountains, and historic landmarks, visitors spent more than $59 million per day in the Commonwealth in 2013 (Virginia Tourism Corporation, 2014b). As auspicious as these economic figures may be, they do not capture the social, cultural, and environmental benefits tourism creates. Many scholars have found evidence that tourism can improve residents' quality of life in communities containing such attractions. Other researchers have argued that serving as a travel destination can raise a population's civic pride. Tourism has also offered opportunities to protect natural resources and may help to preserve culture and traditional livelihoods, as evidenced by efforts such as the development of the *Crooked Road*, which is playing a positive role in preserving elements of Southwest Virginia's music heritage.

These potential economic, social, and environmental benefits provide multiple reasons for policymakers to support tourism. Legislators may be focused particularly on the fact that tourists who generate revenues are nonresidents and go elsewhere to vote. Nonetheless, those visitor

dollars can reduce residents' taxation levels (or postpone increases) while allowing for improved infrastructure and civic services. While policymakers definitely find this fact alluring, many do not recognize the full value of tourism. Just as importantly, many are not aware of the industry's needs. And this is a challenge for the VTC, which relies on a State appropriation as its primary source of funds. In 2014 The Corporation received approximately $20 million from the General Fund for its operations and marketing efforts, visitor services, and support for the Virginia Film Office (Virginia Tourism Corporation, 2014c).

"Many tourism industry leaders across the country are concerned that other states facing difficult budgetary situations may follow Washington's actions [cut in public funding]. More generally, as many policymakers champion a reduced role for government on ideological grounds, additional proposals to downsize or eliminate tourism offices look set to rise."
–Whitney Knollenberg

While some Virginia tourism business leaders contend this level of state support is not sufficient for an economic sector that provides so many jobs and tax dollars, it is nevertheless far better than the complete lack of support given the industry in some other states. In 2011, for example, the State of Washington eliminated all funding for its tourism office. That state's policymakers indicated that necessary budget cuts justified their decision and expressed the view that other priorities were more important for the state, such as education (Yardley, 2011). This step halted any publicly funded effort to promote Washington as a travel destination, providing an opportunity for its competitors to work to capture an increased share of the domestic and international tourists that might otherwise have visited the state. Many tourism industry leaders across the country are concerned that other states facing difficult budgetary situations may follow Washington's example. More generally, as many policymakers champion a reduced role for government on ideological grounds, additional proposals to downsize or eliminate tourism offices look set to rise.

This reality raises the question of how the Commonwealth's tourism industry can continue to make a case for public assistance in an often turbulent and difficult political environment. Currently, as noted above, advocates employ economic indicators, such as Virginia's 5:1 return on every state taxpayer dollar spent on tourism, to argue for continued support. Such data certainly seem compelling, but may not be sufficient in the face of ongoing ideological hostility. What is needed is broader examination and awareness of tourism's multiple positive impacts beyond its economic value, particularly those related to protecting natural and cultural resources and improving citizens' quality of life. These outcomes are not always readily measured and cannot always be neatly converted to the economic indicators preferred by many policymakers. However, they will surely augment the tourism industry's argument for continuing public support.

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Financialization of the Urban: What is it and Why Does it Matter?

Priscila Izar

(Originally published November 20, 2014)

There is something unique about the way in which cities have grown and transformed in recent decades that relates to the financialization of the economy in general and to the real estate and urban development sectors in particular. Globalization scholars have proposed that political and economic transformations related to the adoption, at the national level, of neoliberal policies have often included financial liberalization and have just as frequently contributed to rising urban inequality (Sassen, 2011). These analysts have pointed to a relationship between the penetration of global capital into local development projects and real estate restructuring, a process marked by verticalization of the industry and the increased primacy of exchange values relative to user values in development decisions (Fainstein, 1994; Logan, 1993). Integration of property and financial markets has also been associated with urban sprawl (Knox, 1993) and inner city gentrification (Smith, 1996). Recent financialization literature has explored the specific mechanisms through which otherwise opaque, place-based commodities have been transformed increasingly into financial assets tradable in the global market (Aalbers, 2008; Gotham 2006; 2009; Newman, 2009) and examined the role of the state as a key agent in such initiatives (Gotham, 2009; Weber, 2010). These authors have also posited a relationship between rising financialization and growing inequality (Aalbers, 2011; Fields, 2013; Gotham, 2014).

Financialization of the urban: what is it? To explore this topic, it is important to define it. Economic financialization, which began to occur in the United States (U.S.) and United Kingdom in the late 1970s and 1980s as part of a transition from Post World War II Keynesianism to Neoliberalism, is a pattern of accumulation characterized by a shift from commodity to finance production (Krippner, 2005). Financialization of the urban is a product of economic financialization and involves the integration of property and financial markets through restructuring of the real estate sector and urban policy. This dynamic seeks to accord liquidity to real estate assets that are otherwise inherently "fixed," so as to facilitate global trading (Aalbers, 2008; Gotham, 2006;2009).[1] Moreover, it involves the financialization of city bonds and adoption of "new, risk-laden instruments to [municipal] debt portfolios" (Weber, 2010, p. 256) as a way to attract private capital to invest in public infrastructure and services. As such, the financialization of the urban is marked by the transformation of "mortgage markets as facilitating markets to mortgage markets as markets in their

own right" (Aalbers, 2008, p.150).

The financialization of the urban occurs through a series of mechanisms involving state-driven deregulation of the finance and banking industry, development and adoption of new monetary products involving higher investment risk, strategic incorporation of mortgage markets and intensification of pro-growth alliances between local and state level administrations and rent seeking private developers (Weber, 2013; Gotham, 2014). Scholars concerned with these processes have investigated the specific circumstances in which they take place in order to identify their associated characteristics and outcomes.

"Recent financialization literature has explored the specific mechanisms through which otherwise opaque, place-based commodities have been transformed increasingly into financial assets tradable in the global market and examined the role of the state as a key agent in such initiatives."
–Priscila Izar

The restructuring of the real estate mortgage industry in the U.S. in recent decades is one example of state-led financialization that expanded an urban market (i.e., commercial and housing mortgages) by exposing buyers to greater risk, and that ultimately resulted in the creation of a new form of inequality. In the housing sector, government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs), including Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the public institution Ginnie Mae,[2] deregulated the nation's housing finance system to attract global investors to the secondary mortgage market. They did so by integrating localized property loan markets into a single system, and by creating "a system of credit score and risk-based pricing" (Aalbers, 2008, p.154). This framework stimulated subprime and predatory mortgages that were further securitized and sold in the financial markets. This turn ultimately led to the housing bubble and foreclosure crisis (Gotham, 2009). This major change in the U.S. housing finance system and subsequent crisis affected not only the overall American economy, as represented by the great recession of 2007-2009, but also, and disproportionately, racial and economic minorities targeted for the underwriting of subprime and predatory loans (Squires, Hyra, & Renner, 2009; Wyly et al., 2009). This shift resulted in what

Aalbers (2011) has dubbed a new geography of exclusion and affected millions of families directly via foreclosure and reduced access to affordable mortgages.

Other scholars in the literature have examined financialization from the perspective of urban policy and offered in-depth, case analyses of local economic development processes such as municipal tax increment financing (TIF) and, more recently, disaster recovery zones. TIF "allows municipalities to bundle and sell off the rights to future property tax revenues from designated parts of the city" (Weber, 2010, p.251). These policies are risky because municipal bonds are issued based on an estimated or expected property value increase, and a different-than-predicted outcome can lead to tax default. At the same time, 'successful' TIF districts can represent a financial burden on a targeted area's lower income residents who may be unable to afford a required property tax price increase. One analysis of TIF development in Chicago between 1996 and 2007, for example, indicated strong mayoral control and close association between elected officials and a small number of development firms and intermediaries resulting in "the extraction of near monopoly rent for development services" and oversupply of real estate (Weber, 2010, p.269).

