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CONTENTS

Articles

Johanna E. Foster

In Keeping with Family Tradition: American Second-Wave Feminists and the Social Construction of Political Legacies

6

Jihad K. Othman, Annulla Linders

Masculinity and Immigrant Health Practices: How Male Kurdish Immigrants to the United States Think about and Practice Health

30

Elena Neiterman, Yvonne LeBlanc

The Timing of Pregnancy: Women's Interpretations of Planned and Unplanned Pregnancy

52

Julian Molina

Intervention Tales: Talk, Documents, and "Engagement" on a Wage Subsidy Project

68

Eric O. Silva, Christopher J. Gillmann, KeyAnna L. Tate

Confronting Institutional Discrimination in a Color-Blind World

84

Paula Sequeiros

"Holding the Dream": Women's Favorite Reading Matter in a Portuguese Prison

110

Book reviews

Radosław Kossakowski

Book Review: Bentz, Valerie Malhotra and Vincenzo M. B. Giorgino, (eds.). 2016. *Contemplative Social Research. Caring for Self, Being, and Lifeworld*. Santa Barbara: Fielding University Press 130

Haley Sorenson, Mehmet Soyer

Book Review: Boylorn, Robin M. and Mark P. Orbe, (eds.). 2016. *Critical Autoethnography: Intersecting Cultural Identities in Everyday Life*. London, New York: Routledge 136

Nathan Poirier

Book Review: Griffin, Nathan Stephens. 2017. *Understanding Veganism: Biography and Identity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 140

Magdalena Łukasiuk

Book Review: Lloyd, Justine and Ellie Vasta, (eds.). 2017. *Reimagining Home in the 21st Century*. Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing 144

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In Keeping with Family Tradition: American Second-Wave Feminists and the Social Construction of Political Legacies

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Abstract Through an interpretive lens that borrows from feminist postmodernist perspectives on identity and cognitive sociology, the manuscript utilizes in-depth interview data from 33 women active in the American second-wave feminist movement to explore how aging feminist activists construct their current political identities in relation to the meanings they give to the perceived progressive political identities and actions of their elders. In particular, this study examines the discursive strategies that respondents engage as they link their own feminist consciousness directly or indirectly to feminist, or otherwise progressive, parents and grandparents. Findings reveal three distinct political legacy narratives, namely 1) explicit transmission origin stories; 2) bridge narratives; and 3) paradox plots that add to both the social movement literature on the symbolic dimensions of recruitment, sustainability, and spillover, as well as cognitive sociological literature on the cultural transmission of political capital, in general, and to our understanding of American second-wave activists, more specifically.

Keywords Identity Construction; Political Legacy; Intergenerational Transmission; American Feminism; U.S. Second-Wave Activists; Sociology of Ancestry

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When I was in my elementary school years in the 1970s in the United States, my mother was an activist in what was then called the “battered women’s movement” in the suburbs of the northeastern seaboard city of Philadelphia—though I did not know it at the time. A first generation Italian-American woman from a working-class background, she died by the time I was ten after a long and undisclosed battle with cancer, and both the memory of her and her life in the movement was swiftly plucked from our family’s collective con-

sciousness. It was not until I went away to college and found my way to women's studies, and to the reproductive rights movement in particular, that my father revealed my mother had been active in the women's movement. This experience of my mother's erasure, individually, and the erasure of women collectively, has profoundly troubled me for over 30 years. As my own life has gone on, I have had countless questions for my mother—mostly in her position as my mother outside the context of American feminist activism—but also as a feminist activist during one of the most transformative periods in U.S. history. If she were still here, what would be her perspective on U.S. feminist politics 50 years out from what was, by many accounts, a tremendously electrifying time?

While I could not know how my own mother, herself, might narrate this story, I became attracted to the idea that I might take some steps to make sure that a part of the story of women in her cohort did not suffer the fate of erasure. Thus began an in-depth interview project to explore how American women who were participants in the historic "second-wave" of U.S. feminist activism from the 1960s to the 1980s—a "wave" marked by mass mobilizations that extended the battles for the basic rights of citizenship launched by 19th and early 20th century "first-wave" American feminists—made sense of the modern victories and setbacks in struggles for gender justice as they entered their later years. As these narratives unfolded, I became particularly interested in the ways in which respondents reflected on their political roots, as well as the ways in which they told their own stories of how mothers, grandmothers, and other relatives impacted their trajec-

tories towards feminist activism. As someone who had no conscious memory of the maternal transmission of political values, capital, or social location in progressive politics, these narratives of women's sense of themselves in relation to politically active and sometimes even feminist elders struck me. They struck me not only in my own personal search for meaning and connection to a mother who was largely disappeared, but because, as an American sociologist, I did not know of any scholarly literature on the ways in which movement actors in the United States narrated their perceptions about the political legacies of their parents and relatives.

As such, in this article, I explore how aging second-wave activists who were part of one of the most consequential movements in U.S. history construct their current identities in relationship to the meanings they give to the perceived progressive political identities and actions of their elders. How do they tell their stories of politicization, and with what call backs to significant family members whom they see as aligned in some way with their own feminist philosophies? In doing so, this research contributes to ongoing feminist and critical theories of the social construction of identity, including political identities, as well as challenges our theoretical understanding of the social processes by which political capital—in this case, the knowledge of, or access to, progressive political movement culture which can later be exchanged for future access to or increased status in movement politics—is simply objectively "handed down" from parents to children in a mechanical, linear, and often oppositional way. Empirically, this exploration adds to the growing body of social movement research that

aims to bridge structural and cultural components of movement participation by focusing on perceptions and emotions of participants overall, and fills a gap in the current social movement literature on the social construction of political legacy, particularly in relation to feminist activists. Finally, this work provides a cultural and political space for aging feminist women, themselves, to co-construct a legacy of the second-wave for future generations of American activists.

Theoretical Framework

In the broadest sense, this project is informed by a sociologically-oriented, feminist, postmodernist perspective on identity that assumes that the particular set of identity categories given to us in any social-historical context, whether gender, sexual, racial, or political identities, are not based on universal, stable, or fixed systems of classification, but variable and always imbued with multiple meanings. Further, since one's sense of self as, say, a gendered or sexual being, or in this case, a "feminist activist," is a dynamic process that is not inevitably tied to any essential attributes or properties of individuals as given by biology or psychology, then these identities must always be "performed" in ongoing and eventually routinized interactions in everyday life (Butler 1990). Additionally, these "performances" at the micro-level of social interaction are tied in complex ways to the macro systems of distribution that rely on the belief in seemingly stable and unchangeable identity categories to justify unequal allocations of income, wealth, political power, access to employment, education, healthcare, and leisure time, among other social goods (Connell 1987).

Equally important for this project, as is true of postmodernist analyses more generally, feminist postmodernists theorize the primacy of "discourse," or the collection of a culture's symbolic communication, whether encoded in written text, be it religious text, pop culture, academic texts, or other systems of signs, such as personal narrative, and "discursive relations," meaning human beings' active engagement with and resistance to discourse, as the engine of power, surveillance, and control in postmodern society (Foucault 1975). To understand and resist these relations of power, postmodernists engage in "deconstruction" of knowledge, or the analytical work of uncovering the political history of a set of ruling ideas as they are situated in institutional and discursive contexts; in other words, as conceptualized by Foucault, deconstruction is a kind of "genealogy" and "archaeology," or a tracing of the origins and a digging up of the hidden roots of various forms of knowledge (Foucault 1978).

Within this larger critical field of vision, this project also draws from contemporary social movement scholarship that foregrounds not only the importance of protestors' mental and emotional lives in understanding social movement phenomena, but the importance of identity in mobilizing and sustaining political action and commitments. For at least a hundred years in the United States, scholars studying collective action ignored these dimensions of social movements, assuming that those who protested were immature, psychologically disturbed, irrational, or simply spoiled youth rebelling against authority, most notably their parents, and in any case, certainly not in line with their parents' worldview (Goodwin and Jasper 2009). In the 1980s,

however, social movement scholars shifted from a near total focus on structural forces that precipitated movement mobilization, action, and decline to include cultural factors and the acceptance of approaches that seek to “observe or ask protestors themselves about their perceptions and desire and fantasies, without having a theory of history that predicts in advance what protestors will think and feel” (Goodwin and Jasper 2009:13). In addition, and leaving important critiques of the larger U.S. cultural turn aside, the move allowed for greater attention to the rhetoric activists use to mobilize recruits and stage actions, the strategies of claims-making, and the politics of identity as particular kinds of claims-making tactics (Gamson 1995; Bernstein 1997; Foster 2004).

Finally, and most specifically, this project draws on key insights in cognitive sociology as applied to the sociology of memory and the sociology of ancestry. Eviatar Zerubavel (1997) identifies the importance of “mnemonic traditions,” or those “stocks of knowledge” that help construct both the content of what we come to remember as participants in particular social groups, and the process of how we remember it, arguing that the social processes by which human beings construct the past produce and reproduce group boundaries at the same time that they produce and reproduce individuals’ very sense of their own identities within and outside these groups. In his more recent analysis of identity and the “genealogical imagination,” Zerubavel (2012:10) further argues for a sociological analysis of the processes by which people in communities construct a sense of who counts as their ancestors and relatives, and in doing so, construct a sense of them-

selves, noting that “[t]he way we construct genealogies...tell just as much about the present as it does about the past.” More directly, Zerubavel (2012:24) pays particular attention to the “sociomental” practices of constructing narratives of lineage, origins, and pedigree and suggests that “[a]ncestry and descent play a critical role in the way we structure intergenerational transmission of both material and symbolic forms of capital. We thus inherit not only our ancestors’ property but also their social status and reputation.” Not surprisingly, then, “one of the most important forms of social identity is being someone’s descendent” (Zerubavel 2012:24).

Taken together, these distinct sociological lenses create a helpful prism through which we might better understand how aging second-wave feminist activists in the U.S. socially construct their current political identities by calling—or not—on the legacy of politically progressive elders and with what meaning for the accumulation of their own symbolic capital in social exchanges. That people tell stories about their elders to construct a sense of who they are and where they belong, then and now, is no new insight. Yet, there is no work in the empirical literature in the sociology of identity, the sociology of social movements, or the political science literature that tries to disentangle how this may happen as an identity strategy in the context of political activism generally, or how social actors collectively give meaning to the transmission of political capital in the form of knowledge of, or degrees of membership in, progressive political cultures such that we might begin to think about a “mnemonic tradition” or “genealogical imagination” unique to the construction of progressive political identities.

Literature Review

Thus far, in the U.S. context, it is political scientists and political psychologists who have examined parents' relationships to the political identities of their children. Their approach has largely been quantitative where they have hypothesized causal mechanisms by which parents transmit political ideologies and political party identification to their children with a focus on the relative weight of cohort, life cycle, or socialization effects. Mostly, these studies have tested the strength and longevity of Bandura's social learning model as applied to the acquisition of political behavior (e.g., Jennings and Niemi 1974; Verba, Schlozman, and Burns 2005) or develop new political socialization models (e.g., Beck and Jennings 1991; Sears and Funk 1999; Westholm 1999; McIntosh, Hart, and Youniss 2007), some of which broaden the analysis beyond the family context to examine more macro environmental factors that work to constrain or enable transmission (e.g., Beck and Jennings 1991; Sears and Funk 1999; Verba, Schlozman, and Burns 2005). Included in the latter is the sociological work of Ojeda and Hatemi (2015) which focuses on the importance of children's agency in both perceiving and adopting the political party identification of their parents (see also: McDevitt and Chaffee 2002). Within this body of literature, qualitative studies are extremely rare, as are those studying adult children, and those that have focused on the intergenerational transmission of political ideology to women in the U.S. are now also dated, examining the impact of patriarchal family structures on the transmission of specific personality characteristics and gender role identifications found to be compatible with feminist political ori-

entations (e.g., Acock and Bengtson 1978; Kelly and Boutilier 1978; Fowlkes 1992).

If we look to studies of identity in social movement literature, we also find little on the social construction of political identities in relation to activists' interpretation of their elders' political legacies. Even updating the discredited notion that activists become radicalized simply as disaffected youth mobilized in opposition to the conservatism of parents or authority figures, social movement scholars, including those in feminist sociology, have paid little attention to the social construction of intergenerational transmission of political ideologies and capital within the context of contemporary U.S. feminist movements. Instead, there are important examinations of the persistence or decline of the adoption of "feminist" as a political identity among American women (Kamen 1991; Schnittker, Freese, and Powell 2003); studies of the deployment of motherhood as a politicized identity for recruitment and identification within U.S. social movement activism (Capdevila 2000; Reger 2001); as well as a good deal of writing that analyzes the political and philosophical tensions between American "feminist generations," including a well-populated literature on the rise of "third-wave" U.S. feminism and the perspectives of "third-wave" feminist activists (e.g., Dicker and Piepmeier 2003; Gillis, Howie, and Munford 2007; Dean 2009). While feminist activists, themselves, have published anthologies from "inside" the U.S. third-wave that construct "third-wave" identities often in relationship to notions of "foremothers" of the first- and second-waves (Findlen 1995; Walker 1995; Baumgartner and Richards 2000; Hernan-

dez and Rehman 2002; Heywood and Drake 2002), American feminist sociologists have not taken up social scientific analyses of third-wave perspectives, or analyses of generational differences in the activism and ideologies of second- and third-wave participants.

There is a small handful of feminist empirical work that crosses the boundaries of history, literary criticism, and sociology that examines the political identity construction of American second-wave activists in relation to elders. Ruth Rosen (2006) is among those feminist historians who have chronicled the rise of the modern U.S. feminist movement, and in doing so, documents the identity crises among predominantly White, economically-privileged, and well-educated young women of the 1960s who came into feminist activism in opposition to what they perceived to be the suffocating and unfulfilling lives of their oppressed mothers. In addition, Astrid Henry (2004) has extensively studied the metaphors of family and generation, and particularly mother-daughter tropes in U.S. second- and third-wave feminist movements. With some notable exceptions, Henry, a literary critic, focuses on the rhetorical use of language of family, generation, feminist historical figures, and “waves” of feminist movements themselves, as “mothers” and “grandmothers,” in the construction of what we could call an American feminist collective memory. While Henry’s work attends to the intergenerational transmission of political capital, in the main, her work does not examine how feminist women in the United States call on the actual elders, as opposed to metaphorical ones, in their own lives and families as they narrate their political trajectories. Moreover, Henry’s sources of

data are the writings of prominent American feminist leaders and not rank-and-file feminist activists, as is the case in this project. Finally, sociologist Beth Schneider (1988), while problematizing the concept of political generation as gendered, references the work of feminist sociologist Alice Rossi whose own 1982 work interviewing activist women at the historic 1977 Houston Conference in the southwestern state of Texas found call backs to progressive mothers and grandmothers as activists documented their paths into feminist politics. Published nearly 30 years ago, Schneider’s work urged future researchers to further investigate these kinds of feminist genealogical linkages. Yet, to date, there appears to be not much sociological work that has done so.

Methods

In picking up the baton to explore how aging second-wave activists in the U.S. narrate their political legacies, I rely on data collected as part of a larger qualitative study examining a range of dimensions characteristic of a kind of shared political consciousness among aging feminist activists in the U.S. (see: Foster 2015). The project utilizes 33 in-depth, semi-structured interviews of women who identified as radical, womanist, feminist, a women’s rights activist or otherwise as a woman committed to women’s freedom, and active in some strand of the American women’s movement from the 1960s to the 1980s in a way that was sustained, including women who were regular volunteers of womanist/feminist organizations or networks, members of nationalist liberation organizations or networks, regular participants in direct actions, women’s initiatives, consciousness-raising groups, feminist

collectives or radical community institutions, or volunteer providers of direct service from womanist/feminist perspectives, among other forms of political work. Respondents were initially recruited into the study through convenience sampling of contacts in my own feminist activist networks, followed by a snowball sampling strategy. Almost half in the sample were from the greater New York City area, another 40 percent from the San Francisco Bay area, and the remaining 10 percent from other regions of the U.S. The median age was 68. Five women were not White, and of those, two were Black women, two Latinas, and one woman who identified as “mixed ancestry.” Approximately 30 percent identified as ethnically Jewish women. Just over 25 percent identified as lesbians at the time of the interview. The majority grew up in the middle-classes; almost all had at least some college, with two-thirds holding advanced degrees; and almost three-quarters held careers in the professions for some or most of their working lives. Half were retired or on disability, almost all remained active in some kind of feminist issue work, and about half did so through social movement organizations. Most activists engaged in more than one kind of strategy, though some were singularly or primarily focused on one general kind of engagement, such as consciousness-raising work, or building an alternative women’s culture, or working within the established political structure to bring about legislative change.

The majority of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in women’s homes, their offices, coffee houses, or libraries. One quarter of the interviews were conducted over the phone, and one over email due

to the constraints of international travel. In-person and phone interviews ranged anywhere from an hour to five hours, with the average length being approximately two hours. The interview questions were open-ended and included, among others, questions about their experiences in the women’s movement; their memories of how they first became engaged in the feminist movement; what they thought was possible for the women’s movement to achieve in their lifetime; their recollections of their early years of radicalization, and their sense of the ways in which, for them, the meaning of feminism has changed or not over time. Additionally, I asked participants to reflect back and share their characterizations of their families of origin and the extent to which their elders were politicized themselves. I did not ask direct questions about their perceptions of the impact of elders’ political engagement or political views on their own paths to feminist activism, but rather allowed those assessments to emerge organically. All interviews were recorded with a hand-held digital recording device, transcribed by professional transcriptionists, coded manually using a quasi-grounded theory method of qualitative data analysis, and pseudonyms were assigned to all respondents to protect their privacy. In analyzing the interview data, I took sociologist Lynn Davidman’s (2000) assertion that accounts of the past are neither the actual experiences of the respondents, nor accurate accounts of others, but instead are the respondents’ interpretation of these events and people. Likewise, I approached the interview data with the understanding that the interviews, themselves, were social interactions whereby the interviewer and interviewee, together, constructed a sense of ourselves in relation to

each other, and to our communities, as we engaged in them, and so, too, as I make sense of them here.

Findings

There were a range of themes that emerged in the interviews that confirm what social scientists already know about women's involvement in the U.S. second-wave. Not surprisingly given previous research in history and sociology on women's paths into the movement (see: Freeman 1973; Rosen 2006), for almost all participants, they recall their introduction to the women's movement in ways that evoke the psychological and emotional impact of the "moral shocks" of sexism (Goodwin and Jasper 2009). Also not unexpected, many participants found their way to the movement as a result of changing consciousness after participation in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement or Third World Liberation or New Left—a process that social movement scholars call "movement spillover." For sure, some respondents discussed their fears of turning into their mothers, women whom they felt were trapped in the 1950s cult of domesticity, or who sought to break from the authority of patriarchal fathers and family arrangements at a time of national youth rebellion and uprising—also a common explanation in social movement literature. Yet, while all these forces were at play to some degree in the narratives shared by the participants, what is not well-documented in the social movement literature is the extent to which feminist movement participants, themselves, attribute their eventual participation in the movement not in opposition to parents, but as an outcome of their early political socialization by close elders. In fact, overall, half of the women

in my sample perceive their development of a feminist consciousness directly or indirectly linked to feminist or otherwise progressive parents and elders along a continuum of political engagement. Among those, three kinds of political capital narratives emerged that I explore below. First, for some women, their narratives of their early lives and their paths towards radicalization deployed stories of direct links to mothers and grandmothers who were active in feminist politics, or a kind of "explicit transmission origin story." The second narrative trajectory, which was the modal narrative strategy used by activists in this study, relied on what I call "bridge narratives" of parents or elders who were significant in their politicization of the respondents in their progressive politics, though not feminist politics, *per se*. Finally, in the third, activists shared a kind of implicit transmission narrative that I call a "paradox plot." Here, respondents construct their current feminist political identity by calling on elders who were simultaneously apolitical, but also exhibited personal qualities that respondents could deploy as evidence of roots of their own radicalization.