In another analysis of the Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone, set up in response to the disaster in that region following hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the author found that the initiative "operated as a state supported financialization strategy that reflected and reinforced socio-spatial patterns of uneven development" (Gotham, 2014, pp.2-3). The Zone inaugurated a disaster recovery model based on the distribution of financialized tax incentives to attract private actors to invest in devalued assets. Gotham (2014) has observed that a significant share of Gulf Opportunity program development incentives were directed towards large transnational corporations rather than disaster affected communities. Furthermore, by relying on private investment decisions based on risk assessment, the GO Zone strategy reinforced existing patterns of uneven development while also opening vulnerable disaster areas to the volatilities of the financial market. Public TIFs and financialized disaster recovery zones carry a high level of uncertainty due to their dependence on private developer decisions. They are also quite risky as a result of their reliance on securitized interest-bearing capital. More importantly, most of the risk assumed in such transactions is imposed on city residents and local governments, while private developers enjoy significant benefits (Weber, 2010; Gotham, 2014).

Conclusion: Why does financialization of the urban matter? Urban inequality is on the rise in the United States (Baum-Snow, Freedman, & Pavan, 2014). Periodic capitalist crises such as the subprime-led foreclosure recession of 2007-2009 in the U.S. and around the world affect vulnerable

individuals and communities disproportionately. The financialization of the urban is an on-going process that is constantly being adapted to new contexts, as exemplified by disaster recovery efforts through GO Zones. Understanding the multiple ways in which this trend manifests itself in different settings and investigating whether it reinforces or creates additional forms of inequality is a necessary first step in efforts to protest and ultimately transform it.

Notes.

1. Historically, the real estate market has been characterized as illiquid, immobile and spatially fixed (Gotham, 2009, p. 359) as a result of the built environment's relative longevity, and the effect of location on property value. While open floor plans have allowed for flexible unit size (i.e., single or multiple) and type (i.e., commercial, residential or mixed use), property assets evidence a noteworthy turnover period when compared to other commodities, such as apparel or electronics. Furthermore, local characteristics, such as infrastructure and available services, significantly affect property value. "Capital fixity" makes property unattractive to financial investors seeking more liquid investments (Fainstein, 1994).

2. These are, respectively, the National Mortgage Association, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Company and the Government National Mortgage Association, best known by their above-mentioned nicknames.

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Part 9: The Power of Narrative

The essays in this section explore the vital role that stories play in creating, limiting, and sustaining social change. The authors examine their own experiences and awareness of dominant discourses and counter-narratives that have emerged from the margins, to explain their understandings of self, voice, agency, and their relationship to social change. Lyusyena Kirakosyan traces the threads that connected diverse stories and the people who shared them on the Community Voices stage, an initiative that has invited a number of local, national, and international leaders to Virginia Tech to share their narratives and perspectives on change. She contends that these accounts, filled with collective goals, shared struggles, and common hopes, can teach much about the requisites of democratic citizenship and the changes our own and other societies must make to attain it.

Anna Erwin cautions her readers against relying on a single story to depict any group, using an example of women in the professional world. Erwin draws on the wisdom of modern storytelling pioneers who recognized the essential power of narrative in human lives and have employed it to offer opportunities for individuals to exercise agency, assert their dignity, and pursue social justice. Veronica Arroyave analyzes the global trends that have prompted the emergence of cross-sectoral humanitarian relief organizational structures. In particular, Arroyave examines the case of a cross-sectoral network that can provide engaged organization leaders insights for future planning and action aimed at increasing public understanding of the complexities of international crisis response and NGO-business partnerships.

As one who views herself as battling for racial, gender, and sexual equality, Natasha Cox describes her mission to create safe and brave spaces (environments where perspectives can be shared and challenged without fear) for faculty, staff, and students. Cox shares her personal story of how she has sought to navigate the daily complexity and stigma attached to her social identities, competing graduate school demands, and her desire to help others. She emphasizes the need for self-care to avoid exhaustion and/or personal crisis.

Sofia Rukhin explores the socioeconomic and psychological dimensions of beauty-fashion video blogging, vlogging for short. In particular, Rukhin seeks to understand how a story of a beauty-fashion vlogger evolves, starting with establishing credibility in makeup/fashion, achieving economic success and then expanding into psychological and other life issues. Claudio D'Amato questions the

efficacy of slacktivism, the popular habit of embracing political causes on social media, noting that when individuals endorse a concern in this way, they may care less about the issue than about the currency they gain from supporting it. D'Amato suggests that social media and acts of slacktivism cannot by themselves guarantee social change or be effective. In his second essay in this section, D'Amato tells the story of Villa Altagracia in the Dominican Republic whose workers fought for fair working conditions and a decent living wage, and succeeded. This experience, as D'Amato notes, suggests that globalized consumers not only share an increasing responsibility for the transnational implications of their buying choices, but also have a duty to assist with struggles for labor fairness when they arise by making informed and prudent purchases.

Harnessing the Power of Narrative for Social Change

Lyusyena Kirakosyan

(Originally published January 24, 2013)

Few would argue with the idea that stories represent a universal human activity across history and cultures that has served many different purposes. Bruno Bettelheim believed that through narrative human beings come to know themselves better, becoming more able to understand others and to relate to them in mutually satisfying and meaningful ways. I have been a member of the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance Community Voices team for several years now, as we invited a number of local, national and international Leader(ship) to Blacksburg to share their stories and perspectives on social change. Our guests have used the power of narrative to connect people, stories and resources, to begin conversations around health, arts and culture, economy, technology and community engagement, and perhaps to encourage some of us to take action.

Doug Lipman has suggested that every storytelling event is "a triangle," in which the story, the audience and the storyteller relate to each other in a particular way. First, the storyteller forms a relationship with the audience; second, the narrator has a relationship with the story, its intellectual understanding, emotional experience, and imagining. These two relationships involve the storyteller directly, but they do not determine by themselves a successful narrative in Lipman's view. Rather, to be successful, the audience must form a positive connection with the story. A raconteur can try influencing that third relationship through other ties that involve him or her directly and then hope that the audience will be drawn into the account. I want here to explore one of the relationships of the storytelling triangle through the narratives presented at Community Voices events to date, that of the storyteller's connection with his or her story. As I reviewed the history of our series, I looked for threads that connected these diverse stories and the people who shared them.

Motivated by a vision to renew the American dream from the ground up, Anthony Flaccavento built his Community Voices talk on the foundations of productive households and resilient communities, networks of learning, innovation, and exchange, all suffused and underpinned by love. Beth Obenshain rooted her story in the Blacksburg of several decades ago, tracing its changes to the present. Drawing on the power of ordinary people to shape their communities and bridge differences, she underscored the importance of participation in local politics. Bob Summers offered an encouraging account of how entrepreneurship can foster social action, a tale of how a culture of sharing and collaboration across companies that share space has helped with learning and

engagement across organizations and social sectors in downtown Blacksburg.