"Raised on Righteous Indignation": Explicit Transmission Origin Stories

Although not the modal pattern in the interviews, several respondents narrated their political legacies in direct relation to their mother or grandmother's explicit involvement in U.S. feminist movements in such a way that respondents articulated a kind of political cultural capital they inherited as a result of their ancestry. For example, Tricia, a 62-year-old Latina who teaches at a community college in

Northern California, is also the daughter of a late, well-known feminist socialist activist put under FBI surveillance for her radical political activities, and traces her own commitment back to her mother's deep involvement in the movement. "Raised on righteous indignation," she says, "I got my grounding from my mom...I was raised to challenge...I remember her taking me in a sleeping bag as a baby and she would put me in the back of the meeting room and they would have whatever lecture they would have and then she would wake me up and take me home...So, it was really in the food I ate, the air I breathed." Tricia goes on to recall a particularly defining moment in her early teenage years when she vividly remembers her mother arranging for her to speak at an abortion rights rally:

An "aha" moment for me was when my mom was fighting for *Roe vs. Wade* [the U.S. Supreme Court 1973 ruling that decriminalized abortion] and I remember there were many, many meetings with women and she encouraged me and I was very young. I was like a young teen and she encouraged me to go to the podium and to talk about my support around that and it's so, I remember thinking, as a child, I can't even call myself a young adult...well, yes, I support a woman's right to her, to, I mean, this is my body...And there was a moment there of...me being acknowledged as a young woman saying, "This is my body!"

Tricia also shares her clear sense that her mother "wanted to raise me in a way that really spoke to feminism and all the best things of feminism and raising a strong daughter," including direct involvement in Tricia's own budding activism:

[W]hen I was in high school...we were demonstrating to be able to wear pants. [My mom] would help me. I created leaflets...and she would help me create these. So they raided my locker at school, and took all my flyers and they called my mother in and she was very proud. So, me and my little activist self with my mom's support...even though it was a very difficult...time.

Ultimately, Tricia, more than any other respondent, articulates her perception of a direct transmission between her feminist mother's activism and her own, as well as her belief that this kind of legacy is more widely shared:

She was a walking historian...and she had a wonderful library of books by and about women internationally, globally. I loved to talk to her about...women's issues, and I did grow up and teach women's studies and I could always go back to the oracle because she was so well-read...My mom gave me opportunities...and gave me...the power of my body, and gave me...the ability to question, she gave me foundations and that they can't take away from me even though...the government broke my mom in terms of everything that was done around her and to her...I think that the legacy is that, when our mom's or elder women embody that struggle...that in one way or another, we get it; you know, we breathe it in and we get it.

Though without quite the same level of perception of direct lineage, Debra, a 65-year-old White woman, retired from a career as a chemistry-trained corporate lawyer, but active in National Organization for Women [NOW] politics in the U.S. Northeast, explains her political identity in relation to a politically active feminist grandmother:

My mother would tell me stories [about my grandmother who was a suffragist]...My mother knew Elizabeth Cady Stanton's daughter, Harriet Blackwell, very well. She lived with her family for a while...I think I just always knew these stories with my grandmother. In her papers, there is a note that one of the Pankhursts was coming to the country, and would my grandmother show her around...And there was a big fight in [The National Women's Party]...My grandmother was on the losing side. According to her, if Alice Paul had done her right, we would have the Equal Rights Amendment. You kind of have to know my grandmother. Very Victorian woman. I think she wore stockings and a girdle every day of her life...When they were having a fight [at the NWP], grandmother was leaving the office and there was some fears they might smuggle papers out. Apparently, and I have no idea whether this is true or not, Alice Paul said to her, "Are you taking anything?" and my grandmother just said, "Search me." And, of course, Alice Paul didn't, and, of course, my grandmother had the papers stuck right in her girdle...So that's what I grew up with.

These kinds of narratives of "explicit transmission" of feminist values and family histories that explicitly link respondents to both the second- and the first-wave of feminist mass mobilization in the United States emerge in the interviews as political identity "origin stories" that can carry political capital for activists in the current period as they negotiate who they are in the present.

"I Don't Think She Would Call Herself a Feminist, But": Constructing Bridge Legacies

While these explicit transmission narratives were compelling, most women in the sample did not have

such narratives of mothers, grandmothers, or other elders who were active in explicitly feminist political struggles. This is not surprising perhaps given, among other factors, the span of time between the mass mobilization of the first- and second-wave feminist movements in the United States. Instead, the most common discursive strategy, one used by approximately a third of the interviewees, involved the construction of "bridge" narratives that linked respondents' understandings of their elders' progressive political activity, though not feminist movement engagement, and their own lives in the women's movement, past or present. Among these kinds of "bridge" narratives were stories of respondents' mothers who were perceived by their daughters as feminist women, but for whom "feminist" was not an identity that their mothers would have claimed themselves. For example, Miriam, now a lawyer and healthcare advocate living in the American Midwest, but raised on the east coast in a middle-class White family, describes the ways in which both her parents were participants in progressive political activism during her childhood, and links their actions to her feminist movement participation. She explains, "My mother made me involved politically. My mother took me to the Chase Manhattan Bank to picket in [an affluent town on] Long Island [in New York State] because of Apartheid. [She] was on Dr. King's march and took me on my first anti-war march. My mother was always doing stuff." Miriam also credits her father, also a lawyer, as well as the overall political climate of the era, when she says:

My father dabbled in some civil rights stuff pro bono...but did a lot of appellate work. He was a lawyer's lawyer, wrote a lot of briefs...I have a picture of

my father with Dr. King...My parents hosted a dinner for Dr. King in 1965...I mean, I sort of grew up in that environment and, you know, was involved in anti-war stuff and civil rights stuff in high school.

For example, Ellen, a 60-year-old White, heterosexually married policy researcher, also from the American Midwest and now living in the San Francisco Bay Area, and formerly a member of a feminist socialist party and radical woman's collective talks about the impact of her novelist mom, who she says did not identify as a feminist nor was active in feminist movements, was published by The Feminist Press:

My mother was a writer and she won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1935 when she was very young...it's actually been republished by The Feminist Press. She was somewhat on the kind of fringes of the communist party and socialist party and she would do things and they were kind of cultivating her because of her at the time being well-known. She did articles that...covered strikes...I think she had the basic sense that women should have these greater opportunities and I think that her relationship with my father was somewhat unusual in the sense that she had this career that he respected, and that was like a bit already unusual in a sense. [As I got older,] I would talk to her about feminism and I would think that she had a fundamental appreciation for it, but I am not sure if she saw herself as feminist, even though I think she was very flattered that The Feminist Press wanted to [publish her work].

Ellen goes on to relay her awareness that her own views transpired at least in some measure in the

context of her parents' politicized environment, which she says

had an enormous effect on our family. I think I grew up with a somewhat different sense of what were the opportunities for women. I remember in sixth grade or something and I guess we were supposed to debate something and I took the position that women should be president. And I have no idea—I mean, why did I think that? I am not completely sure, but obviously there was something sort of there.

Ruth, a White, Jewish, and practicing therapist in a suburb of New York City, who was once deeply involved in feminist collective living and an early reproductive justice activist and women's culture worker, shares a bridge narrative with similar contours as Ellen and explains:

My mother was a feminist born in 1908. And she was a feminist in the 20s and 30s, I guess. She was very politically active, but that wasn't the form of her feminism. I think her feminism took more social and cultural forms, such as refusing to let men pay for her in the 20s. And she was an artist. One of the earliest paintings she sold was a self-portrait that was right after the publication of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. She named her portrait, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman*, and just that statement, the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman*, had a, you know, a bit of an in-your-face quality. She was, in general, radical in many different ways.

At the same time, Ruth's father, who was a nationally-known American criminologist, "was the head of the union at the secretariat, which he helped or-

ganize...for everybody from the janitors up through the secretary general during [anti-communist U.S. Senator Joseph] McCarthy. He and all the leadership were fired...and he could no longer work because his work had all been government work. So he went to work in his family business, and we fled the country."

Julia, straight, married, White woman in her late 60s who works as a school psychologist for kids with special needs, said:

My mom was very active. [She ran a gift store] and was an artist and did backdrops for museums. And she would go by the Indian reservations...And buy their stuff and sell it in the store...She'd let kids sweep the store, and, you know, trade for a present for mom. Stuff like that. So she's very community minded...She liked to call herself a humanist. So we always liked to think that. Because it includes feminism. And I say that because that's kind of how I mostly identify myself.

Julia also describes how her father "was in the socialist liberal party, some of it was based on workers' rights, and the equal rights for people; social justice issues...so I spent a lot of time when my father was up in the city with a lot of left wing socialists." Similarly, Christine, a 78-year-old White lesbian also from the Midwestern region of the U.S., and semi-retired photographer and oral historian who lives in an assisted living community in the San Francisco Bay Area, and was a member of the influential Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) once jailed for her civil rights activism, credits her own

passion for justice to her humanist and politically active mother who, while maintaining a conservative position around gender norms, wrote for a liberal religious newspaper and worked successfully to integrate women into the ministry. She says of her mother:

She was how I first learned feminism. Absolutely. And she was a major leader in the different Unitarian churches. She was like the first chairman of the board of the Unitarian Church who was a woman, and she went on to be an organizer for the district of Unitarian Churches. And even earlier than that, when I was like in about sixth grade, she was a member of the United World Federalists which supported the United Nations. And at one point there was a newspaper article in the [Midwestern U.S. city] newspaper that was basically calling her a communist for—and this was in the 50s—for supporting the United Nations and for being a member of the United World Federalists. And that was scary.

Christine goes on to say that, unlike her father, her mother was "an activist liberal" and "so she was always for interracial stuff, racial justice...And she also raised me with very positive statements about Jewish people." She says, too, that her mother connected her social justice through art, which is her current relationship to activism:

Well, my mother was an artist. Her brother was a famous artist. Their father did a lot of photographing of us. So art, you know, I grew up with a lot of art in my house and the visual, yeah, the visual arts was highly regarded and highly valued in my family. So to see a way that you could use visual art and have it

be a part of fighting for justice, wow, that was irresistible. And then, you see, by the time I learned photography and we're in the early 70s, I've been an activist for ten years and I'm tired of going to meetings. And I figured out that I could be a part of the movement and make a significant contribution and not have to go to so many meetings. Well, I took pictures of my roommates—that was one of the first...Just photographing women was radical.

Aside from explicit links to feminist mothers, or otherwise progressively politically engaged elders, a good portion of the sample of women narrate links to families where parents “would not call themselves feminists, but” where humanist values were prominent, even if elders were not politically active, *per se*. Here, adult children tell of mothers or fathers who, at least in a general sense, expressed some threads of a liberal political philosophy such that the daughters would say it instilled in them an early sense of their own, and of women's, essential value. For example, Sylvia describes herself as from a “working-class family...steel family, working to middle-class. My father was the first one who boot strapped out of the working-class, his dad had been a coal miner. Although mother, I think was a feminist in her own way, she never gave into my dad, who...would get enraged about things and...go raging around the house.” When Sylvia got kicked out of the Girl Scouts for being a non-compliant girl, “[m]y mother was so mad, so she said, well, we will start our troop, and it was a troop for girls who wanted to do things...not for girls who wanted to sit around and listen to somebody, you know, to talk about sewing.” Sylvia also narrates the role of her liberal feminist father and his impact on her own liberal feminist orientation:

I remember my dad saying [to his friend,] “My daughter is just as good as a boy,” and I am thinking to myself, “Just as good as a boy,” I am just as good as a boy. The fact that he had to defend being as good as a boy was one thing. And the second thing I realized...I spent...the next 20, 30 years of my life being as good as a boy, that I was going to live up to that expectation of my dad, so I would be as good as a boy. And I think that was a huge influence and the fact that my father and mother allowed me...but encouraged me to do boy kind of activities...And I think that's part of what gave me this idea as a woman I can do anything I want...I think that's what [feminism is] really about...being as good as a man, and my dad, I think what my dad said to his friend was right...having as good a life as a man, and...being able to enjoy life and not being held back by being a woman.

Likewise, Sarah, a middle-class, White, lesbian lawyer from the New York City area who now works in the employment protections field, though formerly very active in women's music culture and activism, narrates the influence of her mother this way:

It's funny, my mother would tell me stories about being active in this girls' club because they had the Boys' Club and Girls' Clubs when she was growing up. She grew up in [an urban, working-class suburb of New York City,] and I grew up on a farm, and so was strong in that sense, very strong personality. But, I don't think she would call herself a feminist, *per se*, but saw women's value. [Her daughters] were sort of like the first generation to go to college.

These narratives are akin to those shared by Sofia, a Latina from a working-class immigrant back-

ground who rose to national power within the liberal feminist wings of the movement and eventually transitioned to a long career in a powerful government post advocating for women's rights nationally and globally, who talks about the legacy of her dad as a liberal school teacher who also owned a bookshop and wrote for a [liberal] newspaper. Consequently, Sofia now understands her own trajectory as that of a kid who grew up surrounded by intellectuals with progressive ideas. In the same way, Sharon, a 62-year-old White lesbian in the computer science field, originally from a working-class family in the Midwest, and with a long history in liberal feminist politics in the Midwestern state where she now lives, narrates the influence of her father who "was...in the unions. He was a union bricklayer. So I was always up to date on union activities and why unions were a good thing to have for workers and things like that."

Unlike the family stories shared by activists sharing direct transmission narratives, then, respondents here could not call on knowledge of elders with explicit ties to feminist movements or feminist identities, but nonetheless came to understand their own political identities as descendant from the progressive politics of both mothers, as well as fathers, and also grandparents in some cases. Among these "bridge legacy" stories are those that rely on recollections of clear political engagement with civil rights, labor, or third world liberation politics, as well as those that rely on recollections of more general humanist values that shaped elders' worldviews, even in the absence of political activism.

"Caught Between Independence, Feminism, and Traditionalism": Narrating Legacies of Paradox

Finally, a third narrative strategy involved the invocation of a legacy of paradox, or "paradox plots," where respondents characterized their mothers and other women elders as women who inhabited characteristically subordinate, apolitical, or even anti-feminist positions, but simultaneously conveyed some message of strength or resilience that daughters connected to their own paths to feminism. Angie, a single, straight, White woman from California with years in the corporate management positions and with a history in liberal feminist activism, shares a narrative about her mother's paradoxical qualities of strength and subordination when she says:

I had been raised by a woman who was caught between independence, feminism, and traditionalism—there's no other way to say that...with very mixed messages. And my mother came from dirt, poor, fifth out of 11 Irish, not Catholic, but...women did all the work, you know, traditional household, and grandma scrubbed the floors in the bank during the depression to feed eleven and grandpa worked in the steel factory, and my mother did everything and saw her brothers get all kinds of perks and freedoms she didn't.

Angie goes on to say that although she thought of her mother as a rebel, her maternal grandparents considered her mother

a fallen woman because she insisted on...and having some advantages of being able to move and send some money home instead of staying there until she

got married...and so it was it, her wits and her looks and her independence that got her the life she wanted when she married my father who moved her out into a brand new suburb in the 50s. My mother had [said to me that] I want you to go to college. So, the first message was you're really, really, really smart, but never let a man know that because they don't like it...[and] my mother's idea of a great part-time job if you're going to have kids was to be a school teacher. You would be a stewardess for five years, then you become a school teacher and you're off with your kids in the summer.

Similarly, Barbara, a straight, Jewish professor from the middle-class in a Northeastern U.S. city who was active in early mobilizations of consciousness-raising book groups, says:

It's hard to explain, but [my mother] was political and not political. I can remember there were people down the street from us that I knew who taught at the university and she talked about people being "pink." And one day some guys came to our door to ask about them...and political movements and I remember my mother dummied up about everything and saying nothing and something about being "pink." She was a 1950s housewife, but she was very politically savvy and very interested in politics.

Then there is Toni, also a professor, and a straight, African-American woman living in the New York City area with years of experience in anti-racist feminist community organizing, who says,

So my mom and her sister, Aunt Joyce, my feminist aunt as I called her, raised all of us sort of together.

Whenever Aunt Joyce would move, Momma would move so we could be near her. Even though my mother was the elder. So she was sort of like a model for me. I saw all the talent and stuff she had very young. They had no political analysis of what that meant, they had no political analysis of—all I just knew, I didn't feel right...Working hard, not making hardly any money, with no protections or anything like that because, you know, domestics were not included in social security until the late 60s. But, you know, we were always cool. We weren't hungry. We always had nice, clean clothes.

Finally, there is Cara, another professor, this time a White lesbian woman teaching in California and from the working-classes of San Francisco, who turns to her history as a daughter of a single mother as the start of her interest in politics. She narrates how her Italian mother, married to an Irish police officer who was a batterer, lost everything in divorce proceedings that also forced her mother back into a difficult labor market:

The things [my mother] articulated about...I wouldn't have articulated as feminist until I went to college. My mom was always supportive. She never articulated the word feminist, but she didn't say she wasn't one, which is important. In a way, my mother was way progressive than the other women. I think she was a reader. Always wanted an education, but was never able to get one.

In contrast to the previous direction transmission and bridge themes, the tenor of the family legacy threads shared here is one of paradox as respondents understand their elders as clearly constrained

by, or perhaps even sympathetic to, patriarchal norms, beliefs, and values, but also as ancestors who possessed other qualities or experiences that respondents construct as consistent with their own identities as feminist activists.

Discussion

The recollections shared by aging American second-wave activists suggest three distinct kinds of genealogical narratives that have both empirical and theoretical implications for sociologists interested in the social construction of memory and identity more broadly, and the intergenerational transmission of political legacy more specifically. At the most fundamental level, the respondents deploy explicit transmission origin stories, bridge legacy narratives, and implicit transmission paradox plots in ways that could be understood as an element or strategy of political identity performance. As I have described above, the narratives of explicit transmission of political capital are such that respondents make use of memory and perception of elders that had overt and direct ties to feminist movement politics, and do so in such a way that these recollections help contribute to a sense of feminist political capital for daughters and granddaughters in the current period, and assist in the social construction of in-group membership over the course of generations. Narratives of “bridging” are ones that respondents called on to connect their own experiences in U.S. feminist movements to the political activism of elders that was not expressly feminist, but nonetheless was recounted as offering a pathway or a bridge from one time, place, and political context to another in a way that made ideological sense for adult

daughters and granddaughters. Finally, “paradox plots” are those narratives that rely on discursive efforts that call on recollections of elders’ political or social life to construct a legacy borne of elders whom respondents understood to be apolitical, or even anti-feminist, yet at the same time somehow among the bearers of an implicit or indirect spark for their descendants’ later feminist activism.

Empirically, these three family history narratives make two major contributions. First, these findings confirm previous social movement scholarship that has rejected assumptions that those who protested were immature, psychologically disturbed, irrational people, or entitled youth raging against elders, both significant and generalized ones. For sure, the dominant narrative in U.S. feminist movement history, and arguably in the popular culture, is that American women found their way to feminist mobilizations clearly in opposition to their parents’ conservative political ideologies and life choices, including their parents’ treatment of them as girl children. To be clear, this is a narrative I do not dispute. However, the accounts of one’s lineage explored here indicated that in the “early making” of feminist activists, it seems that an equally plausible route to feminist activism is in the attempt to create a line to, and not just diverge from, the larger values and beliefs of one’s parents and grandparents. For example, as we have seen, unlike the findings in the literature on the deployment of mother-daughter generational tropes in the writings of prominent U.S. feminist activists of the second- and third- wave, activists in this study did not narrate the political legacies they inherited from their actual mothers, grandmothers, and elders in metaphorical or abstract terms, or as

generalized others, but as significant others who are called on in ways that are deeply personal and simultaneously connect women to a larger tradition of feminist struggle. Here, I do not mean to imply that activists who make use of generational tropes are in some way less genuine in their construction of movement ties, as respondents here are engaging in the discursive arts as well, but of a different kind, and ones that have been largely missing in the scholarly literature in feminist and social movement studies.

Second, and more generally, these findings also help contribute the weight of empirical evidence for cognitive sociological investigations of what cognitive sociologists might call the phenomenon of “mnemonic genealogical traditions” (Zerubavel 2012). If, indeed, the dominant narrative of the transmission of American feminist politics, even in the study of intergenerational tropes, has been that the daughters reject their mothers and other elders to forge a new set of identities in opposition, then the social processes of “remembering together,” or the collective practices of calling up the past, that have been foregrounded in our scholarship have focused on a taken-for-granted reality of “genealogical discontinuity” (Zerubavel 2012), with little empirical data on practices of continuity. Yet, here, respondents discursively tie their current social locations as feminist movement actors to the orientations of the mothers, grandmothers, and progressive elders, albeit in various ways with explicit transmission origin stories, bridge narratives, and paradox plots, each evidence of the ways in which individuals actively construct a sense of affiliation with, and not break from, familial groups that lend

a sense of belonging and perhaps even political capital.

As these empirical contributions suggest, the narratives also help develop key concepts in both social movement theory and cognitive sociological theory. First, in social movement theory in particular, “[p]rotest is no longer seen as a compensation for some lack, but part of an effort to impose cognitive meaning on the world, to forge a personal collective identity, to define and pursue collective interests, and to create or reinforce affective bonds with others” (Goodwin and Jasper 2009:58). Subsequently, along with work that now theorizes how these mechanisms work in relation to the process of initial movement recruitment, these findings suggest that we might also begin to explore these same processes in relation to movement participation not only over the life course of activists engaged for the long haul, but also in the context of identity construction for activists who have long since exited the movement and search for ways to make sense of themselves and their contributions years later. For example, in the social movement literature, notions of “movement spillover” (see: Goodwin and Jasper 2009) and the processes by which initial participation in one movement crosses over into participation in another could be extended to our understanding of the ways in which intergenerational transmission of political values can also transcend singular movements. As previous literature and my own research here confirms, many second-wave feminist activists, particularly those in socialist and radical streams of the movement, first became politicized during the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and Third World liberationist movements. Yet, in their call backs to politicized

and not-so politicized elders, respondents suggest that not only does political engagement “spillover” from generation to the next as adult children make sense of their parents’ and grandparents’ political commitments, but engagement in distinct movements can “spillover” into new movements in subsequent generations as well, as in the case of the respondents whose elders were actively involved in radical labor politics.

In addition, social movement theorists have also paid close attention to what they have called “biographical availability” in the social movement recruitment process, meaning the extent to which the demands of individuals’ work and family and related obligations make them more or less able to devote the time and energy into social movement activity (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam 1986). The findings here suggest we might expand this concept of biographical availability to include the symbolic realm whereby movement participants construct a sense of their own biography as one made possible by the biographies of their parents’ or other elders. As I have described, this discursive biographical influence of elders can be narrated along a “continuum of genealogical availability” that makes possible, if not activists’ own direct participation, although it may at times, but instead a kind of political identity in the present that we might imagine could also give meaning to their actions and sustain their participation in the future.

Related to this reconceptualization of the notion of biographical availability, second-wave activists I studied narrate political legacies in ways that also speak to Goodwin and Jasper’s (2009) analysis of

the importance of the subjective and affective dimensions of social networks and social ties for the building and sustaining of social movements. While previous scholars, such as Freeman (1973) in her groundbreaking study of the origin of the women’s movement and D’Emilio (1983) in his equally significant examination of the gay liberation movement, paved the way for explorations of the role of networks and social ties to the extent that they serve as the locus of recruitment and communication, Goodwin and Jasper (2009:12) argue that “emotions...are the real life blood of networks: people respond to the information they receive through networks because of the affective ties to those in the network.” Given this, it is reasonable to also suggest that social movements expand and are sustained not just across time, but also across generations as activists call on affective ties as they enter movements, justify their continuance movement activity, cope with movement fatigue, or search for purpose in their political commitments past and present.

Moreover, in the same way that network theorists teach us that direct personal contacts to social movement actors are critical as they “allow organizers and potential participants to ‘align’ their ‘frames,’ to achieve a common definition of a social problem and a common prescription for solving it” (Goodwin and Jasper 2009:56), I might argue that the narratives here are useful in that they shed light on the ways in which social movement actors make use of a sort of “retro frame analysis” to align their current identities with political actors in the past in ways that give meaning to their experiences, and, in this case, to engage in identity work that further extends the life of the movement in the symbolic or

cultural realm. Consequently, as social movement scholars continue to theorize and consider the role of social networks and the extent to which access to networks, within a movement and across movements, can lead to movement participation, these narratives here beg the question about how we can think more broadly about affective ties and movement participation and identity. As Goodwin and Jasper (2009:56) put it, the social movement focus on networks is not mutually exclusive from analysis of culture and identity as networks are “important *because* of the cultural meanings they transmit.”

Indeed, it is the meanings that people give to the past that is at the heart of a cognitive sociological approach to history, biography, and memory, and it would be these meanings, and the social practices of constructing these meanings of ancestral legacy, that would be most interesting to cognitive sociologists in any treatment of intergenerational transmission of political identities, and arguably the most theoretically important contribution of the findings here. Again, as Zerubavel (2012: 24) articulates, the social practices of constructing narratives of lineage, origins, and pedigree remind us that “[a]ncestry and descent play a critical role in the way we structure intergenerational transmission of both material and symbolic forms of capital. We thus inherit not only our ancestors’ property but also their social status and reputation.” In this way, the political legacy narratives of second-wave activists in this study fundamentally challenge theoretical notions that the social processes by which political capital, as well as orientations and identities, are simply “handed down” objectively from parents to children in a linear or calculative way

via causal mechanisms that can be quantified rather than actively co-constructed by younger generations in symbolic interactions, imagined or otherwise, with their elders. Although it is true that recent scholarship in sociology (see: Ojeda and Hatemi 2015) has revitalized a conversation in political communication studies about long-standing assumptions of linearity by examining the agency that children have in interpreting the political party affiliations of their parents, the work falls outside the bounds of an interpretive framework that could illuminate precise discursive strategies that adult children use to create their own genealogical realities. Yet, these narratives here encourage us to think about whether there are patterned ways in which activists “perform” their political identities as aging feminist activists through, at least, the three distinct biographical narratives I have mapped out here. If so, these findings can further articulate Zerubavel’s concept of biographical continuity itself, beyond whatever empirical contributions the narratives might indicate.

Ultimately, the findings here push our thinking about what kinds of identity strategies might be constitutive of the symbolic dimensions of political capital transmission, and political reproduction more generally. These empirical and theoretical contributions together reveal the possibility that there might exist a set of patterned, and ideal typical (Weber 1947) discursive practices of constructing biographical continuity whereby not only “oppositional narratives,” but also explicit transmission origin stories, bridge legacies, and paradox plots are among important identity strategies that political activists call on to sustain themselves, and, by extension, social

movements. More specifically, we can understand these types of political capital constructions as positioned along a continuum of elder's social distance from the political movement affiliation of adult children, as perceived by the adult children themselves. In this way, the "oppositional narratives" already well-documented in the literature exist on one end of the continuum and are characterized by perceptions that one's elders' political ideology or engagement ran counter to their own political philosophy such that they were spurred on to resist their elders' worldview in their own political activism. On the other end of the continuum are "explicit transmission narratives" characterized by perceptions that one's elders' political ideologies, as well as political engagement were instead largely consistent with their own social movement participation. In between these ideal poles are "bridge narratives" and "paradox plots" characterized by the extent to which respondents perceived their elders' political commitments approached overt feminist movement engagement. "Bridge narratives" are those narratives that convey political capital by suggesting that elders' had a clear affinity with, but were not overtly committed to, the political movement goals of the adult children, while "paradox plots" convey political capital by suggesting that even despite the indicators that elders may have been indifferent to, or perhaps even in opposition to feminist movement goals, elders' possessed qualities that adult children consider consistent with their own political identity as they understand it in their later years.

At the same time, these contributions should be evaluated through the lens of the limits of the research design. As is characteristic of the constraints

of qualitative research more broadly, the findings generated here can only be generalized to the larger population of American second-wave activists with extreme caution and qualification. In addition, while the sample population included variations on the demographic variables of age, social class, and racial-ethnic, religious, and sexual identity, the range of variation was not wide enough for a meaningful analysis of the extent to which the intersections of structural inequalities, and women's lived experiences negotiating multiple identities, may shape the social construction of political legacies for the women interviewed here. In this regard, the findings should be interpreted with careful consideration, and might be best understood as disproportionately reflective of the discursive practices of predominantly White, working- and middle-class American women.

Conclusion

Throughout this work, I have explored how aging second-wave feminist activists in the U.S. socially construct a sense of their elders' feminist political legacies, including the transmission of feminist political capital, in such a way that we might begin to think about a "mnemonic tradition" or "genealogical imagination" unique to the construction of identity for this cohort of feminist activists in particular, and perhaps applicable to the construction of political identities more broadly. By identifying three distinct practices of biographical continuity, namely, the deployment of explicit transmission origin stories, bridge narratives, and paradox plots, this exploration adds to the growing body of empirical work in social movement research that aims to bridge structural and cultural components of movement participation

by focusing on perceptions and emotions of participants, in this case, the perceptions of a generation of feminist activists who have yet to be fully studied in this stage of their life course, and extends our theoretical understanding of important social movement concepts, such as movement spillover, biographical availability, and frame analysis. This work also fills important empirical and theoretical gaps in our understanding of the discursive practices that are constitutive of memory and identity in the case of political activism. Importantly, not only are we offered a window into the use of these practices by women in a particular social-historical movement context that has yet to be explored by cognitive sociology, but the narratives can point the way towards a better understanding of how political actors call on elders for political capital, encouraging us not only to think differently about the direction of transmission of political legacy, but the kinds of distinct identity practices that move beyond assumptions that activists inevitably develop their sense of their political selves in opposition to those elders. Future research might continue to explore a wider range of identity

practices of continuity and discontinuity in the context of political legacy and capital within this cohort of feminist activists, broadening the lens to examine these processes with greater complexity than I have been able to do so here, particularly with respect to the dynamics of race, class, sexuality, and age, as well as across movements to better understand the generalizability of these patterns. As it stands, I have nonetheless also endeavored to provide a cultural and political space for aging American feminist women themselves to co-construct a legacy of the second-wave for future generations of activists, and in doing so, give meaning, myself, to some shared history constructed through a search for my own pedigree.

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Masculinity and Immigrant Health Practices: How Male Kurdish Immigrants to the United States Think about and Practice Health

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Abstract Researchers have identified a host of factors that influence immigrant men's understanding of and commitment to health, but overall the scholarship is still unsettled, in large part because the experiences of immigrant groups are so varied. In this paper, based on interviews with Kurdish immigrants in the United States, we demonstrate that the field of health provides both opportunities and pitfalls for men whose social, familial, and masculine aspirations simultaneously pull them into American life and push them towards a segregated existence. We conclude that men use a discourse of health to simultaneously assert themselves as men and maintain their connections to their original culture, just as they use a discourse of masculine responsibility to account for the health-related choices they make.

Keywords Masculinity; Immigration; Health; Family; Exercise; Food

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Men from developing nations who immigrate to the United States find themselves in a contradictory space when it comes to health. When they first arrive, immigrants are generally healthier than the native-born population (Goldman et al. 2014; Hamilton 2014). This is so even though they have fewer resources, which otherwise is associated with worse health (Leopold 2016), and even though health is vigorously emphasized and advocated in the United States. Over time, immigrant men typically see their health deteriorate, and researchers have identified a host of factors that influence this development, but overall the scholarship is still unsettled (Steffen et al. 2006; El-Sayed and Galea 2009; Arévalo, Tucker, and Falcón 2015). This is so in large part because the experiences of immigrant groups are so varied as to make generalist explanations unsuitable to account for the many different life course trajectories observed both across and within immigrant groups (Barry 2005; Aqtash and Van Servellen 2013). We simply do not know enough at this point about either how immigrant men think about and engage in health or how their masculinity is implicated in their health-related behavior.

In this paper, we engage the literatures on immigrant health and masculinity and health to address the question of how immigrant men approach—think about and practice—health as both immigrants and men. More specifically, the study examines the health practices of Kurdish men who have settled in the United States and aims to understand how they make sense of and adjust to a very different health environment than the one they knew before coming to the United States. The findings demonstrate that the field of health provides both opportunities and pitfalls for immigrant men whose social, familial,

and masculine aspirations simultaneously pull them into American life and push them towards a segregated existence in an immigrant enclave. That is, they use a discourse of health to simultaneously assert themselves as men and maintain their connections to their original culture, just as they use a discourse of masculine responsibility to account for the health-related choices they make. Overall, though, the men typically do not refer to their own health as an end in itself; rather, they place it in a context of family responsibilities. Food plays a particularly important role in the men's efforts to live healthy lives, but it does so as much for cultural reasons as for nutritional ones. In this sense, food emerges as a cultural practice that simultaneously signals alignment with American health imperatives and resistance to the many elements of American culture that the men struggle with and/or disapprove of.

Masculinity and Health

In much of the developed world, men are less healthy than women. They engage in more risky behavior, die sooner, and, in general, have significantly less healthy lifestyles than women (Courtenay 2000a; Johnson 2005). They also are less likely to go to the doctor (O'Brien, Hunt, and Hart 2005; Springer and Mouzon 2011), and less likely to prioritize and seek information about health (Mahalik, Burns, and Syzdek 2007; Garfield, Isacco, and Rogers 2008; Manierre 2015). Most scholars who address the issue conclude that the health differences between men and women are related to masculinity, even though the specifics of that association are subject to much debate and ongoing research (Courtenay 2000b; Noone and Stephens 2008).

It was especially Connell's (1987; 1995) work on hegemonic masculinity that provided the inspiration for what has become a burgeoning field of health research. In essence, scholars have shown how men "use health beliefs and behaviours to demonstrate dominant—and hegemonic—masculine ideals that clearly establish them as men" (Courtenay 2000b:1388; also see: Cameron and Bernardes 1998; Creighton and Oliffe 2010). In other words, if it is the norms of masculinity that inspire men to define risky behavior as masculine (Dolan 2011:587), then men's poorer health is the price of masculinity (Fleming, Lee, and Dworkin 2014:1029). It is for this reason that men in much of the health literature are simultaneously viewed as "risk-takers" and "at risk" (Robertson 2006:179).

As productive as this line of research has been, it is readily evident that there are significant health variations across different groups of men. Important variations here are linked to social class (Dolan 2011), race and ethnicity (Griffith, Gunter, and Watkins 2012; Towns 2013), age (Noone and Stephens 2008; Springer and Mouzon 2011), profession (O'Brien, Hunt, and Hart 2005), rurality (Stough-Hunter and Donnermeyer 2010), and, as will be discussed further below, immigration status. Scholarship addressing such variations has demonstrated that not only are men differently (un)healthy, and not only do men enact masculinity in many different ways, but men also think about and define health differently (Williams 2003; Oliffe 2009; Evans et al. 2011; Robinson and Robertson 2014). Moreover, as of yet we know very little about masculinities outside of the western world (Van Hoven and Meijering 2005) and have only begun to understand how cultural factors

impact men's health (Gilgen et al. 2005; Aqtash and Van Servellen 2013; Shishehgar et al. 2015). In what follows, we first discuss the scholarship on immigration and health, with a focus on immigrant men, and then key in on the sparse research that addresses the experiences of Kurdish immigrants.

Immigrant Men and Health

The paradoxical aspects of men's health get even more complex when we consider the experiences of immigrant men. Scholarship has consistently shown that recent immigrants to the United States are healthier than their native-born counterparts, but also that this "healthy immigrant effect" largely evaporates as immigrants assimilate into American society (McDonald and Kennedy 2005; Lu and Wong 2013; Goldman et al. 2014; Hamilton 2014; 2015; Hamilton, Palermo, and Green 2015; Li and Hummer 2015; Martin, Van Hook, and Quiros 2015). The reasons for the initial immigrant health advantage and subsequent health decline are varied and multifaceted and involve practices, expectations, opportunities, and experiences associated with both the nations of origin and the new country, including food, exercise, availability of doctors, health insurance, language abilities, stress, discrimination, poverty, drugs and alcohol, exercise, and car dependency (Young et al. 1987; Schachter, Kimbro, and Gorman 2012; Aqtash and Van Servellen 2013).

The deterioration of immigrant health over time is additionally puzzling given the all-pervasive discourse on health that immigrants encounter when they arrive in the United States. Health-related initiatives are permeating social life at every con-

ceivable space, place, and occasion—bike paths and walking trails to facilitate exercise; healthy foods in schools, workplaces, and restaurants; campaigns against smoking, obesity, saturated fat, and sugary drinks; promotion of preventive medical care; and any number of other initiatives directed at populations considered at risk, such as the elderly, children, the poor, and racial and ethnic minorities (Phillips 2005; Fusco 2006; Pike 2011). Such developments suggest that health has become “moralized” to the degree that it is now a “duty to achieve and maintain good health” (Robertson 2006:179).

To the vast majority of immigrants arriving from more traditional and less developed societies, the ways in which the western world emphasizes health are unfamiliar. As of yet, however, we know little about how this new environment of health impacts how immigrants think about and practice health. Moreover, while the literature on the health status of immigrants is fairly sizeable, it has only recently begun to pay attention to gender. When it comes to immigrant men, then, we have much to learn about how their gender identities facilitate and/or impede their health practices (Van Hoven and Meijering 2005; Mahalik, Lagan, and Morrison 2006). In other words, we do not know enough about how immigrant men’s definitions of themselves as men impact how they respond to the particular health climate they encounter in the United States.

Kurdish Immigrants and Health

When immigrants come to a new place, they often choose to settle in communities where others from similar national and/or cultural backgrounds al-

ready live (Andersen 2010). Doing so gives them access to resources and helps them maintain some of their traditional cultural practices while adjusting to life in a new country (Bhugra 2004; Alba 2005). Over time, however, most immigrants become at least partially assimilated and/or acculturated into the dominant culture (Barry 2005; Amin 2014). This settlement pattern also describes Kurdish immigrants to the United States.

Of the few studies that address Kurdish migrants, only a handful address health-related issues. A series of studies done on Kurdish men in Sweden show that their lives are stressful because they have difficulties managing the contradictory cultural demands they experience. They also suffer from elevated stress due to the political persecution they have long been subject to in their homelands (Taloyan 2008; Taloyan et al. 2006; 2008; 2011). A study of older Kurdish immigrants in the United States confirms the negative health consequences of migration and also points to the many health problems associated with war that the immigrants brought with them (Cummings et al. 2011). Moreover, they were reluctant to seek medical services due to language barriers and social isolation (Cummings et al. 2011).

In this study, we expand on the literature on immigrant men’s health with a qualitative study of Kurdish¹ men in the United States. These men

¹ Kurdistan encompasses Northern Kurdistan (eastern Turkey), Southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), Eastern Kurdistan (north-western Iran), and Western Kurdistan (northern and north-eastern Syria). Given persistent violence and volatile political situations, Kurds from the Middle East have long migrated to other parts of the world, including the United States (Lyon and Uçarer 2001; Ufkes, Dovidio, and Tel 2015). Today, approximately 8% of all Kurds live outside their region of origin.

come from a collectivist culture that de-emphasizes men's health (Taloyan et al. 2011), and also provides limited resources (e.g., lack of doctors) to promote health (Husni, Taylor, and Koye 2006). When they come to the United States, they are confronted with a health-obsessed culture that encourages people to live right, eat right, exercise, go to the doctor, and so on, but also with a culture that encourages ill health in many other ways (e.g., fast food, cars). Moreover, considering that their gender identities are fostered in a patriarchal social milieu, the men are also confronted with a very different gender environment that brings challenges to their masculine selves.

Following Okazaki and Sue (1995), we suggest that our understanding of complex social processes like men's health can be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of understudied and invisible groups (also Shah et al. 2008; Aqtash and Van Servellen 2013). As refugees from a volatile region of the world and as members of a persecuted minority in their nations of origin, Kurdish immigrants probably have less of a health advantage when they arrive in the United States (Cummings et al. 2011), but otherwise share many experiences with other immigrant groups. Moreover, like many other immigrants from the developing world, they arrive with an understanding of gender relations that differs in significant ways from prevailing discourse in the United States (Scheibelhofer 2012; Röder 2014). Thus, in asking how Kurdish male immigrants respond to the new health signals they encounter, we are also seeking answers to larger questions of how health practices, masculinity, and immigrant identities interact to produce distinct sets of health-related responses to the challenges immigrant men face.

Method

There are no precise data on the number of Kurds in the United States because Kurdish immigrants² are registered as citizens of the states from which they come, such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. But, estimates suggest that the number of Kurds in the United States is about 40,000, most coming from Iraq (Karimi 2010). Many have settled in Nashville, Tennessee, where an estimated 11,000 Kurds currently live (Karimi 2010). Most Kurdish immigrants arrived between 1975 and 1996 as part of the federal government's refugee program (Dahlman 2001). The fact that many came via an organized refugee program has had some impact on their encounters with the American healthcare system, including especially required medical health screenings upon arrival.