Nancy Agee shared her personal journey as a new leader of a major institution in the healthcare sector, reflecting on the challenges of instilling a culture of learning and collaboration in an organization that serves diverse groups of patients. Inspired by the ideas and practices of servant leadership, Agee conceptualized change as starting first within the organization (improving the health of employees) then moving outward to affiliated healthcare professionals and patients in order to create an integrated health system that benefits the served community and is also sustainable. John Dreyzehner appealed to the New River Valley community with the story of a young boy's family that faced health-related dilemmas similar to those many Americans have experienced as they watched a family member's health deteriorate while their healthcare bills grew. Dreyzehner's talk provided an opportunity for citizens to reconsider their norms and values regarding disease prevention and suggested that the change toward a "culture of health" requires the active collaboration of communities, governments, and businesses.

> "[T]hese narratives [told on the Community Voices stage] serve as a powerful alternative to our culture's pervasive individualism by offering accounts filled with collective goals, shared struggles, and common hopes that can teach us much about the requisites of democratic citizenship and the changes we must make to attain it."
> *–Lyusyena Kirakosyan*

Norma Wood and three youths in foster care shared their experiences with and in the foster care system for their Community Voices program, critically reflecting on the importance of forming positive relationships if youths are to succeed in their transition to adulthood. They highlighted the importance of the role of educators and social workers in such efforts. Craig Ramey then developed the theme of education further at his event, arguing that what we do for our children's education, health, and well-being forecasts the social, economic, political and ethical future of our communities and societies.

Brian Wheeler, Woody Crenshaw and Tal Stanley each offered stories that provided hope for civic possibility. Wheeler shared challenges and opportunities that he has encountered along the path to building community knowledge and engagement in Charlottesville, Va. Through the creative use of media in community-based journalism, his organization has informed the decisions of policymakers, citizens, and business owners on a daily basis. Stanley, in turn, combined layers of stories from places such as Meadowview, Va., and McDowell County, W.V., reflecting on how the interaction of human culture, history, and natural and built environments had created challenges for these communities; challenges that may only be addressed successfully with the honesty and civic creativity that can restore hope and vitality. Determined to celebrate "the small, the slow and the local," Crenshaw reflected on the place of small communities in national life today and offered a visual story of Floyd, Va.'s vibrant cultural life, in which that community's Country Store serves as an incubator, where music, dancing, and conversations take place.

Dudley Cocke shared three stories illustrating the power of the arts and their importance in democracy. In one narrative, we learned how the love of singing brought black and white groups together within a community to create an original work of art through their collaboration. Cocke argued that other kinds of cross-cultural conversations and relationships follow once an initial divide has been breached. Avila Kilmurray inspired us with a complex story about mobilizing across conflict and differences in Northern Ireland with the help of partnerships that have allowed for the introduction of different views and the potential to develop a range of ties. These relationships have allowed the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland to address the nation's divided communities and bring about much needed social and political change.

The Highlander Center's challenges, successes and voices could be imagined and heard through Pam McMichael's thoughtful storytelling. Eighty years of struggle for justice through activism and community organizing at Highlander have been sustained not by passing the proverbial torch, but by helping others' light their own torches.

In sum, the stories told on the Community Voices stage to date have addressed many different aspects of social change, revealing the complexity of the phenomenon in so doing. To me, these narratives serve as a powerful alternative to our culture's pervasive individualism by offering accounts filled with collective goals, shared struggles, and common hopes that can teach us much about the requisites of democratic citizenship and the changes we must make to attain it.

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The Story Space

Anna Erwin

(Originally published March 7, 2013)

Last week Reva Seth, founder of MomShift, a media campaign sharing stories of professional mothers, posted a blog in *The Atlantic* concerning the challenge many young women face today when looking for role models in the professional world. She mentioned a few successful individual examples, corporate mothers who were able to balance it all, but argued that these are very much the exception and not the norm.

Seth cited a recent TED (Technology, Education, and Development) video by Chimamanda Adichie, a Nigerian novelist and storyteller in which the celebrated author cautioned against using a "single story" to depict any group. The lone narrative, using only one account to describe an entire social group, leads to stereotypes, dichotomies, othering, fear, isolation, and structural violence. In American culture, this mythologizing process –the wonderful mother who is able to balance being a CEO, caring for three children, and being a perfect wife, or the young woman on television who lives in Manhattan, works ten hours a week, and wears a different designer outfit every day–creates a model that women rarely meet.

As a daughter, friend, sister, niece, aunt, and neighbor, I have never realized this ideal. During the past week I have cooked with women, created with women, mourned with women, laughed with women, practiced yoga with women, and worked with women. We also shared stories and none of us completely identified with this idealized American narrative. Unfortunately, many women think the ideal is attainable, and when they do not realize it, too many descend into a constant and pernicious cycle of shame due to a self-perception of continuing inadequacy.

Brene Brown, shame and vulnerability expert and grounded theory researcher at the University of Houston, has conducted more than 200 interviews on the subject of shame and shame resilience. Brown has found that the American ideal of the "Superwoman" creates an incredible amount of shame, isolation, and separateness for maturing girls and women in our culture. Brown argues that empathy and vulnerability are two fundamental ways to overcome the cycle of shame. Brown has developed "Shame Resilience Theory" to assist in such efforts. She insists that sharing your shame, vulnerability, and stories of hope are the best ways to move past those feelings and overcome the enduring power of false ideals.

Women, men, children, communities, nations, we all need a space to share our diverse, eclectic

stories. When diversity is celebrated through story, dichotomies transform to continuums and unrealistic, dangerous ideals are seen for the treacherous idols they are. People begin to exercise a sense of agency and to own their lives. It is through the story space that people in a community can connect on the human level, and through those ties that individuals are also made more resilient and adaptable.

"Women, men, children, communities, nations, we all need a space to share our diverse, eclectic stories. When diversity is celebrated through story, dichotomies transform to continuums and unrealistic, dangerous ideals are seen for the dangerous idols that they are."
–Anna Erwin

How do we create these opportunities for individuals to share their stories and begin to define their own "successes"? The Internet and digital technologies are providing one tool. I attended a talk last week by artist, singer, writer, and digital storyteller Thenmozhi Soundararajan. By engaging individuals and working to provide them with the tools and skills to tell their stories, she creates the vulnerable, empathetic space, which ultimately breaks down the claims imposed by socially dominant and unrealistic narratives and ideals that too often constitute structural violence. Her talk was part of The Community Voices series sponsored by Virginia Tech's Institute for Policy and Governance. Soundararajan conducts digital storytelling workshops throughout the world and is also conducting research using the strategy with communities in Appalachia.

Reva Seth, Chimamanda Adichie, Brene Brown, and Thenmozhi Soundararajan are examples of modern storytelling pioneers who recognize the elemental power of narrative in human lives and are employing it to provide opportunities for individuals to exercise agency and pursue both dignity and social justice. The need for such efforts has never been more patent and the challenge to find spaces for such storytelling more obvious. The question that I am left pondering is how I might use story to create potentially empowering spaces for women particularly, in community.

Cross-sectoral Networks and the Challenge of Disaster Relief Coordination

Veronica Arroyave

(Originally published May 2, 2013)

Having recently completed my doctoral research and with the aim of stimulating discussion on the topic, I reflect here on disaster coordination and cross-sectoral networks. It is precisely this interest that motivated my research to investigate such initiatives for their potential to support improved disaster response, enhancing health resource mobilization in the context of Haiti's 2010 earthquake.