In order to understand how Kurdish male immigrants interpret, think about, and respond to the conflicting health messages they receive in their daily lives, we designed a qualitative interview study (Dolan 2011). Because snowball sampling is the most effective method to identify members of marginalized populations (Cummings et al. 2011; Ritchie et al. 2013), we used this method to recruit

² There have been four waves of Kurdish immigration to the United States since 1976 (Nashville Public Television 2008). The first wave was in 1976, when Kurds were fleeing a failed revolution in Iraqi Kurdistan. The second wave was in 1979, when Kurds from Iran left after the Iranian revolution. The third wave took place in 1991-1992, when Iraqi Kurds fled the genocidal campaign, known as Anfal, imposed by the dictator Saddam Hussein in the late 1980s. The last wave happened in 1996 and 1997; this wave included Kurds from Iraqi Kurdistan who wanted to escape conflict and look for better opportunities, plus those who had worked with the western military organizations and hence were in danger from local attackers in Iraq specifically.

participants. The first participant, an acquaintance of the first author, was a doctor living in Nashville; he introduced us to other participants, who, in turn, connected us to yet other participants. The interviews were done in Nashville and were all conducted by the first author who himself comes from Kurdistan. To be eligible, the men had to have lived in the United States for at least 5 years, be older than 18, and come from the Kurdish region of the Middle East. In total, 17 men were interviewed, which is a sufficient number to identify patterns and achieve thematic saturation (Crouch and McKenzie 2006; Guest, Bunce, and Johnson 2006).

The interviews were conducted in January of 2015 at locations chosen by the participants, such as workplaces, homes, and community centers. We let the participants choose the language of the interview; 13 chose Kurdish and 4 English. The interviews lasted on average 40 minutes and were all recorded, transcribed, and translated by the first author. All participants were given pseudonyms. All but one of the men were married and all but 4 had children, the average number of children being almost 4 (ranging in age from infants to adults). The men ranged in age from 28 to 53, with an average age of 41. They had lived in the United States from 5 to 24 years, with 14 years being the average.

The semi-structured interview guide was designed to get at how the men think about health and what, if anything, they do to protect their health. We asked the men general questions about what health meant to them, what they did to stay healthy, how they approached health in the family, what they did when they got sick, and what they thought about

the American health system. The purpose of these questions was to identify themes that can help us understand how they think about and make decisions about health. To get at those themes, we relied on grounded theory as our analytical approach (Charmaz 2006). The three broad thematic categories we present below resulted from several rounds of coding aimed at capturing the breadth and diversity of the data, as well as identifying themes and analytical categories that both align with and extend existing knowledge.

Health and Masculinity among Kurdish Immigrants in the United States

The most basic finding of this study is that the men all accept health as an important imperative. Moreover, the evidence points to the importance of health practices for the men's sense of themselves as fathers and husbands. Considering that the men come from a culture that does not prioritize health, especially not men's health, the fact that they all value individual health is significant in itself. This suggests that the men have somehow absorbed the language of health that penetrates American culture. In the words of Sherzad, "If you are not healthy, you cannot do anything, you become disabled in society. So you have to be healthy, at least try to be healthy" [53, 7 children, 22 years in the United States]. Rahem, similarly, says that "being healthy is key to survival in America because if you are not healthy...you are not going to be able to work... [or] support your family" [37, 1 child, 9 years in the United States]. In this sense, we can say that the men have acquired a certain amount of health capital since coming to the United States (Madden 2015).

Three broad themes related to masculinity and health emerged from the data analysis: 1) Health and Control, 2) Health and Family, and 3) Health and Culture. Each of these themes points to the complex ways that immigrant men simultaneously try to adjust to the ways of their adopted country and stay connected to their culture of origin. As the findings show, health practices play a central role in these negotiations. The health arena provides opportunities for the men to demonstrate they are modern, health-conscious American men, by going to the doctor, exercising, and eating right (Health and Control). But, health-related practices also provide ways for the men to retain a sense of themselves as family men, by taking charge of the health needs of their wives and children (Health and Family). Finally, the men used food and nutrition concerns as a link to a cultural past that posed fewer challenges to both their health and their manhood (Health and Culture).

Health and Control

Most participants emphasized that they feel confident about their health and have control over it through a combination of exercise and prevention. The significance of control for men's health practices has been noted in other studies as well (Arévalo, Tucker and Falcón 2015). The two primary strategies the men use to take care of their health are prevention and exercise, as the discussion below demonstrates. They also prioritize healthy eating, but because food is also so central to their cultural identities, we discuss it under the Health and Culture theme. These strategies give the men a sense of control over their own health. At the same time, they reinforce the idea that health is both an indi-

vidual responsibility and an imperative. And yet, the data do not allow us to conclude that the men's health practices are best understood as a quest for individual well-being and a fit appearance (Frew and McGillivray 2005; Coffey 2016). Rather, as we describe more fully in the section that addresses man's family obligations, the men place their own health practices in a larger context of familial and cultural responsibilities.

Prevention

The Kurdish immigrant men we interviewed all want to stay healthy, and most of them took preventative measures to do so. While their efforts at prevention varied a great deal, regular medical checkups emerged as a particularly important means of prevention. Regardless of how often or regularly they did medical checkups, they talked about them in similar ways, emphasizing how such checkups enabled them to stay in control over their own health. Rahem [37, 1 child, 9 years in the United States] says:

We do checkups to make sure that, you know, it is always good to prevent something before it is happening. Do not let it get too serious because, you know, if, for instance...you have low vitamin D or low potassium or anything like that, it is good to find [out]...Maybe you would never know if you have diabetes or something like that. If you know it at the first stage, it can be prevented. That is the only reason we do checkups.

Rahem makes a connection between checkups and staying healthy. The checkup in his view is a precaution against serious illness. In this, he echoes

contemporary discourses of preventative medicine that has extended the reach of illness into healthy bodies (Armstrong 1995; Fusco 2006). Even though he is talking about sickness as something that can consume you without your knowledge and that requires medical expertise to identify, he and several of the other participants are trying to stay in control of their health by going to the doctor. In Dara's words, by doing regular checkups "you feel you are caring for your own body" [35, 5 children, 6 years in the United States].

What is particularly noteworthy here is that this is a new practice they have adopted since coming to the United States. It is not only that it is a new practice, linked in part to the much greater availability of doctors in the United States and in part to the requirement of refugee immigration, but also that the very idea of a man going to the doctor when he is not sick would have been incomprehensible to the men before coming to the United States. As both Salman and Soran point out, medical checkups are an American thing,

In our culture, it is not a normal thing to do check-ups. My father and mother were sick and they had symptoms, but they did not go to the doctor until they got heart attacks. For me, right now, it is important to prevent [such] major hits. [Salman, 31, no children, 24 years in the United States]

I had never heard of health checkups in my country. But, when we arrived in the United States, they did a checkup and taught us how to take better care of ourselves. [Soran, 44, 5 children, 17 years in the United States]

Hence, by reporting that they care about their health and go to the doctor for regular checkups, the men show that they are influenced by the American emphasis on health. And, by linking such checkups to a sense of responsibility for their own health, as well as that of their families, the men also signal that they are in control of this realm of family life.

Not all men do regular medical checkups, of course, but this means neither that they do not value health nor that they do not take preventive measures to secure it. Instead, they reveal some of the complexities involved in the efforts of immigrant men to secure health. Although most of the men say they value checkups as a way to stay on top of their health, they express more ambivalence around actually going to the doctor with their ailments. One reason for this, as is amply documented, is that not all of them have health insurance, which means they have to weigh the potential advantage of a doctor's visit with the cost. Another important reason is that they think they can control their own health, either by not becoming sick or by curing themselves without the help of doctors. In Sarko's words, "we should be doctors for ourselves" [43, 2 children, 16 years in the United States]. Pashew [52, 4 children, 14 years in the United States] thinks that "everything is about control" and Shakar says that "we have to take care of ourselves" [45, 3 children, 18 years in the United States]. Exactly how the men take care of themselves varies—they discuss things like home remedies, cold water swims, rest—but what is significant here is not primarily that they favor home remedies over professional care, but instead that they distinguish themselves from the rest of their family. Sherzad [53, 7 children, 15 years in the United States],

for example, says that “when I get sick, I try to stay home and I do not like medicine.” But, “the kids are different, I take them to the doctor right away...[because] they are not like me...I am stronger and can control myself.” Kamaran, similarly, says that when his wife gets sick, “I take her to the ER [but]...when I get sick, I can handle it better” and deal with it by “taking it easy” rather than going to the hospital [29, no children, 18 years in the United States].

In general, then, whether or not the men go to the doctor and regardless of the methods they use for staying healthy, they all talk about health as something they value and feel they have control over. In so doing, they simultaneously demonstrate that they have acquired a certain amount of health capital and have found ways to use it that do not undermine their sense of themselves as men.

Exercise

Exercise is a modern practice. People in traditional societies obviously exercise too, but they do not do it as an end in itself. Life in traditional societies is typically less sedentary than contemporary automobile-driven life in the United States, hence reducing the need for focused exercise. Moreover, traditional masculinity is considerably less body-oriented than contemporary American masculinity has become (Rosenmann and Kaplan 2014). This is why Kurdish men when they first arrive in the United States generally do not pay attention to exercise as a practice that has any appeal or even meaning to them. As Shakar [45, 2 children, 18 years in the United States] observes, “I come from a culture where exercise is not valued.”

Over time, however, some men come to adopt physical exercise as a way to deal with American life. Dara, for example, who has lived in the United States for 6 years, links his weight concerns to the sedentary nature of his new life. He says he has to “use the car to go anywhere,” whereas back in Kurdistan he might “walk 5 to 6 miles a day.” Sherzad [53, 7 children, 22 years in the United States], similarly, remembers that back in his village in Kurdistan “we used to walk around and go to the mountains,” whereas here in the United States, “we do not move around too much.” Finally, Hawar [39, 4 children, 20 years in the United States] says that:

We do exercise because it helps cholesterol and blood pressure. You know what, we used to live in our village and nobody had diabetes. And we used to go... to the mountains, so we used to be healthier. But, when you come to this environment, where you do not move [as much]...you store all of your sugar and oil on your body, [which] eventually [will] kill you!

Hawar’s reference to cholesterol and blood pressure shows that he is using health knowledge he has gained in the United States to make sense of his own health practices. But, he is also using his new health knowledge to complain about how life in the United States impacts his health negatively because life is considerably more sedentary here than in Kurdistan.

The time commitment was a concern for several of the men who said that family obligations took so much time that they had difficulties fitting exercise into their daily lives. Sherzad [53, 7 children, 15 years in the United States] laments that he does “not

have much time,” but tries to “do exercise machines at the gym and home” whenever he can. Exercising, he says, “helps you to control your weight and blood pressure. You stay healthy when you exercise.” Although he has fitness equipment at home, Soran [44, 17 years in the United States] says he is “too tired to use them”; he explains that he has 5 children “that I have to take care of and that doesn’t leave me any time to work out.” As we show in the next section, however, family obligations do not so much divert the men’s health commitments as they change how the men express their commitment to health.

Taken together, the findings in this section show that male Kurdish immigrants express their ambition for health and general well-being through exercise and prevention. But, they do so in ways that smooth over the evident gap in the role of health practices in the expression of masculinity in Kurdistan compared with the United States. The emphasis on control, as other studies have demonstrated, is one significant way that men try to reconcile their health concerns with their masculinity. But, for these Kurdish immigrants, the reconciliation between masculinity and health is made complicated by the additional challenges to their masculinity that they experience in the United States. The cost of medical care and health insurance, for example, is a potential challenge to the men’s provider roles, but one they resolve by emphasizing other ways to stay in control of family health and, not the least, to present themselves as less in need of care than their more vulnerable wives and children. More generally, the findings suggest that the men have resolved the potential dilemmas they face around health by articulating health as one of their primary family

obligations and by infusing their cultural practices, especially those linked to food, with health considerations. In the next two sections, we elaborate on these points further.

Health and Family

The evidence we present in this section demonstrates how the men have incorporated the health-consciousness they have acquired since coming to the United States into their larger obligations as husbands and fathers. Although the men talked about family as an obligation that competes with health, it is nonetheless an obligation that propels them towards health in other ways. That is, the men see it as their responsibility to make sure that their wives and children are healthy and well provided for, a finding that has also been documented on studies of working-class men in the west (Robertson 2006; Dolan 2011).

In what follows, we first describe how the men talked about health as a family obligation and then discuss the role that masculinity plays in the men’s narratives.

Health as a Family Obligation

As with their own health practices, the men pointed to food and exercise as the most significant health-related areas of family life, although a few also mentioned hygiene and cleanliness as part of their health regimen. They described how they tried to steer their families in the direction of health and emphasized the importance of their own interventions in these areas. Even though a few of the men

credited their wives with making good health decisions, they all referenced their own involvement in their families' health practices as active and deliberate. Sherzad, for instance, who has lived in the United States for 15 years and has 7 children, clearly saw it as part of his responsibility to make sure that all members of his family are healthy. He observed that "every family wants to have a healthy life. We all want to be healthy...if I want to be healthy, I want to see my wife and kids healthy." Asked if he was involved in his family's health practices, Rahem [37, 1 child, 9 years in the United States] answered "Yeah. Yeah, I am actually; I want to see my wife and kids be healthy." Nawzad [48, 4 children, 15 years in the United States], too, emphasized that his children's health is important to him and that he considers it part of his duty to ensure that they stay healthy. He says that he and his wife "always advise our children, even the grown ones, to eat healthy. Sometimes they do not like our involvement, but we have to keep our eyes on them to stay healthy." Karmand, similarly, mentions that "I watch my children a lot in order to prevent them from eating bad food"; in this context, he also points to the importance of health instructions in the schools which, he says, "I advise them to follow" [45, 3 children, 14 years in the United States]. Observing that he himself had "no chance to take care of my health...because of the society I grew up in" and that he "learned those things here," Soran, as a final example, tries to teach his 5 children "to take care of their body and health right from the beginning, so that they can do many things" when they grow up.

These findings suggest that the emphasis the men place on their children's health has emerged as part

of their parental obligations once they settled in the United States. The point is not that living in the United States has made them better parents, on the contrary, but instead that health has come to occupy an increasingly central position in their paternal practices. That is, the men are more alert to the children's health practices in the United States than they were, or would have been, in Kurdistan. The men's concerns about health are evident also for the few men who acknowledge that their wives do most of the work around health in the family. Pashew, for example, indicates that his main responsibility in the children's health practices is to make sure that they do what their mother tells them to do; he says that he steps in "When they do not obey their mom, but they are very close, so they don't disobey" [52, 4 children, 14 years in the United States]. Nawzad, similarly, says that "Their mom is very helpful to me, and she is very attentive to these things [health practices]. Because moms are closer to children, she does most of the work at home" [48, 4 children, 15 years in the United States].

Health, Family, and Masculinity

The men's health narratives invoke masculinity in the control they see themselves as exercising over their health and in the obligations they feel to their families. Masculinity is also evident in how they formulate health as an important aspect of their manhood. According to the men, their manhood is implicated in health practices in two distinct, but interrelated ways. The first of these, regarding the importance men place on their provider role, has been documented in other research on masculinity and health as well (Robertson 2006), whereas the other, concerning

the role of health behavior in the gendered relationships the men have with their wives, is more novel, at least in this context, even though the emergent literature on health behaviors in intimate relationships has begun to untangle the role of gender in partner negotiations around health (Reczek and Umberson 2012).

Speaking of the importance of his own health, Rahem [37, 1 child, 9 years in the United States] explains that

as a man, if you are not healthy, you cannot take care of your family as a man. You cannot do what you are supposed to do to support your family. So, it is very important to be healthy. Nobody wants to live with a sick man, and nobody wants to see a man at the house who cannot do anything.

Sarko, similarly, says that health “is really important to me because I want to have a healthy life and I want to have my own energy...to serve my family and children, so I can take care of them well” [43, 2 children, 5 years in the United States]. As a final example, Pashew emphasizes that “If you take precautions and prevent diseases, you will be in control of your life and stay a father to your children” [52, 4 children, 14 years in the United States].

Beyond the provider role, it is evident that the men have incorporated health-related concerns into their sense of themselves as men. As an example, Sarko [43, 2 children, 5 years in the United States] observes that many women

do not know about their health status, which is why we [men] have to teach them or let them know that

some things are not good for their health. It also makes the relationship better because...we show that we care more about them. Yes, we should watch them and tell them all the time.

Sherzad [53, 7 children, 15 years in the United States], similarly, explains that “I advise my kids to stay away from bad food” and also that he still tells his wife, even after 20 years of marriage, to “not put too much oil on the rice.” But, overall, he is satisfied that, when it comes to health, his wife “listens to me as, you know, in our culture, wives should listen to their husbands.” Observing that it is “a very important part of my religion to educate the family on good practices [such as] exercise, food, or health,” Salman [31, no children, 24 years in the United States], too, talks about how he encourages his wife to be healthier. He says he makes sure “that she comes along” when he goes for a run or a hike and also that he does “not allow her [to] put a lot of sugar on her food.” As yet another example, Dara [35, 5 children, 6 years in the United States] relates how he had to convince his wife to be more health-conscious:

At first she wasn't into it because organic food is more expensive and she didn't care; she was trying for us to be like other people. But, [I said] no, instead of having meat every day, have it once, but it should be organic. So I think she is convinced and she agrees with what I say.

Finally, Pashew, who acknowledges that his “wife takes care of herself,” nonetheless emphasizes that, although he does “not intervene much,” he often tells “her to be careful, [and] try not to get cold.”

Given that the men come from a culture that is considerably more gender-traditional than the one they encountered when they came to the United States, it is not altogether surprising that they emphasize and invoke their status as men in conversations about health and family life.³ While only a few of the men directly related their understanding of gender, their thoughts are quite revealing. Karmand [45, 3 children, 18 years in the United States], for example, said about men and women that “we are different, biologically, physically, and our reactions are different; I am talking scientifically.” Pashew [52, 4 children, 14 years in the United States], similarly, stated that

We can say that men and women are equal in some things, but I personally don't believe in male-female equality because neither can men play the role of women, nor women the role of men. These can't be equal. This doesn't mean that women should be subordinated to men, but that is how God created [men and women]...In America...the woman is free, but the burden on her shoulders is heavier here; in our country, women have half of that burden.

In conclusion, in this section, we have shown how the men try to negotiate the value they place on health with their many other life commitments. Although the men resolved the tensions somewhat differently, no one would have been prepared to re-

nege on his other responsibilities, especially those linked to family, in order to tend to his own health. In fact, by emphasizing what they have to give up in order to meet their duties to their families, the men simultaneously emphasize their masculinity—their obligations are linked to their manhood and they meet them as men.

Health and Culture

When introduced to the subject of health, many of the participants immediately started talking about food. They described the differences between American and Kurdish food, and many insisted that American food is not as good, and not as good for you, as Kurdish food because it generally is processed and not organic. Studies of other immigrant groups have found similar patterns regarding perceptions of American food (Guarnaccia et al. 2011). As a cultural marker of sorts, then, food is an important symbol of identity and distinction, quite apart from its nutritional value (D'Sylvia and Beagan 2011). When it comes to gender, identity, and food practices, however, we know more about immigrant women in various contexts (Srinivas 2006; Ristovski-Slijepcevic, Chapman, and Beagan 2007) than we do about men, especially when it comes to food negotiations and practices that extend beyond household labor.

Most men in this study observed that the food they used to eat in Kurdistan is healthier than much regular American fare, but this is not to say that they deliberately ate healthy before coming to the United States. On the contrary, it was not until they arrived in the United States that they developed

³ It is also important to point out that a few of the men spoke of more gender egalitarian partnerships with their wives. Salman, who came to the United States as a child and who is newly married, says that he and his wife started talking about health “since we were married because we want to be here for each other and support each other...we talk about not eating too much and doing some regular exercise.” We do not have enough data in this project, however, to examine what factors might contribute to greater gender egalitarianism.

health-consciousness and became concerned with their diets. That is, food has emerged as a part of life that the men are much more involved in than they used to be in Kurdistan. Although few, if any, of the men did any cooking in their households, they nonetheless spoke as if they not only cared about food, but also had a strong influence on their families' eating practices, including what to eat and what not to eat. We have no way of knowing if this accurately captures what goes on in their families, but it is nonetheless important to observe that the men have come to consider it part of their responsibilities, as husbands and fathers, to take command over their families' nutritional needs. In so doing, the men also establish a link that runs through health between their new life in the United States and their old life in Kurdistan.