Disaster relief is now the target of global attention. Until recently, governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with specialized interests and skills shaped the disaster response domain. But today, an expanded set of humanitarian actors is engaged in disaster work, and response to the Haitian 2010 earthquake was indicative. In fact, "roughly 10,000 NGOs descended upon Haiti–all of which worked on separate, small projects, with varying objectives ranging from healthcare to shelter to feeding the hungry" (Anderson, 2011, para. 9). Coordination of these multiple actors, in addition to others from other sectors, represents a very significant challenge. Disaster relief efforts are chaotic environments with much evidence suggesting these initiatives suffer from high levels of confusion, miscommunication, inefficiency, redundancy, and poor collaboration. And yet, the lives, livelihoods, health, and welfare of those affected by these events depend on coordinated action.

Recently, corporations have sought to respond to disasters in increasing numbers. Globally, these trends have prompted the emergence of cross-sectoral humanitarian actors. The involvement of the for-profit sector has established a new cadre of participants who, by their presence, numbers, and overlapping interests in these crises, has changed the disaster response process, including its expected outcomes and accountabilities. Among the emergent forms of corporate involvement in relief are collaborations with NGOs. Damlamian (2006) has highlighted a central NGO-business cooperation engagement challenge. On the one hand, "NGOs have become instrumental in development work internationally, but they generally do not have the means and resources to carry out their projects efficiently in a sustainable manner" (p. 5). On the other hand, "Companies desiring to be more responsible do not necessarily have the knowledge, training, or dedication to carry out development programs" (Ibid). NGOs are leading the way in relationships with businesses to address disasters, but they must do so in ways that also permit firms to realize their aims. Civil

society organizations need support and corporate actors need expert partners in disaster relief efforts. Cross-sectoral networks provide a platform for NGO-firm exchanges of expertise, resources, information and talent.

"Cross-sectoral disaster response networks are today repurposing both NGO and business' missions to create shared value for global disaster response and development. The challenge is old, the instruments are as yet little understood and the potential for improved effectiveness and equity in post-disaster aid delivery is large."
–Veronica Arroyave

Voluntary interdependence, or networks, represent forms of governance that often include corporations, nonprofits and governments reassessing the, "strengths and limitations of public/governmental, private/commercial, and civil society institutions in grappling with world problems" (Widdus, 2001, p.714). Networks, according to Vandeventer and Mandel (2007), are "any sustained effort around which different, autonomous organizations work in concert as equal partners in pursuit of a common social or civic purpose" (p. 5). Such collaborative efforts are blossoming as never before in the disaster domain. The common denominator among these initiatives is their call for increased cross-sector engagement to enhance resource mobilization for improved aid delivery. Networks offer their participants potential to galvanize cross-sectoral action by sharing best practices, translating knowledge, developing social capital and complementing each other's missions. My research findings suggest that these networks often serve as a surrogate for a central coordinating body and authority in disaster relief scenarios. I also found that galvanizing collective network action is by no means automatic, but involves catalyzing relationship building, learning within a joint framework, providing a collaborative space, negotiating trade-offs, and managing conflict—all with the goal of flexibly and dynamically creating shared purpose, social cohesion, trust, and direction among otherwise autonomous members. Finally, I found that efforts to create communication and collaboration pathways among involved organizations prior to disaster events improves later NGO-business disaster response to crises.

Cross-sectoral networks represent an invaluable resource at varying operating and relational scales to address the crisis relief and response challenge. In the end, sustained study of the roles of cross-sectoral networks in responding to natural disasters has the potential to inform policy, provide engaged organization leaders insights for future planning and action and to increase public understanding of the complexities attending crisis response and NGO-business partnerships. What is more, evaluation of the dynamics and outcomes of such networks and their continuing evolution is now pivotal to understanding whether our collective turn to these more complex organizational forms is yielding desired results.

Imagine a world in which networks are the preferred application for cross-sectoral messaging. A "collaboration app" would allow users to communicate and coordinate efforts globally and nearly instantaneously via text, photos, video-conferencing, and meetings. This "network app" would be a spin-off of the same dynamics that power partnerships: trust, learning, and social cohesion. Cross-sectoral disaster response networks are today repurposing both NGO and business' missions to create shared value for global disaster response and development. The challenge is old, the instruments are as yet little understood and the potential for improved effectiveness and equity in post-disaster aid delivery is large.

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When Compassion Hurts: Self Care for Queer Activists of Color

Natasha Amanda Cox

(Originally published April 10, 2014)

Mentally and emotionally drained, I review my weekly calendar. A page of rainbow colored blocks displays a 60- to 70-hour work week: The Office for Diversity and Inclusion; the Women's Center; the Department of Human Development; the Family Therapy Center, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally (LGBTA) Support Group; Queer People of Color; research teams; professional meetings; job interviews; and finally the two classes that will conclude my doctoral coursework. I am exhausted before I even begin. However, this has all been a labor of love. Black, queer, and female, I navigate spaces in which the intersection of my identities is overtly or covertly stigmatized on a daily basis. It has been my mission to create safe and brave spaces (environments where perspectives can be shared and challenged without conflict) for faculty, staff, and students like myself.

Colleges and universities can be stressful environments for LGBT individuals (Connolly, 2000; Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010), and are even more taxing for those who identify as LGBT students of color due to balancing multiple marginalized identities (Hwang & Goto, 2009; Rankin et al., 2010). A number of studies have shown that such individuals have experienced verbal taunts, exclusion, and sometimes violence on college campuses (Rankin, 2005; Rankin et al., 2010). Some researchers have focused on LGBT faculty members across universities and disciplines and have reported that this group has had similar experiences, irrespective of their physical location, due to the stigma of sexual and/or gender minority status (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009). However, despite frequently confronting multiple sources of marginalization and oppression, queer individuals of color do develop strengths, resilience, and ways of coping. These mechanisms can include self-advocacy, self-restraint, spiritual coping, honesty/integrity, help-seeking, or emotional release of any kind (White, 2013).

Vaccaro and Mena (2011) tell us that queer college activists of color have to navigate their complicated social identities while dealing with competing demands and their desire to help others, which often leads to exhaustion and/or personal crisis. Their study highlighted that such individuals regularly feel frustrated or overwhelmed in their efforts to succeed academically, while simultaneously helping others. These feelings are often intensified by a lack of awareness of personal limitations, internal and external pressures to succeed, and self-sacrificing behaviors. Silently dealing with burnout and even more severe mental health crises, such as compassion fatigue and suicidal

ideation, this population perceives a constant pressure to make successful change happen.

In describing burnout among the general population, Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) have contended, "the three key dimensions of this response are an overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment" (p. 399). Compassion fatigue represents a level of emotional and psychological distress and deterioration that goes beyond burnout (Sparang, Clarck, & Whitt-Woosely, 2007). As Figley (2002) has explained, "Compassion fatigue, like any other kind of fatigue, reduces our capacity or our interest of bearing the suffering of others" (p. 1434). We are only as good to others as we are to ourselves. Therefore, queer college activists of color must set limits on the responsibilities we undertake and attend to our chronic lack of self-care.

> "It has been my mission to create safe and brave spaces (environments where our perspectives can be shared and challenged without conflict) for faculty, staff, and students like myself."
> *–Natasha Cox*

As black feminist scholar Audre Lorde (1988) has observed, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare" (p. 131). This sort of subversive self-care has risen to the top of my to-do list. Shanesha Brooks-Tatum, a blogger for The Feminist Wire, has offered guidelines for such radical and intentional self-care:

- Do what you love: What brings you joy? What you're passionate about? Take time to tap into your humanity and your creative side, every day.
- Reevaluate where you are in your life. Is this where you want to be? Shape your own career path. Academia is not the end all be all for any of us.
- Set priorities and boundaries – without apology. Remove toxic people from your life. Block out times to take care of yourself and make self-care just as much of a priority (or perhaps even more so) than other aspects of your life.
- Get new role models not role-martyrs. Stop glorifying women who gave it all until there was nothing left a long time ago. Make your role models women who make time for themselves, for family, and for friendships.

- Create a wellness manifesto and community. Hold yourself to this mantra, and check in with a community that keeps you accountable.

Mentally and emotionally drained, I review my weekly calendar. I scan the rainbow colors for the purple blocks reserved for honoring myself: therapy, mediation, Netflix, music, Facetime-ing with my family, date nights with my partner. I allocate time to be my own diversity project, so that I can provide my whole and authentic self to the battle for racial, gender, and sexual identity equality.

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From Hobby to Business: Beauty-Fashion Blogging on YouTube

Sofia Rukhin

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Blogging as a trend on the Internet has become extremely popular during the last decade. People all over the world have begun writing on a variety of topics—music, news, education, cooking, etc. Basically, anyone who finds himself/herself experienced in an area can easily share their knowledge on the Web. For many people such efforts have become something much more than a hobby. Successful authors may quit their "normal" jobs and make money as full-time "professional" bloggers while others may supplement their "ordinary" income with revenue generated by their written or video content. The question for people unacquainted with this industry is how bloggers make money; who actually pays them?

Initially, "blogs" referred to written content posted on the Internet, but with the widespread popularity of YouTube and its videos, the notion of "vlog" ("video blog") came into use. I use these two words interchangeably in this essay. I focus here on beauty-fashion video blogging as one of the spheres in which individuals can generate income. Probably, many reading this article who also are YouTube users, especially females, have come across video blogs by nice looking young women who passionately talk about their "spring favorites" or "how to make small eyes appear bigger." As a woman whose hobby is makeup and fashion, I have found these videos interesting and useful at the same time. As a sociologist, I think this phenomenon evidences a variety of socioeconomic and psychological dimensions that merit scholarly investigation.

As mentioned above, the majority of beauty-fashion vloggers on YouTube are non-professionals in these areas if we define "professional" as possessing such attributes as special education or training. However, many of them, despite having no specialized preparation, work as makeup artists in their offline lives and they create YouTube videos mainly as a means to promote their work. For others, a YouTube beauty-fashion channel is a "stage" for sharing knowledge concerning their interest. A typical example a beauty-oriented YouTube channel is that of Michelle Phan.

My investigation into beauty/fashion-vlogging as a moneymaking process suggested that there is a natural progression for those who succeed in the industry. First, in the majority of cases, beauty-blogging as a hobby serves as the starting point for individuals who may become YouTube partners in the future. Developing such partnerships takes time. Therefore, one should not enter this industry with the expectation of making money immediately. An example of a popular income-generating

YouTube fashion/beauty site is that of Carli Bybel.

Second, prospective income comes from two main sources—a YouTube partnership, as noted earlier—and cooperation with various brands, online/offline stores that find a beauty blogger with a solid number of subscribers an effective and inexpensive advertising mechanism. A signed contract with YouTube requires a blogger to prepare a certain amount of video content for a specific price. In the case of Michelle Phan, one of the most successful and popular beauty YouTube vloggers, with more than 6 million subscribers, at one point Google paid her 1 million dollars for 20 hours of her content. However, this example should be seen as exceptional, rather than typical. Content is not the only thing of interest to YouTube. Another important factor in gauging audience interest is the number of views of posted content. Projected earnings are usually estimated on the basis of $2.50 per 1000 views, at least for highly popular YouTube partners. Cooperation with brands and stores, however, works in a different way. Brands usually send free products to video bloggers of their choice and ask for a review in one of their episodes.

> "Vloggers' audiences often come to perceive these individuals as experts, not only concerning beauty, but regarding psychological and other life issues as well."
> *–Sofia Rukhin*

Some individuals receive free items and also receive compensation for positive reviews. Others are content simply to obtain free goods. Some vloggers are paid with a fixed percentage of the increase in sales that their endorsements create. The terms and conditions differ for every blogger depending upon how successful she has been during the negotiation process and how many subscribers she has. It goes without saying that the number of subscribers is the most important criterion that a firm employs to decide whether it will assist a video blogger to advertise its products. Some companies purposely choose individuals with a smaller number of subscribers because they are not able to meet the dramatic increase in demand that might be generated if they selected a popular YouTube figure.

Another interesting thing about these Internet channels is that the starting point for all of them is makeup tips and hair tutorials. As time passes, these efforts typically evolve to include other topics

less directly connected to makeup and fashion. Vloggers' audiences often come to perceive these individuals as experts, not only concerning beauty, but regarding psychological and other life issues as well. It is not rare to see fashion/beauty video bloggers posting productions called, for instance, "5 ways to achieve a goal," in which he or she offers motivational tips. Establishing credibility in makeup/fashion questions sometimes leads these individuals not only to economic success, but also helps them establish authority in related areas as well.

Performative Slacktivism: "Saving" the World with Facebook Likes

Claudio D'Amato

(Originally published April 24, 2014)

"Mother of Sick Child Finally Receives Vital Facebook Likes Needed for Operation" (Waterford Whispers News, 2013). A photograph of a young woman receiving a box of the famous social network "thumbs up" signs accompanied this fictitious headline in an online satirical publication. I hope and trust as I write that no one actually believes such Internet clicks to be currency. Indeed, should the article be widely believed, that fact would suggest that Lord Byron (1823) was right about truth often proving stranger than fiction.

Yet "slacktivism" and "awareness-raising" campaigns are massive phenomena. Both terms describe the popular habit of endorsing political causes on social media—such as by "sharing" on Facebook or "retweeting" on Twitter—while doing nothing else about them outside of these Internet forums. This practice is often criticized for being causally ineffective (Seay, 2013), translating into less actual public support than otherwise might obtain (University of British Columbia, 2013), or even reinforcing privilege and oppression. (Cole, 2012) I do not disagree; such objections are sensible and too often silenced. But it is not only slacktivists who deserve criticism, but also those media outlets that validate and encourage such behavior by blurring the lines of fact and fiction and distorting public knowledge of causal relationships.

Performative contexts. My analysis of these issues rests on a discussion of *performativity.* Performativity is too vast and controversial a topic to address in any detail in this space, but I want here to highlight three key elements of the construct. First is the idea—as argued by philosopher J.L. Austin (1962)—that speech acts are not true or false claims that represent inner mental states. Instead, these must be assessed according to whether they fulfilled the goals of the speakers who voiced them. Second is the related contention that the ascription of traits to persons has more to do with their performance of acts than with their psychological characteristics. For example, Judith Butler (1990) has claimed that gender is not something that one essentially is and that determines one's behaviors. Instead, she has suggested that gender is something that one *does*, a series of repeated gender-doings and how they are evaluated in the discourses of one's community. Third, and similarly, we often choose our actions based on the social currency they earn us, what pragmatist philosophers such as William James (1990) have called "the cash-value of truth." While our moral and metaphysical commitments matter, they alone do not determine actions or the conditions for truth.

Slacktivists, voters, nonviolent protesters, and Molotov Cocktail throwers may believe similarly, but behave differently because of situation, opportunity, worth, and availability of social currency, and different assessments of success conditions and causal relations—that is, because of the *performative contexts* in which they operate. Our judgments of slacktivism must therefore include evaluations of the circumstances in which the behavior occurs.