Kurdish cultural values and norms deeply pervade the participants' health practices, and when it comes to food especially, the participants clearly favor traditional Kurdish food. And many, like Dara, who has 5 children and has lived in the United States for 6 years, conclude that "we are healthy because we eat our Kurdish and healthy food," and this is so because American food is filled with "chemical substances." The emphasis on healthy food was especially pronounced when the men talked about their children. They were clearly determined to pass on a Kurdish diet to the next generation. This points not simply to a concern for a healthy diet, but also to how the determination of what is healthy gets filtered through cultural traditions. Soran [44, 5 children, 18 years in the United States], for example, talked about why he thought it was important to keep a diet of Kurdish foods:

Yes, we do always talk about what we eat, and I advise my kids to stay away from bad food, especially the American fast foods because most of them are bad for your health, but our food is better and healthier. That is why we want to stay with our food.

When we asked Abo [46, 3 children, 19 years in the United States] about his family's health practices, he said:

We even prepare food for them when they go to school because they do not eat at the school's cafeteria. We prefer our food because it is healthier and better...I do want my kids to be healthy and stay away from junk food, even though they sometimes eat out, but we do our best to keep them away and eat at home, or I take them to a Kurdish-style restaurant, which is better for us.

Salman, similarly, talks about how he and his wife, who have no children, "try to make sure that [our nephews and nieces] are not eating too many sweets or ice cream...We try to educate them about health practices and exercise. Especially in a country like this where most of the food is processed, chemically enhanced." In this way, the men use the health-consciousness they have developed since coming to the United States to criticize cultural food habits that they do not want their own children to adopt. In this sense, the men's concerns about "junk food" also express a more general concern about life in America.

However, with increased health knowledge, many have also come to view traditional foods, which contain lots of salt and fat, as potentially harmful.

Most of the men talked about having cut back on heavy Kurdish meals since they came to the United States. Sherzad, for instance, reports that he has “cut down on the meat I eat. I eat a lot of vegetables, and I like raw things. I mean organic things because I come from a village originally. Those things keep me healthy. Plus, I like nuts a lot because they have good oils in them, and I drink water as much as I can” [53, 7 children, 22 years in the United States]. Hawar [39, 4 children, 20 years in the United States], who acknowledges that the family sometimes eats “some junk food,” tells us how he encourages his wife to serve healthy foods; he says that “we have to have a big salad, I tell her all the time to have a salad.” Nihad, who has lived in the United States for 5 years and has 4 children, also talked about trying to find a balance between readily available fast food and traditional Kurdish food:

Yes, I have been keeping my Kurdish diet, but sometimes we eat out such as pizza, hamburger, or fries, but it is not on a daily basis or routinely.

Kamaram, 29-year-old and recently married, who has lived in the United States for 18 years, said that “We used to eat everything or whatever was available in Kurdistan, but since we have been here, we watch our diet and foods because we do not want to get health issues.”

Such evidence points to food as an important element in the efforts of Kurdish men who have settled in the United States to reconcile the tensions between the culture they left and the culture they now live in. In other words, it is in large part through food and all the rituals surrounding food that the men

manage their identities and try to retain a sense of themselves as Kurdish men. It is through food, then, that the men demonstrate to both themselves and others that they still are good Kurdish men. However, their newfound health knowledge also requires that they make adjustments to their food practices and it is here that the men combine in various ways what they see as distinct Kurdish and American cultures and create a new kind of Kurdish-American identity.

Family life is the central node that connects them to both the larger Kurdish community—especially through family activities at the community center—and to the American community—especially through their children’s participation in the school system. It is in the family, moreover, that Kurdish immigrant men continue to play a comfortable masculine role that is clearly distinguished from the role their wives play. Here it is important to note that all the men we talked to had married within their ethnic group (one man was unmarried). The findings show how the men try to protect their identity by adhering to the cultural values and practices that, in their memories, characterize life in Kurdistan. But, through the vantage point of health practices, it is also evident that the men have adjusted to life in America and, in a sense, have come to use the health knowledge they have acquired to stake out a new sort of masculine identity.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to increase our understanding of how immigrant men in the United States think about and manage their health. Such an

understanding, we argue here, must be grounded in an analysis of the ways in which immigrant men simultaneously manifest their masculine values in their health practices and adapt to the very different contexts of both health and masculinity that characterize life in the United States. From this perspective, the stories the participants told us about their health values and health practices were also stories about themselves as Kurdish men.

The three interrelated themes that emerged from the interviews all speak to the complex ways in which Kurdish immigrant men navigate an environment that emphasizes health even as they try to hold on to a traditional sense of masculinity that would have disregarded health talk and health work as irrelevant to their lives. The first theme, Health and Control, shows how the men have adopted general American health values and approach health as a task that it is possible to be in control of. The men emphasize prevention above all; by exercising, eating right, and doing medical checkups, the men think they can keep ill health at bay. But, as the second theme, Health and Family, makes clear, the men prefer to talk about health as a family obligation rather than an individual project. That is, their newfound health-consciousness does not translate into a personal health agenda as much as it becomes part of their family responsibilities. From this perspective, they need to stay healthy in order to take good care of their families, but they also have come to think of health as something they need to ensure for their wives and children. The final theme, Health and Culture, develops this insight further and shows how health practices—especially food—are central to the process whereby the men

continuously seek to reconcile their traditional Kurdish masculine identity with the new American demands on health. Here the men talk about how they use such knowledge to guide what the family eats and what they should stay away from. Of particular importance here is how the men use their knowledge about what is healthy and unhealthy to navigate a food territory that involves a mix of traditional Kurdish food, American junk food, and food their children are exposed to in school or when they are with friends. It is readily evident from the men's discussions, then, that food decisions are about a lot more than food. It is, in essence, about who they are as men.

Taken together, these findings make a few important contributions to our understanding of the puzzles associated with men's health. As other qualitative studies have demonstrated, this one, too, provides evidence of the complex nature of the entanglement of health and masculinity. With the focus on an understudied group of men the study contributes new empirical knowledge to the field, even though some of the themes that emerge from the study align fairly well with existing knowledge. This is so especially regarding the importance to the men of staying in control of their health and, albeit less commonly noted, the significance of family life for the men's health practices. Our findings also confirm that an understanding of men's health practices must rest on a foundation that view men as gendered beings. More surprising is the evident importance the men place on health, but in light of some other research that has shown variations in the extent to which men care about their health this is not an altogether novel contribution (O'Brien, Hunt, and Hart 2005). Rather, it

is in the findings regarding the importance of health practices to the experiences of immigrant men that the study makes its most important contribution. The men were clearly influenced by the American emphasis on health that penetrates schools, workplaces, and media, but they used their newfound health knowledge in creative ways. Rather than completely surrender to American health dictates—which, several of the men pointed out, are also characterized by poor health practices—the men use their new knowledge to also stay connected to Kurdish traditions, especially those related to food.

The men who participated in the study for the most part hold on to traditional masculine values that make clear distinctions between the roles husbands and wives are expected to play in the family. Other studies have shown that international male migrants highlight their gender identities when they arrive in a new country (Van Hoven and Meijering 2005). Because life is often difficult and immigrants

typically experience a status slide, traditional masculinity becomes a way for men to hold on to their values, their community, their culture, and, most of all, their sense of themselves as respectable men. This was true of the Kurdish immigrant men in our study as well; they tried to protect their masculine identities by adhering to a set of cultural values that recognize men as heads of the household. In order to do so, however, they also had to change in some ways. In this study, health practices emerge as a particularly important and illustrative example of how the men have adjusted their masculine selves. From having not thought about health at all before coming to the United States, they now have incorporated health into their responsibilities as husbands and fathers. Hence, and in conclusion, they use a discourse of health to simultaneously assert themselves as men and maintain their connections to their original culture, just as they use a discourse of masculine responsibility to account for the health-related choices they make.

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The Timing of Pregnancy: Women's Interpretations of Planned and Unplanned Pregnancy

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Abstract In this paper, we apply the concept of timing to explore the meaning that women attach towards planned and unplanned pregnancy. We conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with 42 Canadian women who were pregnant or recently gave birth to examine how they experience the transition to motherhood. We contend that the timing of pregnancy is a socially constructed norm that impacts women through a complex range of life events and circumstances. Participants' accounts suggest a gamut of compliance, ambivalence, and defiance towards the "timing of pregnancy" standards. Situating women's decisions on childbearing within the continuum of their life trajectories and societal expectations surrounding pregnancy allows for better understanding of the interplay between women's personal choices and the social norms informing these decisions.

Keywords Pregnancy; Planned and Unplanned Pregnancy; Timing; Women's Interpretations; Transition to Motherhood

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In Canada, pregnancy is expected to be a planned event, properly situated among other social transitions (Sassler, Miller, and Favinger 2009). The age, marital status, and socio-economic status of the mother often define social attitudes towards pregnancy (Berryman 1991; Litt 2000; Friese, Becker, and Nachtigall 2008). Women who do not fit the “norm” can be stigmatized as mothers of questionable value (Woollett 1991; Douglas and Michaels 2004). A set of social indicators of appropriate mothering suggests that women should not be “too young” or “too old” during childbearing; they should not be “too poor,” “too sick,” or have “too many children” (Friese et al. 2008). The socially constructed notions of motherhood in western society suggest that the desire to have children is rooted in “natural,” biological instincts of women (Phoenix and Woollett 1991), yet the reproductive practices are expected to be controlled by women and meticulously planned. Social expectations regarding the appropriate timing of pregnancy are not a new phenomenon—women’s reproductive freedom has always been constrained by patriarchy and subjected to a set of strict normative regulations (O’Brien 1989). The loosening of some norms (e.g., getting married before pregnancy) has given rise to the ideology of intensive mothering which prompts women to invest considerable financial and emotional resources in their children (Hays 1998). These expectations altered the sequencing of pregnancy in women’s life course, positioning it after completion of education and (for middle-class women) establishing a career (Ranson 2009). Moreover, the availability of a birth-control pill and other methods of contraception firmly entrenches the expectation that re-

production should be a well-planned event (Locke and Budds 2013).

Given the responsibility placed on women for the emotional and economic stability of their children (Villabolas 2014), it is not surprising that many women postpone pregnancy until they feel emotionally and financially ready (Gregory 2007). Coupled with an increase in the mother’s age at first childbirth—an average of 30 years for Canadian women (Statistics Canada 2016), the drop in total fertility rate has been a common feature of demographic change in most developed countries, including Canada (Waldby and Cooper 2008). At the same time, the image of the “ticking biological clock,” prevalent in popular media, hints that childbearing should not be postponed for too long (Leung 2009; Yale University 2012). The goal of this paper is to explore how the societal norms around the timing of pregnancy inform women’s experiences of the transition to motherhood. Analyzing qualitative interviews with 42 Canadian women who, during the time of the interview, were either pregnant or gave birth to a child in the past 12 months, we examine (1) how women perceive the timing of their pregnancy and (2) how their personal perceptions intersect with societal expectations about the appropriate scheduling of pregnancy. Although women’s perceptions of the timing of pregnancy are informed by societal expectations, findings indicate a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of childbearing. This is evident in the participants’ accounts that suggest a range of compliance with the social norms, ambivalence towards them, and, in some cases, overt defiance towards “timing of pregnancy” standards.

Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Timing and Human Agency

Relying on an interpretive paradigm which envisions individuals as active social agents, we explore how women negotiate the meaning of their transition to motherhood within the context of social norms and expectations. Guiding this analysis is the concept of timing. Borrowed from the life course perspective (see: Bengtson, Burgess, and Parrott 1997; Connidis 2010), timing refers to social expectations about when life events should occur. Timing is closely linked to life transitions which initiate shifts in social identity triggered by major life events such as the birth of a child or marriage (Elder 1998). Since individuals move across their life course with a set of culturally informed expectations about the proper order or sequence of transitions, the timing of such events is often regulated by societal expectations. Some of these are formally institutionalized, such as the age for obtaining a driver's license or voting, while others are set informally, such as the expected age of childbearing. Events that are experienced "on-time" are expected and socially approved. "Off-time" events, however, can be stressful and/or socially disapproved. Hence, timing and sequencing mediate the impact of life events and transitions on personal biography (Connidis 2010). Choices and actions are also impacted by the opportunities and constraints of social history and circumstance (Elder 1998). Regardless, timing and sequencing are socially constructed concepts that only hold meaning when the complex social contexts of people's lives are defined and interpreted within these parameters by individuals themselves.

The literature on women's transition to motherhood acknowledges the importance of structural and contextual factors that shape the experiences of childbearing. While the contextualization of personal experiences in a larger web of structural and social factors is not new in the research on parenting (see, e.g., Kaplan 1997; Fox 2009), our analysis contributes to this literature in two interrelated ways. First, our focus on the *meaning* that women attach to the timing of pregnancy captures the nuanced understanding of this societal norm. Second, we explore how women's agency is enforced in responding to the socially constructed "appropriate" timing of pregnancy.

Cultural Concept of Marriage and Childbearing

Cultural expectations surrounding the timing of pregnancy are rooted in a mix of history, biology, and ideology that impact childbearing beliefs and practices. While men contribute to childbirth biologically and socially, women are the ones who actually give birth. As feminist scholars have pointed out, in all too many societies women have roles subordinate to men and their reproduction is controlled by the patriarchal order of their communities (O'Brien 1989; Katz Rothman 1998). Lacking an active, physiological role in reproduction, men historically have regulated women's sexuality. Publically acknowledging the familial relationship to a child by giving him/her the father's last name or restricting reproduction to the nuclear, patriarchal families are just two examples of the successful attempts of men in western societies to regulate women's reproductive work (O'Brien 1989; Katz Rothman 1998).

While patriarchy continues to influence marital and familial relationships (Katz Rothman 1998), recent historical, economic, and cultural changes have somewhat altered traditional normative transitions into childbearing. The women's liberation movement that swept North America in the sixties prompted women to demand more control over their bodies and over reproductive choices (Davis-Floyd 1992). The invention of the birth-control pill and the growing financial and economic independence of women have contributed to delays in marriage and parenting transitions (Goldin and Katz 2000; Fox 2009). Demographic trends indicate that the birth among unmarried women have increased substantially in the past twenty years in many western countries, including the United States (from 18.4 in 1980 to 40.6 in 2008) and Canada (from 12.7 in 1980 to 27.3 in 2007) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2003). Combined with the decrease in marriage during the same time period (for 1980-2008, the rate dropped from 15.9 to 10.6 in the U.S. and from 11.5 to 6.4 in Canada), these trends indicate that more women give birth outside of legal, heterosexual marriage, and they do so more often than 30 years ago.

Women's participation in the labor force has also increased dramatically in the past several decades. Although women have been working outside the house throughout the 20th century, the majority of these women were single, divorced, or widowed, and marriage was usually associated with cessation of paid employment. An increased number of married women are now in the labor force (Beaujot 2000). In 2009, close to 80% of Canadian married women were in paid employment (Statistics Canada 2011).

In part, labor force participation has been influenced through greater opportunity for education. Post secondary education has flourished in recent decades and women now outnumber men in obtaining undergraduate degrees, with the exceptions of traditionally male-dominated fields, such as engineering and mathematics (Statistics Canada 2011). Expansion of post-secondary education and decrease in employment opportunities delay the transition to adulthood. As a result, we have seen a continuous increase in the age of women having their first child (Mitchell 2006).

The changes in women's labor force participation are not only evident in the numbers of women working outside the home but also in the type of work they perform. While traditionally "feminine" professions, such as nursing or teaching, continue to be dominated by women, the percentage of women in "male" professions has also increased dramatically (Adams 2005; Heru 2005; Hilbrecht et al. 2008). The rising number of women, however, has not eliminated gender discrimination in the workplace, and women often struggle to combine paid employment with family life. As Ranson (2009) suggests, this can result in postponing childbearing until establishment in the workplace is achieved, due to fear that childbearing will negatively affect women's career advancements, especially in the workplaces dominated by men.

The Ideology of Mothering: Choice and Responsibility

While women often continue to be seen as mothers "by nature," *good* mothering requires the acquisition

of normative skills and practices (Hays 1998). In order to be a good mother, women have to prepare themselves emotionally and intellectually (Phoenix and Woollett 1991). The ideology of “intensive mothering,” prevalent in our society, suggests that women should constantly invest in their children emotionally, physically, and financially (Hays 1998). Thus, mothering becomes a full-time job, requiring devotion, dedication, and sacrifice from women.

These expectations are conveyed to women even before the child is born. During pregnancy, women are expected to adhere to prenatal norms and regulations established by medical professionals in order to ensure successful fetal development (Copelton 2007). Pregnancy is expected to be a planned event, which signifies the woman’s *readiness* to take on the responsibility of becoming a mother. The planned nature of the event is sometimes seen as pivotal in defining the meaning of pregnancy for women and for people around them (McMahon 1995). It has been demonstrated that older women, who postponed pregnancy until they established themselves financially and professionally, felt that their decision to wait aligned with social expectations concerning pregnancy (Gregory 2007). On the other hand, young, teenage mothers are often perceived as getting pregnant without meticulous planning, and teen mothers are often socially devalued (Davies, McKinnon, and Rains 2001; Duncan 2007).

The contemporary ideology of mothering is not only gendered but also a class- and culture-specific enterprise (Fox 2006; Johnston and Swanson 2006; Gillies 2007). The consumption practices associated with good mothering and the ability to demonstrate

devotion to a child’s development require considerable financial means and strict adherence to cultural scripts that are consistent with the ideology of intensive mothering (Hays 1998). Lacking access to these resources, lower-income, and racialized women practice motherhood differently from the middle-class norm, which is evident in their choices of prenatal care, medical decision-making (Litt 2000; Brubaker 2007), and their parenting strategies (Lareau 2002). But, the failure of these mothers to abide by the expectations of intensive mothering places them under constant social scrutiny, and this often results in marginalization and stigmatization (Neiterman 2012).

Implicitly embedded in the ideology of intensive mothering is the normative importance of marriage. Women are required to devote themselves fully to the well-being of the child, while the financial stability of the family is assumed to be provided by the father. This sets the image of a nuclear family as an ideal setting for child-rearing. Sequencing pregnancy outside of marriage is therefore largely incompatible with the practice of intensive mothering. Studies suggest that childbearing outside of marriage is associated with negative health and social consequences for the mother and the child (Abma et al. 1997; Terry-Humen, Manlove, and Moore 2001), and, disproportionately, the negative attitudes towards extra-marital pregnancy are born by teen and lower social class mothers (Davies et al. 2001; Duncan 2007; Gillies 2007).

While biological age seems to dominate the literature on “off-time” pregnancy, such a focus is largely based on the social norms and social disapproval experienced by childbearing women (Friesen et al.

2008). We know considerably less about *women's* perceptions of the timing of pregnancy and how their childbearing experiences are affected by their personal biographies, which may or may not be consistent with socially constructed norms surrounding childbearing. Addressing this gap in the literature, this paper explores how women's perceptions about the timing of their pregnancy are informed by social norms and their personal biographies. This allows us to see women as active social agents, able to adapt, reinterpret, and resist the social norms surrounding the timing of pregnancy.

Methods

This paper is based on the qualitative analysis of 42 interviews with pregnant women and new mothers. The interviews were conducted for a study examining women's experience of the transition to motherhood. To analyze how women's experiences are changing over the course of pregnancy and after giving birth, 17 women were interviewed while pregnant (8 weeks to 39 weeks) and the remainder were interviewed 2-12 months postpartum. The interviews were conducted with women of diverse age groups, including teen mothers (n=11), women in their twenties (n=7), thirties (n=22), and mothers over age 40 (n=2). Among these women, 22 were born in Canada and five of these women self-identified as members of visible minorities groups. The rest were immigrants. Four women, including one immigrant woman, reported belonging to an upper income bracket, twelve women, of whom the majority were teen mothers, reported low to no income, and the rest of the respondents reported living on middle income. First-time mothers constituted about 1/3 of

the sample and the rest had 2-4 children. All women were given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

The interviews were conducted in 2007-2008 with women residing in Ontario, Canada. The study received approval from McMaster Research Ethics Board. About half of the respondents were recruited via snowball sampling through personal networks and the networks of the respondents. Ten teen mothers were recruited in an educational and residential facility designed for young mothers who want to complete their high school education. Most immigrant mothers were recruited through prenatal classes for newcomers. Teen mothers and immigrant mothers were offered a \$5 gift certificate in compensation for the interview.