> "While our moral and metaphysical commitments matter, they alone do not determine actions or the conditions for truth."
> –*Claudio D'Amato*

In the first analysis, we can assess actions and actors based on performative contexts. Consider a simple speech act to express approval: "I guess I would not oppose marriage equality." In liberal circles this is at best an indifferent endorsement, often too tepid, but it indicates courage or firm moral commitment if performed when one stands to lose social currency, such as when spoken among bigots. All kinds of statements can be assessed similarly, even the more moral or metaphysical, such as "I am a person" or "I have a right to be educated"—just ask Malala Yousafzai (2013).

But we may also reverse the direction of analysis and explain actions through contexts. As the son of a former union leader, I know well which protest acts are efficacious. I may rationalize that knowledge through Marxist rhetoric, but that is not how I learned that those acts are effective. I learned of their efficacy because I lived in a performative circumstance that validated and encouraged those steps and in which people were more likely to perform them and praise those who did, and where their effectiveness was clear to me. The question, then, can be framed in this way: How do the performative contexts of social media promote and validate slacktivism?

Epistemic obscurantism. One feature is immediately evident: Social media distort perceptions of causal relations by displacing real-world consequences in a manner similar to the online disinhibiting effect on behavior and moral perception when Internet anonymity is guaranteed (Suler, 2004). When we endorse a concern on social media, we simultaneously also assume the risk of caring less about the issue than about the currency that we have gained from endorsing it. Our standards are lowered and we more easily rest content that we have made a difference, not to mention that we have ready and abundant exit routes. If something goes wrong, we just need to turn off the screen,

"unfriend" someone, or stop caring about the issue, and it goes away.

Those who behave like this are partly to blame, but they are also victims of an obscurantist context that discourages transition to more causally efficacious ones. It should come as no surprise that those unacquainted with a certain context, the Internet or another forum, are also less aware of the causative efficacy of the acts performed within it. Those who are not oppressed, or who do not live in poverty, or who did not suffer grave illness, or who do not unionize, or who do not daily experience a range of additional conditions that might be named, are less aware of the differences between those contexts and those where one can afford to believe "I have made a difference; this will be enough," simply by clicking a link.

These comments must not be taken as leave to stereotype individuals: The Social Media Sharer, The Union Leader, The Oppressed Person, etc. Acknowledging that acts ought to be assessed in their contexts does not warrant the reification and warrantless pigeonholing of performers any more than asking five students what they like to eat permits conclusions concerning "student" eating habits. On the contrary: honing one's sensitivity to performative contexts encourages careful particularism in lieu of hasty generalizations.

"Have you heard this?!" Despite all this, slacktivism can be useful. It informs or reminds individuals of a problem, and that is significant. When my students ask what they can do to address injustice and "fix things," the first of my many suggestions is always the same: Tell as many people as you can, as often as you can. Some say that they are afraid of losing friends by talking too much, or of finding in so doing that they no longer enjoy the same things. Unless one is a thoroughly committed idealist, these are valid concerns. I reply that part of becoming a better thinker (and citizen) is learning to balance social expression with its consequences and to become more sensitive to the performative contexts of our social lives. It is a game of practical balance, assisted by that nagging thing called morality.

Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson (2006) has remarked that some scientific discoveries make him want to grab people on the street and shout, "Have you heard this?!" Surely the same applies to injustice, oppression, suffering, and many other public maladies, replacing wonder for indignation, anger, love, or solidarity. In this sense, social media sharing can serve as a weapon against the very obscurantism that validates it, but only if it is the first step of many. Just as wonder alone does not result in scientific progress, so social media cannot by itself guarantee social change. When it is perceived as an end, as effective beyond its merits, or as a mechanism of validating self-importance—

that is, when it puts the "slack" in slacktivism—we must not only hold its users accountable, but also demand accountability of the medium that makes such perceptions possible and desirable.

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Sweatshop Resistance and Transnational Activism: The Success Story of Villa Altagracia

Claudio D'Amato

(Originally published October 2, 2014)

Last month, two textile workers from the Dominican Republic addressed Virginia Tech's chapter of United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and lobbied the university's administration to support fair trade practices in Latin American apparel factories (Hughes et al., 2014). Their employer, Alta Gracia Fair Trade, is one of a few clothes manufacturers in Latin American free-trade zones to pay its employees a living wage, that is, a salary high enough to guarantee a decent standard of living. Alta Gracia's main American buyer and distributor is Knights Apparel, whose clothes are increasingly common on U.S. college campuses, including that of Virginia Tech.

Alta Gracia is now a worldwide example that fair and sustainable working conditions can be attained in garment factories, but the battle for labor fairness at the firm was long and bitter. Workers and their families in Villa Altagracia, a small town in the central Dominican Republic, endured years of coercive practices by the factory's owners and managers as they sought to organize a union. Their success highlights the power of unionized labor and community activism—with a little help on the side from some American college students.

Labor struggles. In 1997, the Korean-owned BJ&B apparel factory in Villa Altagracia employed some two thousand workers. More than 95% of them were women and their average pay was 69 cents an hour. Although 10-hour workdays were common, total wages per employee amounted to less than $200 a month, which is well below the Dominican government's guideline for a minimally decent living standard (Hughes et al., 2014; Herbert, 1998).

As with most Central American sweatshops, workplace sanitation at the Villa Altagracia plant was poor, physical, and emotional abuse of workers by managers was frequent, and turnover was high. Even though BJ&B prohibited unionization and the company routinely fired individuals seeking to organize, workers nevertheless continued to petition the firm and the Dominican government for fair labor representation (Ross, 2006).

Between 1997 and 2002 the plant's employees also cooperated with U.S.-based NGOs, including UNITE (Union for Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees), USAS, and the newly formed WRC (Workers' Rights Consortium), a labor-rights monitoring NGO founded by members of USAS. As part of an effort to raise American consumer awareness of conditions at their factory and with the support of the union and interested NGOs, Villa Altagracia workers visited several U.S. college

campuses during the five-year period of cooperation to publicize their plight. In response, student groups began campaigns aimed at their administrations to ensure that firms that supplied campus clothing adopted fair business practices. In turn, some university leaders began to pressure their main suppliers (Nike, Champion, GAP, Fila, etc.) to demand fair working conditions at their contracted factories, including BJ&B in Villa Altagracia (Ibid).

> "A century ago the struggle of a union was more likely to be limited to its local membership base, which often included one plant, one district, or in some cases, one nation. But, as difficult as it was to achieve, success in Villa Alta Gracia would have been still harder to attain without the union's deliberate efforts to internationalize its efforts."
> *–Claudio D'Amato*

Still, the brunt of the fight was borne by the Dominican workers themselves. Their employer engaged in anti-union tactics well into 2002, including a campaign that accused several union leaders of terrorism and physically threatened some in their own homes. The union did not negotiate a new contract successfully until 2003. That pact guaranteed improved working conditions and compensation that exceeded the Dominican Republic's legal minimum wage. Perhaps more importantly, the union obtained public apologies from management for its past brutalizing behavior along with a guarantee that its leaders and members would no longer be harassed (Herbert, 1998).

Living wage. Despite these union victories, BJ&B gradually moved its operations at Villa Altagracia to lower-wage countries and the company closed the plant in 2007. However, the same factory was acquired and reopened by a new firm, simply called "Alta Gracia," in 2010. The new company began to rehire workers and guarantee them a living wage (Gonzalez, 2003; Greenhouse, 2010). The firm is now known as Alta Gracia Fair Trade, or Alta Gracia Project. Today, Alta Gracia stands as a stalwart example of fair employment practices in an industry notorious for its long-time failure to ensure such conditions. The plant's workplace settings have greatly improved over the years,

mostly to the union's satisfaction (Brown, 2010; Workers' Rights Consortium, 2010). For example, in 2011 workers were paid an average of $759 per month, well above the free-trade zone's minimum wage of $216, and slightly higher than the living wage for current residents of the Dominican Republic (which is estimated at between $500-700 per month, depending on the source) (Kline & Soule, 2014; Workers' Rights Consortium, 2008).

A living wage means more than mere sufficiency. The Spanish term, *salario digno*, captures this concept better than its English counterpart by highlighting its connection to the concept of human dignity. Lower salaries may allow physical subsistence, but people want more than merely to survive: they want to live a life worthy of their humanity, with decency, dignity, and self-respect.

The struggle for a *salario digno* is in line with much of the argument underlying the United Nations' Human Development Reports and Millennium Development Goals. "Development" suggests at least some industrialization and freedom from oppression, but more importantly, it implies individuals who possess both agency and autonomy. And while development in this sense is not limited to earning enough money to make a decent living, sufficient financial means is a key instrumental good that must be ensured to secure it. So even though the labor struggles in Villa Altagracia and elsewhere have often focused on measurable material gains (higher salaries, shorter hours, cleaner workplaces, etc.), these initiatives are all components of a larger effort to ensure human dignity.

Beyond Alta Gracia. The success story of Villa Altagracia is not an example of financial autonomy in a broadly struggling Latin American economy. Despite the plant's many workplace condition and compensation improvements, production and sales still operate within a largely capitalist framework and Alta Gracia still makes apparel for U.S. companies that earn a handsome return on it.

Nonetheless, this case does represent an archetype for what a motivated labor force can achieve, and it exemplifies the undeniably transnational character of trade and business in today's globalized economy. A century ago the struggle of a union was more likely to be limited to its local membership base, which often included one plant, one district, or in some cases, one nation. But, as difficult as it was to achieve, success in Villa Alta Gracia would have been still harder to attain without the union's deliberate efforts to internationalize its efforts.

To obtain meaningful changes in employment practices and wage fairness at the lower ends of supply chains, this case suggests that proponents of change must apply political and economic

pressure at all levels, including (and perhaps chiefly) at the top. This must include workers, consumers, and everyone in between: owners, local management, local vendors, foreign vendors and buyers, schools, and so forth.

More generally, the Alta Gracia experience suggests that all consumers in a world economy share an increasing responsibility to consider the transnational implications of our buying choices; and, as individuals who purport to care about democratic institutions, we also have a duty to assist with struggles for labor fairness when they arise.

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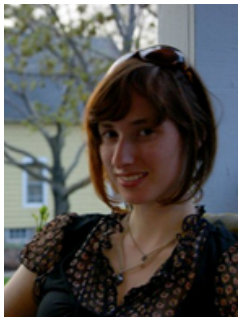

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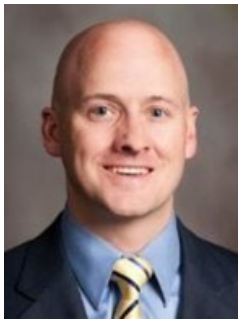


Eric Hodges is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and currently a faculty member at the University of South Florida. He teaches courses in American Government and recently taught a special topics course on Veterans' Reintegration and Resilience. Eric has won several teaching awards, including Virginia Tech's Teacher of the Week and the American Political Science Association's Teaching Award. Eric's research focuses on the connection between military service and civic engagement, and moral injury. He presented some of his findings in a 2013 TEDx talk at Virginia Tech, "The Moral Injury of War." Eric earned his bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the University of Virginia in 2004 and his master's degree in Philosophy and a Ph.D. in Planning, Governance and Globalization from Virginia Tech in 2010 and 2014, respectively.

Priscila Izar is a Ph.D. candidate in Urban Affairs and Planning in Virginia Tech's Planning, Governance and Globalization Program, and a graduate research assistant for the Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience. Priscila's work explores the relationship between global financialization, transformations in the built environment and social justice and her dissertation focuses on a financialized urban policy in São Paulo, Brazil. Priscila holds a master's degree in International Development Policy from Duke University, 2000 and a professional degree in Architecture and Urban Planning from Mackenzie University in Brazil, 1992. She has worked as a practitioner and researcher with community development and planning, housing and slum upgrading.

Elizabeth C.S. Jamison (Eli) is a Ph.D. candidate in the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) program at Virginia Tech with concentrations in social and political thought, and is also earning the Women and Gender Studies (WGS) Graduate Certificate. Her research focuses on challenging "business as usual" paradigms by interrogating the intersection

of power networks, state politics and corporate governance through the lens of the 2011 Alabama immigration law and the role of poultry processors in its passage. She is mapping the challenges and opportunities for expanding the practice of corporate social responsibility into areas affecting social justice for immigrant labor. Eli holds a bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology from James Madison University and a Master's In Business Administration degree with dual concentration in human resource management and organizational management from Vanderbilt University. She was inducted into The Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society in March, 2015.

Sabith Khan recently completed his Ph.D. in Planning, Governance and Globalization at Virginia Tech. His dissertation examined the relationship among giving and faith and community for the Islamic population in America. Prior to coming to Virginia Tech, Sabith led the Muslim Public Service Network, a Washington D.C.-based nongovernmental organization that works to inspire and educate American Muslims to enter public service careers. He also founded MENASA, a think-tank dedicated to creating new knowledge about the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia regions. Sabith co-edited a book of essays, *Millennials Speak*, which was launched at The World Bank in 2013. He earned his master's degree in public administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University in 2011 and a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering and Management from MS Ramaiah Institute of Technology, Bangalore, India, in 2004.

Whitney Knollenberg is a Ph.D. candidate in the Hospitality and Tourism Management Department at Virginia Tech. She holds a bachelor's degree in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management from Michigan State University and a master's degree in Sustainable Tourism from East Carolina University. Her research focuses on leadership in the tourism industry, specifically the cultivation of political leaders and their ability to create relationships with tourism industry members. She has also explored multiple aspects of sustainable tourism development, including the roles of power and partnerships in the planning process.

Jordan Laney is a writer, photographer, educator and doctoral student in the ASPECT (Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical and Cultural Thought) program at Virginia Tech. Her research interests include: place, Appalachia, identity, music, labor justice and feminist space. Before joining ASPECT, Laney received her master's degree in Appalachian Studies (Music concentration) from Appalachian State University in 2013 and her bachelor's degree in Creative Writing from Goddard College in 2010.

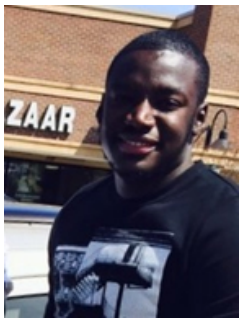
Renee LoSapio is an avid cyclist and advocate for public transportation in the Hampton Roads area. She believes multi-modal networks are vital to sustainable and successful public transportation systems. She enjoys the arts, hiking, social dancing, philanthropy, weight lifting and a myriad of other social activities and hobbies. One lifetime goal she hopes to achieve is to travel internationally every year. She graduated from Virginia Tech with a bachelor's degree in Economics in 2011. Thereafter, Renee pursued a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning with a focus in transportation and she completed that program in 2013. Renee lives in Norfolk, Virginia and works in the freight rail industry for Norfolk Southern Railroad.