The interviews were semi-structured and focused on the woman's transition to motherhood, pregnancy experiences, the chronology of pregnancy, the postpartum period, and the change in the woman's communication with others during pregnancy. Women who had given birth before the interview were asked to reflect on their past experiences and compare their previous pregnancies with the more recent one. The interviews lasted between 1-1.5 hours and were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The data were coded in NUD*IST 6 and analyzed for emerging themes. The inductive coding of the data followed Charmaz's (2006) guidelines, moving from line-by-line coding to a more focused analysis. The theme of the timing of pregnancy emerged during the analysis. About one third of the respondents defined their pregnancies as "unplanned." Utilizing the conceptualization of the "on-" and "off-time"

events articulated by the life course perspective, in what follows, we demonstrate how women experienced their transition to motherhood and how they negotiated the meaning of their pregnancy vis-à-vis social expectations about its timing.

Findings

On-Time Pregnancy: Social Approval and Personal Ambivalence

Among married women of childbearing age, pregnancy is perceived as a desirable and expected transition (Phoenix and Woollett 1991; Bailey 1999; 2001). Women in our sample were fully aware of this expectation. Most of them felt that pregnancy was a welcomed event in their lives and that it coincided with the expectations that were placed on them by others. Reflecting on her first pregnancy at the age of 32, Debra, a 34-year-old married mother of two, noted:

I always felt that I looked old enough, and I wore a wedding ring, and I felt like the society approved of me being pregnant...

While Debra later commented that she felt uneasy to disclose her pregnancy at the workplace where she just started her new promising career, she also said that her superiors and her colleagues were not surprised to find out about her pregnancy and even “expected” it to happen. Women like Debra—married, with middle/upper-class income, in their late 20s and early 30s—carefully planned their pregnancies. They discussed their pregnancy with the partners, identified “the right time” to get pregnant, and felt overwhelming (and, indeed, sometimes pres-

suring) support from their family and close friends to “begin a family.” For most of them, sharing the news about pregnancy initiated a jubilation among their significant others and even complete strangers:

Everyone was pretty excited when I was pregnant and everyone was supporting me, and everyone made fuss about the belly, and touched it, and commented on how cute it was...I loved the attention towards my pregnancy and people got so excited from it that I got excited, too. [Chelsea, 31-year-old married mother of one]

Married and financially stable, Chelsea aroused excitement and social approval featuring her pregnant body in public. While for some women becoming the center of attention during pregnancy can be an unwelcomed transition (Neiterman 2012), Chelsea, as well as some other women in our sample, was happy with the contagious excitement that her pregnancy brought into her interactions with others. The positive attention given by people around her reinforced Chelsea’s perception that her pregnancy was a life course transition that was welcomed and socially approved by others.

Similarly to Debra and Chelsea, the majority of women who we interviewed for this study planned their pregnancy, ensuring that it is properly situated within their life course. For most women, the signifier of the readiness to get pregnant was getting off the birth-control pill or other methods of contraception. Sometimes women conceived almost immediately, but much more often conception took time. For some, the waiting period was quite prolonged, and although anticipated, the plan to “get pregnant”

often evolved into the *possibility* of pregnancy. Exhausted from continuous anticipation, which could have lasted between a few months to a year, some women preferred to engage in their daily lives without focusing on their desire to become pregnant. In some instances, the realization of pregnancy, as Jessica suggested, created a significant life disruption:

I think because I had many difficulties with menstruation cycle, initially, I didn't know that I was pregnant and I was kind of guessing that I was pregnant a lot of times and then I wasn't. So...it was probably...about six weeks when I realized that I am pregnant. And even though I was expecting this pregnancy, it was somewhat sudden for me. I was in the middle of a project at work. And it took me some time to get used to the thought that I am pregnant. [Jessica, 28-year-old, 18 weeks pregnant]

Some other women also found the news about pregnancy unsettling, noting that they "didn't expect it [to] happen so quickly," and reported that it "would take some time" to get used to the idea of being pregnant. In making sense of their ambivalent feelings towards anticipated, yet unexpected, pregnancy, women tried to time the acknowledgement of pregnancy in a way that would allow them to complete work commitments and attend to personal matters:

I was feeling...that maybe I am pregnant...But, I...was working on my comprehensive exam and I didn't do the [pregnancy] test right away because I was thinking that if I found out that I was pregnant, I would be too distracted. So I kind of postponed doing it, and by the time I did the test, I wasn't that surprised by the results, I kind of felt that I am pregnant already. And

I also was planning to get pregnant, so it wasn't a big surprise for me. [Michelle, 31-year-old mother of one]

Similar to other women, Michelle was ready to have a child, but sought to situate childbearing into an array of other plans in order to maintain coherence in her personal life. Although pregnancy among these middle-class, married women was socially expected and desirable, situated within their personal biographies, it was not necessarily viewed as an "on-time" event. Reflecting on their attitudes towards the timing of their own pregnancies, some women expressed ambivalence and uneasiness once learning that they were pregnant. The "on-time" pregnancy, therefore, had two dimensions—it was welcomed and expected by women and people around them, but, occasionally, expectant mothers could still perceive it as "sudden" and "disrupting," even if only for a short period of time.

Off-Time Pregnancy: Accepting and Challenging the Norms

Prior to getting pregnant, women are expected to finish their education, achieve financial stability, be in their late 20's to early 30's, and have a meaningful relationship with a supportive partner. When pregnancy occurs before the successful completion of these transitions, it is often construed as an "off-time" event. The mere definition of the "off-time" event does not always call for a social reprimand; cases of chronic illness experienced by young adults can illustrate the situation in which an "off-time" event is perceived as unfortunate but unpredictable (Williams 1984). An off-time pregnancy, however, is often seen as an event that *is* preventable, and

women who do not time their pregnancies according to socially approved norms are blamed for being irresponsible (Macleod 2001; Bonell 2004).

In the literature on pregnancy, teen mothering is most often constructed as an “off-time” event that poses physical and social risk to the mother and the child (Bonell 2004; Duncan 2007; Breheny and Stephens 2008). Teenage mothers are seen as reckless, relying on the support of the state, being unable to complete their education and find a proper job, and lacking partner’s support (Duncan 2007; Gupta and Jain 2008; Neiterman 2013). Moreover, when pregnancy is planned by young mothers, it is assumed to be desired for all the wrong reasons (Musick 1993).

All young women who participated in this study were highly critical of planned teen pregnancy and raised their disapproval with teen pregnancy as a social phenomenon. All of them defined their own pregnancies as unplanned and all but one practiced some form of birth control. Reflecting on their transition to parenthood, teen mothers defined it as unplanned and highly disruptive. Echoing the accounts of other teen mothers, Vicky, a 19-year-old mother of one, recalls:

It was such a change in my lifestyle because I was young, well, I am still young, but anyway...I was having one lifestyle and then, when I found out that I am pregnant, I had to make a 360 turn, and it was really hard...I couldn’t go to clubs and didn’t go dancing and I couldn’t do other stuff that my friends did...

For Vicky, the “off-timing” of pregnancy is signified by her inability to continue the life of a teenager.

Comparing her new life of a pregnant woman to the lives of her peers, Vicky sees pregnancy as disrupting the routine of growing up—having fun and enjoying her previous lifestyle. Vicky’s words echo the sentiments of other young mothers who talked about the disruption that pregnancy caused in their lives.

While the disturbing impact of the off-time pregnancy was evident in the narratives of young mothers, some young women questioned the conventional discourse on the negative outcomes of teen pregnancy, especially on educational and career opportunities:

I got [negative comments] probably mostly at school... People would look at me differently...At school I felt that people thought, “Oh, you shouldn’t be here” or maybe, like, “You are a student and you are too young [to have a child]”...But, I finished my school regardless. [Brenda, 19-year-old mother of one]

Brenda challenges the social consensus that the transition to motherhood should be postponed until the completion of education. Her pregnant and maternal body disrupts the university setting where she obtains her undergraduate degree. Qualitative studies inquiring into the experiences of teenage parenthood demonstrated that teen mothering can be experienced positively (Coleman and Cater 2006; Brubaker 2007; Arai 2009) and the availability of social policies supporting young mothers may enhance successful transition to motherhood (Bonell 2004; Greene 2006). Delayed childbearing is often associated with White, middle-class culture and many teen mothers and women from marginalized

groups do not experience mothering in a similar way (Kaplan 1997; Geronimus 2003; Brubaker and Wright 2006). For some young teens, transition to motherhood fosters the feeling of responsibility, motivating them to pursue education (Smith Battle 2007), thus challenging the conventional order of social transitions from completion of education to mothering.

Moreover, the ambiguity of chronological age as a determinant of successful mothering has been challenged by some of the participants, including 19-year-old Jenn:

A lot of my [teen] friends who had babies go to school [even though they] had babies. But, there are other girls [or women] who don't go to school...or don't work...They are not ready to be mothers...And just by looking at people on the street, you can't really say if they are going to school or they do nothing, if they are good mothers or not. So, you really shouldn't judge those people...And you shouldn't care what other people are saying anyway—you are about to become a mother. You should care only about your baby, and not the gossip or what people are saying. [Jenn, 19-year-old mother of one]

As Jenn notes, although chronological age is often associated with the growing sense of responsibility, “bad” mothering is not necessarily the marker of younger mothers. Jenn links good mothering to the ability to provide for the child and to the woman's readiness to devote herself to her child's well-being. Since Jenn defines herself as a mature person, situated within her personal biography, her pregnancy can be interpreted as an “on-time” event.

Recently, developments in reproductive technologies have spurred debates about being “too old” for pregnancy. The definition of being “too old” is contested as more and more women decide to pursue mothering at an older age (Gregory 2007; Friese et al. 2008). These women are usually well-educated and financially secure (Berryman 1991; Gregory 2007), and, depending on their age, may blend visibly and socially with mothers who are perceived to have children at a socially appropriate time.

Among our participants, only two women gave birth after the age of 40 and both of these women had given birth previously as well. Similar to teen mothers, the ambivalence with which these women experienced their pregnancy was intimately related to their age at childbearing. On the one hand, this pregnancy marked their bodies as “not too old” to have a child. On the other hand, chronologically, age seemed to be a reminder that pregnancy at this point in the life course remains outside of conventional social norms:

I had two miscarriages between my first pregnancy and my second one and while I was fine the first time around, then you are facing it again, and the second time you are 42. I felt like, oh my God, what have I done? [Miranda, 42-year-old mother of one, 35 weeks pregnant]

Miranda considers her age to be a potential indicator of making the wrong decision about childbearing. Unlike teen mothers, who were publicly stigmatized, the older mothers did not report any negative comments in communication with others. Nevertheless, the internalization of socially inscribed age norms challenged these mothers' perceptions regarding the

appropriateness of timing of pregnancy. Their perception of societal expectations of childbearing made them feel uncomfortable and uncertain about their pregnancies.

Although chronological age is fundamental to the analysis of the timing of pregnancy, other asynchronous events can complicate or interfere with normative expectations. These add another layer of complexity to the concept of “off-time” within the trajectory of motherhood. The case of Anna, described below, demonstrates this.

After dissolution of her first marriage, which left her with one school-aged child, Anna married again at the age of 33 and within less than a year gave birth to her second child. Anna’s family was well-off financially and her friends and relatives were supportive and excited during her second pregnancy. When Anna unexpectedly got pregnant again, while still breastfeeding her seven-month-old child, she realized that this pregnancy was viewed as an “off-time” event by people around her:

And I knew that majority of people will be really surprised that I am doing it again...And I think that a lot of people judge me for that...I didn’t tell anybody that I was pregnant. I didn’t want people to judge me...I saw when my friend got pregnant with her 4th child soon after having her third, she was really pissed that people would come and say, “Are you crazy? Why did you get pregnant again?” And she was shocked at that reaction of people...I guess that having too many children is looked down upon, especially when you are having one after another. [Anna, 34-year-old mother of two, 34 weeks pregnant]

The differences in social responses to Anna’s second and third pregnancies illustrate the social attitudes towards the timing of motherhood. The hard work of child-rearing, consistent with the ideology of intensive mothering, presupposes the woman’s complete devotion to her child (Hays 1998). When two children are too close in age, the ability of their mother to take care of them may be questioned. While during her second pregnancy Anna’s transition to motherhood was celebrated, the consecutive pregnancy was perceived as an “off-time” event. Situated too closely to the previous pregnancy, Anna’s subsequent pregnancy was defined by people around her as not properly planned in terms of timing.

Discussion and Conclusion

When pregnancy is situated outside of the conventional path of childbearing, women often are faced with social disapproval and meet overt or silent criticism regarding their decision to have a child. Social criticism is not restricted to merely questioning the timing of the transition to motherhood; it casts doubt on the ability of the woman to mother her child (Phoenix and Woollett 1991). Since for many women mothering continues to be one of the most dominant components of self-identity, when this status is threatened, it can have significant implications for one’s sense of self. Therefore, when pregnancy is situated outside of the socially approved time frame, the expectant mothers conform to the ideology of intensive mothering even more eagerly, seeking to demonstrate that they can, indeed, be good mothers (Neiterman 2012).

This paper demonstrates that women are aware of the social expectations surrounding the timing

of pregnancy, but this awareness does not always reflect the actual experiences of pregnancy as an “off-time” or “on-time” event at the individual level. Even when women carefully plan their pregnancies and follow established social norms, the intersection of the transition to motherhood with other life events and transitions may create ambivalent feelings about the timing of pregnancy. For example, when the timing of pregnancy is perceived to be inconsistent with social norms, women, depending on the context of their personal biographies, may experience this transition as an “on-time” event. Although these women may face significant social disapproval, they may see the timing of pregnancy as properly fitting their life transitions.

Our findings demonstrate that “on-” and “off-time” events are constructed not only through social norms and expectations (Elder 1998) but are also experienced and interpreted by individuals vis-à-vis their personal histories and biographies. Evaluating the timing of their transition to motherhood, women in our study assessed the impact of pregnancy on their overall life course trajectories and this assessment did not always align with the socially constructed norm of the timing of pregnancy. Women's accounts suggest a range of responses that include compliance, ambivalence, and overt defiance towards the normative “timing of pregnancy.” The analysis of the *process* by which individuals define “on-” or “off-time” events as fitting or misaligned with their personal biography can contribute to the existing literature on life course theory.

In addition to our contributions to the life course perspective, this paper seeks to inform the litera-

ture on the transition to motherhood, which tends to treat the biological age of a woman as a core variable that can explain women's perceptions about the timing of pregnancy (Furstenberg 2003; Gregory 2007). Moreover, the attention paid to “older” and “younger” mothers' perceptions about their pregnancies rests on implicit assumption that “unplanned” pregnancy is more likely to happen among these women (Berryman 1991). Explaining women's nuanced understanding of the socially appropriate timing of pregnancy, we showed that biological age and marital status do not always coincide with the way women interpret the timing of pregnancy.

While our sample was rather diverse, we were unable to differentiate between the role of age, income, and social support in shaping the context in which women came to terms with their pregnancies. Most women in our sample were either married or had common-law partners; all teen mothers had steady boyfriends and, despite their low income, relied on social and financial support from their families. We believe that further research that considers class, age, marital status, and other markers of social position as a context in which women make sense of their pregnancy can enrich our understanding of women's experiences of transition to motherhood.

In conclusion to this paper, we would like to call for further research on the personal experiences of individuals who breach the conventional order of social transitions. Some events that are perceived to be “off time” mostly entail personal costs and emotional uneasiness. In other cases, “off time” events may set off a course of transitions that can result

in social disapproval, stigmatization, and marginalization. Teen pregnancy can serve as an example of an “off-time” event which can produce the stigma of being an unworthy mother. At the same time, looking at teen mothers it is evident that the convention-

al order of life course transitions can be challenged by individuals and that qualitative exploration of individual experiences allows for better understanding of the variety of responses that major life events may trigger in social actors.

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Intervention Tales: Talk, Documents, and “Engagement” on a Wage Subsidy Project

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Abstract Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork on a wage subsidy project for NEETs in London, this article examines how talk and documents are used to make sense of caseloads and clients. The article draws attention to the way that staff account for clients through using “Intervention Tales.” The use of these tales provide insights into the routine implementation of labor market interventions. The article describes the work involved in documenting staff-client interactions and selecting which clients to put forward for “live vacancies.” The article shows how organizational documents, spreadsheets, and client registration forms are used as resources for assessing “hard to engage” clients during routine activities. In this sense, intervention tales, talk, and documents provide practical resources for organizing ordinary activities, such as segmenting client caseloads and characterizing individual clients.

Keywords Documents; Ethnomethodology; Labor Market Interventions; NEETs; Social Problems Work; Studies of Work

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This article focuses on the methods for coordinating the implementation of a wage subsidy project for 16 to 24 year olds not in education, employment, or training (NEET). By focusing on the practical use of talk and documents during staff meetings, the article draws from ethnographic fieldwork with staff implementing the project to describe how client identities are registered on administrative forms and in talk. The article offers a detailed examination of the way that “so-

cial problems work” requires situated methods for coordinating a shared understanding of caseloads in order to implement employment interventions (Holstein and Miller 1993). These methods are, in Harold Garfinkel’s (1967) terms, a “members’ resource.” The article thereby provides a detailed description of cases whereby the work of delivering labor market interventions and employment related services with NEETs and unemployed youth is done (Miller 1991; Eick 2007; Brodtkin and Marston 2013).

As documents are ubiquitous features of bureaucratic organizations, it should be no surprise that in delivering a publicly commissioned employment service, staff are required to document their work during each stage of implementing an employment intervention (Del Rosso and Esala 2015). In one sense, these documents give an overarching, reportable coherence to organizational action, offering up official accounts about what staff did to deliver this employment initiative. However, the coherence of these documents is contingent upon the use of professional, routine methods to make sense of them (Watson 2009). The article contributes to research on ethnomethodological studies of work by describing how labor market interventions are administered through the use of routine, situated methods. This speaks to recent research on the ways that documents and administrative “forms” are used to facilitate “becoming unemployed” (Griffin 2015). Rather than taking a historicist, hermeneutic approach to “decode” an administrative form, the article looks at how documents are used as organizational resources within workplace-specific settings.

In focusing on how work is accomplished through the use of administrative forms, the article also demonstrates how staff use standard documents as a resource in interpreting their client caseload, and how this resource is dependent upon sense-making procedures used during the accomplishment of specific, organizational tasks (Zimmerman 1970; Harper 1998; Drew 2006; Hartswood et al. 2011). By taking an interest in the methods at play in labor market interventions, the case study explicates how staff used documents as a resource to coordinate how they should implement a wage subsidy project through making sense of the client caseload. This work involves formulating stories about clients. The article thereby contributes to an understanding of the practical features of implementing labor market policies, employment interventions, and employment-related services with unemployed, urban youth (Gatta 2014; Boehringer and Karl 2015; Mazouz 2015).

The next section outlines the setting of the case study, followed by an overview of how staff reported that some clients were “hard to engage” on an item of grey literature, a planning spreadsheet called the RAG Report. The third section introduces one specific aspect of the wage subsidy team’s work, namely, how staff selected clients to put forward for subsidized vacancies. The fourth section goes into more detail about how this work is accomplished through describing how documents provided a resource to organize the work of selecting clients to put forward for “live vacancies.” The article does this by showing how staff made up for the insufficient details on forms by producing “intervention tales” that recount prior interactions with clients.

Researching a Wage Subsidy Project

This article draws from fieldwork with staff implementing a wage subsidy project in an inner London local authority during 2015. The fieldwork took place over nine months in the offices of a local authority-funded, multi-agency network of employment support advisors. The ethnographic fieldwork involved following the work practices of staff members by participating in the routine processes used to work with clients and employers, supplementing these insights with the collection of administrative documents and audio-recordings of team meetings. This approach was used to research how the organization of employment interventions was produced through professional practices, common-sense knowledge, and record-keeping about specific forms of situated action. The majority of the fieldwork took place with the project team within the offices, working alongside other job advisors and project teams, but also involved off-site meetings with employers and local authority staff. The project team, initially composed of two, and then five members of staff, were in charge of delivering an employment project for NEETs.