Sarah Lyon-Hill is an economic development specialist in the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development and a student in Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs Planning, Governance and Globalization Ph.D. program. She has a background in international and community development and has studied and engaged in collaborative governance and nonprofit activities. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Niger in 2009-2011, she worked with individuals and organizations to coordinate community projects, including a women's micro financing project. Now as a Ph.D. student, Sarah is pursuing her interest in community development by studying methods of encouraging greater community collaboration, connectivity and bottom-

up reform through the theatre arts. She received her bachelor's degree in French and International Relations from Beloit College in 2006 and her master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Tech in 2012.

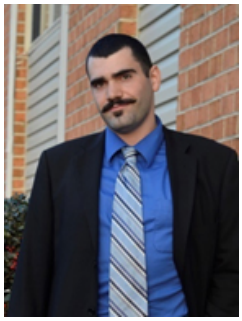
Lorien E. MacAuley has nine years of experience coordinating efforts to teach adults and youth about nature and gardening in governmental and nongovernmental organizations. She is currently a Ph.D. student in Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education at Virginia Tech. While at Virginia Tech, she has worked with the Mapping Sustainable Farm Systems project, the Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition Program and the Dan River Partnership for a Healthy Community. She focuses her research and development efforts on beginning farmer and rancher preparation and community-based food systems initiatives. Lorien holds a bachelor's degree in the Biological Sciences from Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia, 2003, and a master's degree in Agricultural and Extension Education from Virginia Tech, 2014.

Christian Matheis holds a Ph.D. in Ethics and Political Philosophy from The Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical and Cultural Thought at Virginia Tech, 2015, as well as a master's degree in Applied Ethics and a bachelor's degree in Psychology, both from Oregon State University, in 2004 and 2001 respectively. He teaches in the Government and International Affairs program at Virginia Tech and in the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Radford University. Christian's recent research focuses on philosophical conceptions of solidarity in liberatory movements, problems of recognition and identity politics in models of social justice, moral criteria for regulating how state administrative agencies treat refugees, critiques of immigration and border policies, and the aesthetics of race. Christian was named the 2013 Outstanding Doctoral Student in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and in 2015 he was inducted as a member of The Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society.



Saul N'Jie is from Churchill's Town, Serekunda, The Gambia. He is a doctoral student in the Planning, Governance and Globalization program at the Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA). Saul earned his bachelor's degree in Social Science with a concentration in Political Science and History and a minor in International Studies from Bluefield State College, 2011, and his master's degree in Government and International Affairs, with concentration in Political Economy, Microeconomics, and Capacity Building from Virginia Tech, 2013. His research focuses on the role of alternative forms of development (microfinance) in The Gambia and Africa at large. He currently serves as a Visiting Professor of Political Science and Geography at Bluefield State College, where he teaches American National Government and Economy, State and Local Government and International Relations.

Kate Preston Keeney is a Project Director in the Office of the Senior Fellow for Resource Development at Virginia Tech. She earned her doctoral degree in Public Administration and Public Affairs from Virginia Tech in 2014, master's degree in arts management from American University, 2005 and bachelor's degree of Music in Performance from James Madison University, 2003. Her research interests bridge arts management and public policy and management scholarship with a particular focus in public funding for the arts and culture. Kate has served as a graduate research assistant for Americans for the Arts' Animating Democracy program and has worked as an arts administrator at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.



Chris Price earned his master's degree in Government and International Affairs from Virginia Tech in 2014 after receiving a bachelor's degree in History and minor in Political Science from Virginia Tech in 2010. His research focused on private military contractors and their impact on state-building in post-conflict societies, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition, he coedited *Issues*

in International Politics, Economy, and Governance with Yannis Stivachtis, published by ATINER in 2014. Recently he has been serving as a teaching assistant in International Studies at Virginia Tech.

Sofia Rukhin received a bachelor's degree in Sociology in 2013 from the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow. She completed her thesis, "Egyptian Attitudes toward Democracy: What the Afrobarometer Reveals about the Influence of Social Status," and graduated with her master's degree in sociology from Virginia Tech in May 2015. Her primary research interests include political economy, political sociology and globalization. She is also interested in the development of U.S.-Russia relations and was selected to participate in the Stanford University-Russia Forum in 2012-2013 to work on a collaborative research project entitled, "Cooperation between U.S. and Russian Public Welfare Agencies." In her spare time, Sofia is learning Mandarin Chinese.

Jamie Sanchez is a Ph.D. candidate in Cultural and Political Thought in the ASPECT Program at Virginia Tech. Her research investigates ethnopolitics, representations of resistance and cultural anxiety in Northern China. Prior to beginning doctoral study, Jamie worked in China for more than eight years. Her professional experience includes business consulting, business startup and management, personnel training and teaching. Jamie holds a bachelor's degree in International Business from New Mexico State University (1998); a master's degree in Intercultural Studies from Union University (2007); and a master of divinity degree from Golden Gate Seminary (2008).

Emily Swenson Brock is a Senior Policy Advisor for the Government Finance Officers Association and a Ph.D. candidate in the Center for Public Administration and Policy at Virginia Tech. Emily's dissertation explores the institutional contours of public pension policy space. Prior to her doctoral work, Emily was a commercial relationship manager at a large national bank, serving as the sole company liaison for government and university clients. Emily holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Virginia Tech and a master's in Business Administration degree from the College of William and Mary.

Marc Thomas completed his Ph.D. in the Social, Political, Ethical and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) program at Virginia Tech in 2015. His major was Political Theory with a focus on direct and participatory democracy while his minor was Social Theory with a focus on race. He holds master's degrees in History from Virginia Tech, 2010, and in Government (Political Theory and Comparative Politics) from the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, 2005. Marc earned his bachelor's degree in History and Archaeology from University of the West Indies as well, graduating with Honors in 2002, and certificates in Training Techniques, 2006, and Project Management, 2005. He has taught several courses, including Political Science Research Methods and History of the Modern World, to students in Jamaica and in the USA during the past eight years.

Jerald H. Walz is a Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education at Virginia Tech currently researching academic freedom in colleges and universities. He holds a bachelor's degree in Social Studies (with a concentration in Secondary Education) from Asbury College, 1996, a master's degree in Government from the Johns Hopkins University, 2003, and two graduate certificates from Virginia Tech. His professional experience has involved more than twelve years in nonprofit management, including serving as the Vice President of Operations for the Institute on

Religion and Democracy, a Washington, DC-based think tank. Jerald has also taught Public Policy in Pepperdine University's Washington DC program and Leadership in the Governor's School for Agriculture at Virginia Tech.

The Editors

Lyusyena Kirakosyan is currently serving as an Affiliated Research Faculty member with the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG). In 2013-14, she was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at VTIPG, engaged in collaborative research projects on the arts and their roles in peacebuilding and community development. In 2013 she completed her Ph.D. in Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) from Virginia Tech. She received the ASPECT Ph.D. program Outstanding Dissertation Award for her dissertation entitled "Democratic Justice for Brazilians with Impairments." Lyusyena earned her master's degree in Management from the Hult International Business School in Boston, Massachusetts, 2001, and a bachelor's degree in Economics from Yerevan State University in Armenia, 1997.

Max Stephenson, Jr. is Professor of Public and International Affairs, School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech, and Director of the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance. His current research and teaching interests include the arts and community change processes, NGOs and international development, peacebuilding, humanitarian relief and collaborative governance. He has published several books and more than 50 refereed articles and book chapters. His most recent book, edited with Scott Tate, is Arts and Community Change: Exploring Cultural Development Policies, Practices and Dilemmas (Routledge, 2015). Stephenson earned his bachelor's (1977), master's (1979) and doctoral (1985) degrees from the University of Virginia.

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