The article draws from a small number of cases so as to offer a detailed description of how staff members formulate the identity of clients in terms that are relevant to their ongoing project work. These cases are principally drawn from two team meetings with staff members working on a wage subsidy project for NEETs. The article also draws upon participant observation, field notes, and organizational documents, to contextualize the extracts from audio-recordings of two meetings in

staff members' routine work practices. The article offers a thorough analysis of a small number of examples—in all, eight clients are discussed in the following transcript extracts—so as to contribute to a literature on social problems work and ethnomethodological studies of work in social service agencies (Zimmerman 1970; Miller 1991; Holstein and Miller 1993). Future research could provide further analysis of the systematic basis of staff members' talk about clients and caseloads.

The project team consisted of two areas of focus, a client-side and an employer-side. This article draws from research focused on the client-side of the project. There were up to three members of staff working on the client-side, and two members on the employer-side. The wage subsidy project was set up in early 2015, and the employment network was awarded a contract to deliver the client-side of the project in partnership with a social enterprise company who would secure vacancies with small- and medium-sized enterprises within the local authority area. The wage subsidy provided up to 50% wage subsidy for a full-time, one year employment contract. In contrast to some other employment or welfare-to-work programs, client participation on the wage subsidy project was not mandatory. Clients would self-refer or be signposted to the team by local social welfare organizations.

Through participant and non-participant observation of the project team's routine work, I shadowed and interviewed staff, clients, employers, and local authority staff, observed different aspects of the project, and collected administrative documents used at the employment network. The following

analysis draws from audio-recordings from two team meetings and one piece of grey literature, an administrative document, the RAG Report. The names of clients mentioned in the transcripts have been anonymized and any details that may be used to identify individual clients have been removed.

Ethnographic research can be used to show the “gap” between official policy designs and its re-creation through actual implementation. In this gap, staff and practitioners interpret how to implement policies within work routines, organizational constraints, and the culture of front-line employment services (Wright 2003). The following analysis makes use of Douglas Maynard’s notion of the “limited affinity” between ethnography, ethnomethodology, and conversation analysis. In doing so, the analysis supplements transcripts of team meetings with relevant ethnographic findings (Maynard 2003:73-77). The fieldwork focused on the routine aspects of delivering the wage subsidy project, tracing the different stages of delivery: registering clients, action plan meetings, job clubs, producing job descriptions, reviewing client CVs, submitting client applications, and supporting clients prior to and after interviews, team meetings for project staff, processing payments to employers, producing quarterly monitoring reports on the project team’s progress, and so on.

The initial focus of the fieldwork was to understand the ways that staff organized the routine aspects of their work. It came to focus on the way that staff used documentary, record-keeping practices to code the cohort and to select which clients to put forward for vacancies. Staff used a set of

standard agency-wide forms to collect relevant details about clients and circulate them to other project teams. Rather than assume that these sources transparently indicated which clients would be appropriate for roles, the work of implementing the project involved making sense of clients and then reporting them on shared documents and during discussions with colleagues. Before the article goes on to describe how staff attempted to find suitable candidates for vacancies, it is necessary to explain the methods used to visualize the client cohort and code some of them as “hard to engage” on a shared administrative document, the RAG Report.

Documenting “Hard to Engage” Clients

One of the project documents used to depict the client caseload was a spreadsheet that staff referred to as the “RAG Report,” the acronym standing for Red-Amber-Green. It provided a loosely defined coding procedure that segmented the cohort into categories that were of practical concern for implementation. The Report depicted the cohort by representing the stance that staff would take towards a client’s ongoing participation in the project. The Report was open to project staff adding to and amending the color-coding of clients as required. The Report provided a color-coded overview of the cohort, available to staff as an “orientated object” (Garfinkel 2002). This spreadsheet compiled details about clients who had registered with the agency and were referred to the project. By October 2015, around six months after the project started, there were over one hundred and seventy clients represented on the spreadsheet. Staff filled out details by selecting information from the Job Network’s

client registration forms, forms completed during action plan meetings, and subsequent contact with clients.

The spreadsheet's headings were: names; job preferences; status & comments; referred by; action plan; development, activities & comments; and

other. The colors used to code the report had loose, operative definitions, with the principal colors being: Red for "not work ready"; Amber for "almost job-ready, requires some additional support"; and Green for "job-ready." Additional colors were used to code other members of the cohort. Staff used the color purple for clients who had found employ-

Figure 1. The NEET wage subsidy team's "RAG Report."

Job Preference	Status/ Comments	Referred by	Action Plan	Development	Other
Bike mechanic	B Red		Yes	No longer wishing to participate	
Childcare/ animals	B Red	WOM - Family	Yes	(training program)? Hard to engage	
admin/ airport	B Red	Troubled Families	Yes	could do with more careers advice, work experience	
Retail/ customer service	B Red	(youth charity)	Yes	Taken on Development programme	
retail/ fashion	B Red	Troubled Families	Yes	Referred to Prince's Trust	
Retail/hospitality	B Red	WOM	Yes	Referred client to Inspire	
IT/plumbing/	B Red	Facebook	Yes	Applied for (borough) Apprenticeships	
not sure	B Red	Troubled Families	Yes	Hard to engage - not attending appointments	
not known	B Red	Troubled Families	Yes	Troubled Family - hard to engage	
Animal care	B Red	WOM	Yes	Young Mum - hard to engage not willing to leave child	
Not yet known	Z Working	Not (wage subsidy project)	No	to be contacted for Action planning	Cleint now employed as a scaffolder

Note: The excel spreadsheet is used to collect information about over one hundred and forty registered clients. All identifying details about clients and local service organizations have been anonymized by replacing text within parentheses. The "client name" column has been removed. "Troubled Families" refers to a government program. "WOM" is an acronym for "word of mouth." The spelling and layout of the rest of the spreadsheet have not been modified.

ment through the project, light blue for clients who found employment outside of the project, a darker blue for clients referred to other teams within the agency, and orange for new clients.

One way that the Report was used by staff to undertake actions on the project was through entering the comment, “hard to engage,” on the Report. This was used to describe clients that staff found difficult to enroll in project activities. In one sense, staff used this coding procedure to mark clients who did not exhibit adequate reciprocity during interactions with the project team. In another sense, this designation also signaled that staff had *worked hard* to get this client to participate, but their efforts were not reciprocated.

The comment, “hard to engage,” was used in relation to twenty eight “Red” clients on the Report. Of these, fourteen “Red” entries detail that the client is “hard to engage.” Four of the fourteen entries took the form of: “Hard to engage—not attending appointments.” Three of these comments were verbatim, a fourth to similar effect: “Not turning up for appointments, hard to engage.” Other entries signaled that a client’s status had been or would be effectively cooled, or that they had, or should be, enrolled onto another program. The following illustrative examples are taken from the RAG Report (see: Figure 1).

Comments about “hard to engage” clients were not exclusively applied to clients coded “Red.” Over forty other clients had comments to the effect that they were either not participating, not engaging, failed to attend appointments, staff had no phone

number on record, staff’s phone calls and messages had not been returned, or staff were unable to get in contact. Only in a small number of entries were dates included in the comments section and only in reference to referrals made to other agencies. As a way to segment the caseload, this code did not prevent staff attempting to work with these clients, although, as the article will go on to discuss, staff frequently complained about clients’ lack of commitment, being hard to engage, and not reciprocating staff members’ efforts to be action-planned or to go for “live vacancies.” The following sections will return to the way that variants of the code, “hard to engage,” were cited while discussing clients. The next section describes how, as part of implementing the project, staff coordinated among themselves to select which clients to put forward for subsidized vacancies.

Putting Clients in the Mix

As staff met with, spoke to, emailed, texted, and stayed in contact with clients and employers on an ongoing basis, one way to understand the implications of working with clients is through the practice of “putting clients in the mix.” This involved the selection of clients to be put forward for subsidized placements, so-called “live vacancies.” Part of this selection work involved suggesting potential clients to other project staff. The following extract from a team meeting shows how this work is done by staff members orientated towards “two new people.” The first member of staff attempts to do this by citing a prior agreement, without mentioning who the candidates are or making any qualifying assessment about their suitability.

Extract 1. S1-3: staff members

- 1 S1: uh. so, anyway, so we've got two new people.
- 2 S2: okay.
- 3 S1: uh, to put forward, and I remember you saying yesterday
- 4 so we can just fire those straight across.
- 5 S2: yeah. fire them (straight).=
- 6 S1: =as they come in.
- 7 S3: what two new people?
- 8 S1: so there was one person that you said about for the online,
- 9 and that was, what's his name?
- 10 S3: Arnold ((surname))?
- 11 S1: no. The one with the really, jazzy.
- 12 S3: oh, Ezekiel (((surname))).
- 13 S1: [Yeah.
- 14 S2: oh I recognize that name.
- 15 S3: yeah. Yeah he was, he- he was with us at the beginning of
- 16 the project. young guy, rea:llly kind of um. uhh, creative.
- 17 um, and he did go for a position but there was some confusion
- 18 with regards to, him turning up or he couldn't get in.
- 19 S2: oh okay.
- 20 S3: there was some issue.

Initially, an agreement is reached that “two new people” can be put in the mix without an elaborated discussion of the client. The agreement is made relevant to a sequentially ordered, future occasion, “as they come in,” marking recruitment for a seemingly “distal” cooperative action (Heritage 2016). With these steps, the project team seems to have solidified a prior agreement about what actions to take with two clients.

Although agreement seems to have been reached by line six, another staff member (S3) queries the identity of the “two new people.” Once one of their names has been acknowledged through two change of state tokens—“oh”—S3 initiates an account about this clients in terms of their prior involvement on the project (Heritage 1998). This account seems to treat the suggestion of putting this client in the mix as marking potential trouble. By signaling that there may be reasons as to why there may be difficulties working with this client, this extract gives a sense of the way that clients' involvement on the project

were displayed in terms of, what we will describe as, *intervention tales*. As accounts, these tales detail the identity of clients in terms of project aims, outcomes, record of previous interactions, impressions of their personality and behavior, their background, and interests in types of vacancies.

These tales also account for the relative knowledge that different members of staff have about members of the caseload. As the staff member suggesting this client was relatively new to the project, S3's account could be treated as: a) informing the staff member that they have already tried to find this client a placement; b) that the staff member should have checked with S3 before making the agreement; c) that there is a history of interactions with this client that they seem to be unaware of; d) that there may be reasons as to why it is difficult to secure a placement for this client. In considering the features and use of these accounts, the next section will look in more depth at the way that prior interactions with clients, which are not recorded on administrative forms, are delivered as reportable descriptions after standard, administrative documents are glanced over.

The Use of Intervention Tales and Client Forms

In order to present further details about the use of intervention tales, the article draws from audio-recordings of a meeting between two members of staff and myself. The meeting was called so as to identify which of the current list of registered clients would be suitable to put forward for the “live vacancies.” One staff member mentioned that they were also trying to become more familiar with the client co-

hort through reviewing a ring-bound folder of clients’ administrative forms.

These extracts also show that it is not possible to adequately understand the descriptor “hard to engage” in terms of etymological definitions nor in reference to administrative documents used by the project team. Instead, as a designation, it constituted an interpretive resource through which to index the project-relevant characteristics of a client. As J. William Spencer (2001:159) has detailed, the institutional identity of clients in receipt of human services is dependent upon the way that an “institutional discourse provides the conditions of possibility for constructing persons and their troubles.” In order to make sense of how descriptions were used to review clients for vacancies, it is necessary to focus on how staff cited details from documentary sources and memories of prior encounters. These recollections were not systematically recorded on standard forms or the agency-wide, digital record-keeping system, the Network Register. In this sense, the notion of intervention tales provides a way to describe how project staff, in the words of Rick Hood (2016), actually talk about complex cases.

Staff worked through a folder of client registration forms by producing descriptions about clients’ suitability in terms of their qualifications, work experience, age, preference for types of roles, demeanor, manner, behavior, attitude, and as a member of a generational group. These attributes were used to focus upon clients’ displays of commitment to the project objectives. On the table in front of the two staff members and myself was a large folder

in which staff collected all the forms used on the project. The bulk of the folder contained completed client registration forms, action plans, a copy of the RAG Report, and other project documents. As staff talked, they read client forms, placing them on piles corresponding to the vacancies and possible referrals to other organizations.

The new project manager worked through the alphabetically ordered folder of client documents, pulling out forms, inspecting additional handwritten notes. The other member of staff explained how they used different “systems” to annotate the forms. The project manager, she said, “has her system...when I put the forms on Network Register, I put highlighters through, otherwise I’ll put them on three times and it just goes through my mind...so I always put a highlighter through.” This different “system” also distinguished which members of the project team had registered, action planned, and updated the clients’ database record. There were a number of distinguishing marks, that is, handwritten notes, annotations, post-it notes, and recommendations written in the margins and the verso side of the form. Such addenda compensated for, what Moore and colleagues (2011:185-186) refer to as, the “chronic insufficiency of standard forms.”

Staff approached the selection work through a binary rationale. For the task at hand, clients are either possible candidates or not. In none of the cases were there “maybes.” Where there was uncertainty over a clients’ suitability, rather than offering a judgment in the form of “yes” or “no” utterances, they collaboratively produced descriptions of clients so as to resolve what to do with this client. This was done on

a case by case basis. This talk also displays a shared orientation to the clients as members of a cohort accountable to expectations of conduct, current employment status, and having expressed a preference for types of employment. The staff's work involved treating clients as unavailable through a set of related glosses which indicated a shared understanding of what they meant for the present task. These glosses included: "is working," "has a job," "got a job," "unavailable," "disengaged," "off the radar," "is out," "is going to college," "part of Troubled Families," "very hard to engage," "does not engage," "he's done," "not eligible," and so on. Whilst all of these terms indicate a different set of circumstances, each descriptor orientates the conversation towards an interpretative justification as to why, for the task at hand, the client cannot be considered as a potential candidate.

In the following two extracts, this also involved producing intervention tales that are sequentially organized descriptions of previous encounters between staff and the client under discussion. These tales invoke prior encounters to display how clients have conducted themselves during interactions with staff. These tales display how staff had instructed clients, how these instructions had been acted upon, what moral assessments to make of these staff-client interactions, and how other actors are drawn into the employment intervention. In searching for clients to put forward for vacancies, this next extract shows staff members' orienting to a quick succession of clients who are not selected as candidates. For these cases, the two members of staff skimmed through a set of negative cases that result from a set of disparate descriptions.

Extract 2. S1-2: staff members

- 1 S1: uh Keith, he's disengaged. Didn't he?
- 2 S2: mm. What else did he want, ((S1's name))?
- 3 S1: he just wanted something outside.
- 4 driver's mate. ((employer name))?
- 5 S2: they're- they've shortlisted.
- 6 S1: okay. Well that's good anyway. Lucy is out, she's
- 7 got her job. Marnie ((surname)), is there any
- 8 point in putting her forward again?
- 9 S2: uh:::m. I would say no at this point, just purely
- 10 because she's already had interviews there.
- 11 S1: yeah.
- 12 S2: and if we can manage to, get a new day sorted out,
- 13 it's- I just feel that it would be a waste of her time
- 14 and I just don't want her to be put through that to
- 15 get a no again.
- 16 S1: Matthew, we got him a job.
- 17 S2: yeah.
- 18 S1: Marvin ((surname)).
- 19 S2: Marvin works.
- 20 S1: he's got a job?
- 21 S2: yeah. He was the guy with the really deep voice.
- 22 um, he works in construction.
- 23 S1: oh I remember him now. Yeah.

The first client, Keith, is "disengaged," available for work, but given his preference for "something outside," is only treated as eligible for a vacancy that has been "shortlisted." This first case goes against the notion that "disengaged" clients are dismissed as unsuitable for candidate status. We can see that S2 acknowledges S1's question about Keith having "disengaged," then re-orientates towards what roles Keith was seeking. The inquiry is not settled until staff answer "what else did he want." Three clients are then briefly surveyed, each of whom are working. Though each of these clients is employed, the attributes of the job are marked by different lexical attributions of how the job was found: "got her job," "got him a job," "he's got a job."

Marnie presents a different subject for discussion. In her case, we can see another feature of how inter-

vention tales are used by staff to detail the reasons for and against putting clients forward for roles. As “she has already had interviews there,” the staff member provides a reason for not granting candidate status to Marnie. The justification that “I just feel like it would be a waste of her time” seems to indicate the assumption that this employer will not come to a different decision this time around. In this case, an intervention tale contains consequential details about previous interactions with clients, giving grounds for what actions should be taken in the present and future, joined to displays that account for a client’s time and the way that employers make decisions about hiring applicants. None of these details are to be found on the client’s registration form. Each of these quick-fire citations of client names resembles condensed versions of end-of-shift “handoff routines” in health practice. LeBaron and colleagues (2016) describe how physicians’ “handoffs” involve the work of coordinating sequentially organized, embodied talk. The authors show how physicians’ actions coordinate “handoffs” through a flexible, negotiated ordering of “moves.” This flexible set of moves may involve the patient’s name, family matters, adjacent patients, major issues, past events, and so on.

Intervention tales are thus not solely concerned with ensuring compliance with organizational rules and project policies. Instead, they account for what has happened with individual clients in a series of encounters and in ways that are intelligible to the relevant concerns of implementing the project. In this sense, they resemble what Albert Meehan (1986) has described as a “running record.” Meehan describes how police officers keep

track of routine interactions with juveniles that are left unrecorded in log books. This running record is treated by police officers as a shared resource for interpreting and justifying future interactions with juveniles in the context of professional and organizational expectations. On the wage subsidy project, although clients are not required to undertake mandatory actions like attending the offices on a routine basis, their ongoing participation is dependent upon, among other perceived characteristics, “being available” when opportunities arise and staying in contact with staff. The following intervention tale shows how staff work together to interpret how a client has comported herself, and by doing so finds the basis upon which to justify whether or not to put them forward for vacancies. In this way, staff account for clients in ways that are unrecorded on standard forms or the record-keeping system, but can draw from these sources in order to do interpretive work.

As staff flicked through a folder of client documents, what these intervention tales afford is an interpretive resource to decide *who* is suitable for vacancies. This work makes reference to clients’ current employment status, as well as perceptions over their conduct and receptivity to staff members’ advice and instructions. In this way, intervention tales display a sense-making practice of just how a client’s ongoing participation in the project should be configured. These tales treat prior interactions as one source of evidence about clients. Although the notion of discretion cannot fully explain how staff apply their judgment through attentiveness to specific circumstantial details, by analyzing the following extract, the article

describes how discretion is accomplished by “citing evidence” from documentary records, registration forms, and through reciting prior encounters with clients.

This last extract shows how staff work to identify who Rosanna is, leading to affective expressions of annoyance and a moral injunction for this client to display “willingness.”

Extract 3. S1-2: staff members

- 1 S1: Rosanna. um, do you remember Rosanna?
- 2 S2: let's have a look at her ((inaudible)). Oh::: yes
- 3 I do I think, I think she came down with Devin.
- 4 S1: no.
- 5 S2: no?
- 6 S1: was it her? Because I saw her and I didn't ((inaudible))
- 7 the action plan for her. Yes it was.
- 8 S2: it was.
- 9 S1: she couldn't open, yeah.
- 10 S2: she, I think she's going to college isn't she?
- 11 S1: she's not doing anything. But I, and I-, I spoke to- I
- 12 spoke to Devin about her and he said oh she's still
- 13 not doing nothing and I told- I advised her to come
- 14 back to you. I said yeah, anytime. Just that I need to hear,
- 15 you know.
- 16 S2: mmm.
- 17 S1: show me some willingness.
- 18 S2: absolutely.
- 19 S1: it's just a case of sitting down here for half an hour,
- 20 forty five [minutes]
- 21 S2: [Yeah]
- 22 S1: and I'm not actually getting anything back,
- 23 so I [couldn't see as ((inaudible)).]
- 24 S2: [No, she'll be out of work.]
- 25 S2: what, what- what was she looking for ((staff name))?
- 26 S1: she was looking for:: it was, retail. Childcare.
- 27 um hospitality or admin.
- 28 S2: put her in the hospitality pile.

The staff initially work together to clarify Rosanna's identity. This is collaboratively accomplished by asking to see the action plan form, venturing a guess that is disconfirmed, and then again referring to the action plan form. “Yes it was,” marks alignment in who they are talking about. One of the staff suggests that the client is going to college, which is contest-

ed in the next turn in which an intervention tale is launched. This tale is used to display an appraisal of how the staff member's offer for the client to get in contact was responded to. This offer contrasts with the version of what the client is doing provided by Devin, an advisor at a partner organization who refers clients to the team. He is reported to have said that the client is “doing nothing.” The tale builds the case that, as Rosanna is “doing nothing,” she should be getting in contact. “Doing nothing,” on this occasion, generates a context in which to interpret Rosanna's inaction as a lack of reciprocal engagement. The description provides an appraisal of whether the client meets the project criteria of “out of work” and what to make of the client's conduct because, although they are “doing nothing,” they still have not stayed in contact.

Appraising the client in this way makes a general expectation about client conduct partly visible by stating the need for clients to reciprocate staff members' efforts to stay in contact: “Just that I need to hear.” It also provides grounds for calling upon the other staff member to agree for the need for this client to “show me some willingness.” Given these considerations at play in the intervention tale, and whilst this client may seem to be “hard to engage,” the orientation towards retrieving “what she was looking for” from the client's form leads to the client name being put in the mix. As S2 instructs, “put her in the hospitality pile.”

Readers can see in this extract that the two staff members are using the occasion to organize the client caseload into “piles,” that is, the hospitality pile that Rosanna's forms are placed on. The staff

members inspect each of the documents to locate information that was noted during an intake meeting. This information on this administrative form is, in Andrew Carlin’s (2003) terms, available “at-a-glance.” And yet, in Rosanna’s case, staff members turn to the document in line twenty five to search for one piece of information, “what was she looking for.” The document and the intervention tales are thereby both used as resources for the accomplishment of this routine sorting of clients to put forward for “live vacancies.”

This last extract has sought to describe the routine interplay of talk and documents in deciding on how to organize the client caseload. The analysis of a small number of cases has shown how intervention tales constitute a flexible resource that staff members use to formulate historical details about their contact with members of the client caseload. The fact that these tales are told in the course of meetings where staff members practically decide how to implement the project is instructive for researchers interested in social problems work. For one, these tales are used to describe client actions and characteristics in ways that are not locatable on organizational documents. The use of tales is, however, also prompted by the “chronic insufficiency of standard forms” (Moore et al. 2011:185), and what does not need to be included in organizational records. Each of the examples used in the article have shown how these tales are used to display clients’ “engagement” with the project.

The use of these tales constitute routine aspects of the work of implementing the wage subsidy project. In the present cases, the tales are principally used

to show how a client has been seen to respond to staff requests, requirements, and advice. The tales evidence how staff members have sought to initiate interventions with specific clients by, for example, offering interviews, or inviting clients to attend Action Plan sessions. Clients are accountable when they are seen not to reciprocate these intervention efforts. This lack of reciprocity and “engagement” is located within intervention tales to evidence “some issue” with a client. These tales thereby offer a resource for staff with which to display issues about clients. The issues may be a “lack of reciprocity,” they may involve a client “wanting something outside” of the project, or that a client has already had a previous interview, which means offering a new one would be a “waste of her time.” As such, intervention tales are a practical resource for staff members to describe a client, to show the rational basis for staff members’ stances, to add to staff members’ shared knowledge of the client caseload, and as evidence for deciding whether to select or not select clients to “put them in the mix” and put them forward for interviews.

Concluding Remarks

The article has addressed the topic of how labor market interventions, such as a wage subsidy project, are implemented through ordinary activities. I have addressed this topic by showing how members of staff distinguish between clients registered with a multi-agency network of employment support advisors. This team kept records on the registered client caseload and decided which clients to put forward for “live vacancies.” The article has described some aspects of the routine work that staff

undertake to arrive at these decisions. I have drawn from ethnographic fieldwork, administrative documents, and audio-recordings of talks between staff so as to show how these decisions were arrived at during two team meetings. Future research could offer a larger number of cases for analysis. The present article has identified a specific practice that staff use to get this work done, which the article has referred to as intervention tales. These tales are used to make sense of clients given the insufficiency of standard administrative forms. These tales involve members of staff recounting prior encounters with clients that are not documented on administrative forms, and formulating how these prior encounters are relevant to a client's "organizational identity." This identity is formulated in terms that are relevant to specific, practical tasks, that is, "putting clients in the mix" for "live vacancies." These intervention tales are used to evidence what staff have noticed about a client's, for instance, reciprocity towards staff members' efforts. They seem to answer the question, "Is this client sufficiently engaged with our project?" These tales are thereby used as a resource to provide a rational basis in staff members' efforts to make sense of clients as accountable, potential job candidates. These tales resemble a set of "formula stories," specifically akin to those stories that Donileen Loseke (2007:670-672) has called "organizational narratives."

These intervention tales are produced by members of staff to describe members of the project's client caseload. These clients are not solely assessed according to their demographic information or details that are codified as "client eligibility requirements." Indeed, a clients' lack of reciprocal engagement with staff

members is a practical concern for how the project should be implemented. A client's conduct—that is, their engagement, reciprocity, willingness, and not having caused issues—and staff members' ongoing obligation to that client, is the object being formulated in intervention tales. Extracts from transcripts of team meetings have been used to show how members of staff use intervention tales as a "members' resource" alongside collections of organizational documents, such as the "RAG Report" and client registration forms.

The article has aimed to contribute to the literature on social problems work and ethnomethodological studies of work in social service agencies, by describing how members of staff implement a wage subsidy project for NEETs through the use of talk and documents. Members of staff use talk and record-keeping practices to make sense of the client caseload, and in turn, use these representations as resources for interpreting how to work with clients in the course of ordinary activities. NEETs and unemployed youth in receipt of employment services or enrolled on training projects are thereby accountable in terms of their exhibited, noticeable, commentable, describable actions and inactions. In this sense, the focus of the article has been on explicating a "members' resource" used to accomplish routine work tasks. By showing how staff code clients as "hard to engage" on an administrative document, the RAG Report, the article has shown that one way that staff make the client caseload intelligible is through segmenting the group into different categories corresponding with a set of colors. The article developed this point of coding and categorization by showing how staff made sense of whether

to select “hard to engage” clients for “live vacancies.” When it comes to this aspect of implementing the project, staff members accounted for some clients through intervention tales. The descriptor of “hard to engage” found in an administrative document, the RAG Report, does not determine whether, in each case, staff will or will not put clients in

the mix. Rather than treating administrative documents as representations of work or organizational realities, researchers are recommended to consider how talk and documents come to be put to use as resources that facilitate the undertaking of social problems work with NEETs and other recipients of employment and training services.

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Confronting Institutional Discrimination in a Color-Blind World

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Abstract This article builds on the scholarship on color-blind ideology by examining discourse challenging two cases of institutional discrimination (the criminalization of unauthorized immigrants and sports teams' use of Native American symbolism). Our research questions are first, what general options do anti-racists have for navigating norms of color-blindness in the public sphere? Second, how does context influence how people confront institutional discrimination? Based on an ethnographic content analysis of 165 letters to the editor published in American newspapers, we find that opponents of institutional discrimination have the choice of addressing one of four laminations. In each lamination, authors acknowledge framings of racial discrimination that are unacknowledged in previous ones. In the abstraction lamination, authors do not recognize race and ethnicity. In the pigmentation lamination, authors identify race and ethnicity, but not discrimination. Authors in the discrimination lamination acknowledge the practice is harmful to a particular racial or ethnic group, and the contextualization lamination lends added dimensionality to the discourse. A comparison of the laminations of pro-immigrant and anti-mascot letters demonstrates varying willingness to acknowledge racial discrimination. Namely, the pro-immigrant discourse was more color-blind than anti-mascot criticism. We consider the potential causes of these findings and offer suggestions for future research in the conclusion.

Keywords Color-Blind Racism; Framing; Laminations; Indian Mascots; Immigration

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Since the 1960s, White Americans have subscribed to a color-blind racism that “explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics” (Bonilla-Silva 2006:2). While the color-blind ideology that governs American culture legitimizes institutional discrimination, it also proscribes overt expressions of racial prejudice (Bonilla-Silva 2006). Much scholarship has supported this conclusion by documenting the variety of circumstances where color-blind ideology allows defenders of institutional discrimination to avoid appearing racist (e.g., van Dijk 1992; Moras 2010). A growing body of work is addressing how anti-racists confront these norms (Every and Augoustinos 2007; Goodman 2010; Rojas-Sosa 2016). This study builds on these efforts by addressing two questions. First, what general options do anti-racists have for navigating norms of color-blindness in the public sphere? Second, how does context shape their rhetorical choices? We pursue these questions with an ethnographic content analysis (Altheide and Schneider 2013) of letters to the editor written in opposition to Indian mascots and punitive immigration policies. Taken together, answers to these two questions will yield theoretical benefits. It will add to our understanding of the ideational processes that contribute to the maintenance of color-blind ideology. More specifically, we demonstrate how Goffman’s underused concept of laminations can facilitate our understanding of how race can be variably unacknowledged in public discourse. Because we draw on two cases, we will gain a sense of the generality and variability of anti-racist efforts.

Although the political struggles over Indian mascots and immigration policy are vastly different,

they are both instances of racial projects (Omi and Winant 1994). When people discuss whether or not to retire a mascot, they inevitably construct what it means to be Native American. Likewise, stereotypes about Latina/os and Asians inform the debate about immigration policy. The norms of color-blind racism constrain both those who seek to maintain and oppose the racial hierarchy. The term color-blind racism sensitizes us to some of the patterned ways that Whites justify institutional discrimination. Racial and ethnic relations, however, are contextually bound. A comparative analysis can help to distinguish between general and particular features of contemporary racial ideology. Specifically, the comparative analysis that follows will allow us to observe which potential definitions of race go “unacknowledged” (Silva 2014). A claim that is common in one dispute may be absent from others. For instance, as will be demonstrated below, discourse over Indian mascots is far more likely to include the perspective of Native Americans than pro-immigrant discourse is to address the subjective experience of Latina/o immigrants. Such an analysis, then, might add to our conceptualization of our vocabulary (Mills 1940) for discussing racial and ethnic relations in the public sphere.

The following study will uncover how those who support undocumented immigrants and those who oppose the continued use of Indian mascots go about confronting these specific instances of institutional discrimination in the era of color-blindness. Understanding such “work” (Miller and Holstein 1989; Borer and Murphree 2008; Borer and Schafer 2011) will be facilitated by measuring the laminations (or levels) (Goffman 1974) of acknowledgment

of discrimination in discourse over racial projects. Before we answer these questions, we provide some context for our cases, discuss the relevant theoretical literature, and outline our methods.

Color-Blind Ideology

American support for explicit white supremacist principles plummeted after World War II. Numerous sociologists have sought to interpret these findings. Despite differences, these scholars suggest that racial ideologies have morphed from explicit to implied justifications for institutional discrimination (Quillian 2006). Bonilla-Silva (2006) goes beyond survey research to explore *how* White Americans justify the status quo in a cultural climate where explicit prejudice is no longer acceptable. Through the analysis of qualitative data, he uncovers the color-blind ideology Whites use to explain racial and ethnic inequality without using the explicitly white supremacist language of the Jim Crow era. Bonilla-Silva (2012:174) further argues that “‘racial domination’ generates a grammar that helps reproduce racial order as just the way things are. The racial grammar helps accomplish this task by shaping how we see or don’t see race in social phenomena, how we frame matters as racial or not race-related, and even how we feel about race matters.” For example, the existence of the terms Black movies or HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) and the absence of the terms White movies or HWCUs (historically White colleges and universities). Likewise, numerous studies have examined how color-blind justifications propagate racial inequality (Holyfield, Moltz, and Bradley 2009; Léonard 2014).

A small but growing body of literature has moved from documenting how Whites avoid being labeled racist to the influence of color-blindness on racial and ethnic minorities and those who confront institutional racism. Color-blindness is a resource for those who wish to defend institutional practices against charges of racism (Goodman 2010). Accordingly, norms of color-blindness make it difficult to acknowledge and directly challenge racial discrimination (Every and Augoustinos 2007; Goodman 2010; Rojas-Sosa 2016). There is a small literature outlining how color-blind norms influence minorities and anti-racists (Every and Augoustinos 2007; Goodman 2010; Rojas-Sosa 2016). Rojas-Sosa (2016) demonstrates how American Latina/o college students are reluctant to define situations as discriminatory. These students are only making sense of their lives and not trying to influence the public sphere, however. Every and Augoustinos (2007) analyze Australian Parliamentary debate over asylum seekers and conclude that it is possible, but difficult to confront racism. Likewise, Goodwin (2010) examines public discussion over asylum and immigration in the United Kingdom. He shows that those who defend immigrants in the public sphere are very hesitant to accuse their adversaries of racism. While it is clear that norms of color-blindness extend to those who experience and confront institutional racism, there is still more to learn. We add to this scholarship by asking two questions.

First, *what general options do anti-racists have for navigating norms of color-blindness in the public sphere?* The existing studies focus on a particular case. The advantage of doing so is that they can provide much detail about the specifics of each situation. The lim-

itation of such work is that it becomes difficult to observe general features. Our contribution to the literature will be a comparison of how anti-racism operates in two separate cases. This comparison will allow us to obtain a more basic sense of how individuals negotiate color-blindness.

A comparative analysis will also allow us to observe the variability of such efforts. Hence our second question, *how does context influence how people confront institutional discrimination?* That is, how does the willingness to acknowledge racial discrimination vary by the situation? While color-blind racism seems to exist in many societies, it stands to reason that contextual factors will shape its power. But how? By comparing anti-racist ideational work in two distinct racial projects, we can gain a better sense of how situational factors can influence the confrontation of institutional racism. A comparison of two cases will highlight aspects that individuals do not acknowledge in particular situations. Accordingly, this article follows Bonilla-Silva's mandate to explore how race can go unseen. Goffman's concept of laminations will facilitate this endeavor.

Laminations of Acknowledgement

There are numerous approaches to the ways that people construct reality in the public sphere, for example, narratives (Somers 1994; Jacobs 1996; Maines 2001), discursive repertoires (Steinberg 1999), critical discourse analysis (van Dijk 1992). This study operates in the Goffmanian tradition of frame analysis. The concept of framing has proven to be a very useful tool for examining how individuals construct reality, particularly in contentious situations (Ben-

ford and Snow 2000; Snow 2004). Frames are shared cultural schemata that actors use to organize their cognitions and conduct (Goffman 1974). For example, the color-blind ideology includes the frames of abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and the minimization of racism (Bonilla-Silva 2006). Whites use the abstract liberalism frame when drawing on "ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., 'equal opportunity,' the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters" (Bonilla-Silva 2006:28). With the naturalization frame Whites argue that the racial status quo is inevitable. Whites employ the cultural racism frame to maintain that racial inequality is a function of Whites and minorities having different values and lifestyles. The two questions asked in this article will allow us to build on Bonilla-Silva's scheme by uncovering the generic laminations of racial discourse.

Situations often have multiple levels or laminations (Goffman 1974). Laminations occur when actors add new framings of reality on top of existing frames. For example, a situation where two people discuss an investment opportunity while attending a baseball game, the business conversation lamination sits atop the game lamination. The two might switch between laminations during the game—during a high leverage situation in the game the discussion of business is interrupted, the conversation resumes between innings. Recently, sociologists have begun to employ the concept of laminations to the study of political disputes (Hedley and Clark 2007; Silva 2013). Our analysis will uncover the laminations of color-blindness. Individuals may acknowledge

certain laminations and unacknowledge others. Regardless of whether or not such unacknowledgement is intentional, the patterned absence of a lamination is meaningful. The use of a comparative analysis helps to elucidate how speakers variably address a particular lamination in the public sphere.

People do not frame reality in a vacuum. Context or “discursive field” influences framing (Steinberg 1999; Snow 2008). Contextual factors include cultural norms (e.g., color-blindness) and by the alternative framing of reality given by one’s adversaries. As Esacove (2004) demonstrates, combatants dialogically frame reality in relation to the counter frames of their opponents. This paper seeks to document how discursive fields influence how institutional racism is confronted by pro-immigrant and anti-Indian mascot authors. We expect that nativist framings shape pro-immigration discourse and justifications for Indian mascots affect criticisms of the practice. We now will outline the contextual features of each case.

Cases

In previous research, the lead author examined how individuals discuss immigration and Indian mascots (Silva 2007; 2013; 2015). Upon reflecting on these separate studies, a question that emerged (see: Charmaz 2014) was how color-blind ideology operates in each case. The two cases examined in this study provide an interesting contrast. The opposition to the Native American imagery that symbolizes certain athletic teams and the support for unauthorized immigrants are both instances where individuals confront institutional racism. These cases

also involve very different factors. Indian mascots discriminate against Native Americans, while punitive immigration policies primarily affect Latinas/os. Additionally, these issues have a differing mix of status and class interests. Following Weber’s (1968) lead, sociologists have distinguished between “class politics,” which are based on struggles over *the allocation of material resources* and *status politics* that involve *political conflict over the allocation of prestige* (Gusfield 1963; Marshall 1986; Lio, Melzer, and Reese 2008). The mascot controversy is largely a symbolic status dispute and immigration policy has a mix of class and status dimensions. Additionally, actors use color-blind ideology to defend punitive immigration policy (Douglas, Sáenz, and Murga 2015). By contrast, the use of Native American imagery by sports teams is not color-blind, but overt (Robertson 2015). Although defenses do include color-blind justifications of it as a matter of “self-expression” or “democracy” (Silva 2007). Therefore, these two cases provide an opportunity for a comparison that should elucidate the general and situation-specific ways actors challenge color-blind ideology.

Indian Mascots

Sports are a site of the re-production of racial and gender inequality (e.g., Hoberman 1997; Messner 2011). For more than a century high school, college, and professional athletic teams have symbolized themselves with Native American imagery which includes nicknames (e.g., Redskins, Braves, Indians, Chiefs); mascots dressed as “Indian warriors” who “represent” the team along the sidelines of a contest; logos depicting feathers, caricatures of Indians, tomahawks, et cetera; fan behavior such as the

“tomahawk chop” where fans of the Florida State University “Seminoles,” in unison, simulate a chopping motion by extending and flexing an arm while chanting “ohhhweehweoh.” Over the past two decades critical scholars have launched a furious attack on Indian mascots. This work has demonstrated the negative effects of the imagery (Fryeberg et al. 2008; Kim-Prieto et al. 2010), as well as the racism, colonialism (Fenelon 1999; King and Springwood 2000; Pewewardy 2001; Baca 2004; Farnell 2004; Williams 2007; Callais 2010; Gamache 2010; Steinfeldt et al. 2010), and hegemonic masculinity (Davis 1993; Williams 2006) that motivates it.

Both critics and defenders have had significant victories. Hundreds of high schools and colleges have retired Indian symbolism (Pember 2007). Notably, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has forced a number of college teams to do so (Pember 2007; Staurowsky 2007). But, while many teams have changed, many, including some of the most prominent, remain (e.g., Atlanta Braves, Cleveland Indians, Florida State Seminoles, and Washington Redskins). The end of this cultural battle is not in sight.

In general, mascot supporters account for the practice of using Indian symbolism by denying injury (e.g., claiming that a mascot is harmless), asserting benefit (e.g., arguing that it honors Native Americans), claiming authority (e.g., stating that one has expertise as a fan), or rejecting the challenge (e.g., attacking the character of the critics) (Silva 2007). This defense is informed by color-blind ideology (Callais 2010). The analysis that follows will be of recent (2007-2014) attempts to challenge these color-blind defenses of the practice.

Given the symbolic nature of the dispute, many parties to the issue have sought to establish Native American opinion of the practice. The opinion of local Native Americans is an influential factor in mascot controversies (Davis-Delano 2007). The rationale, presumably, is that because the interpretation of the imagery is subjective, Native Americans have enhanced authority to evaluate it. The NCAA policy allows for colleges who secure the support of relevant Indian tribes to retain their Indian mascot (e.g., Florida State University), while colleges that fail to do so, have been forced to relinquish it (e.g., Arkansas State University) (Staurowsky 2007). No uniform Native American position on the symbolism exists, however (Peroff and Wildcat 2002; Jacobs 2014). Nonetheless, mascot supporters have taken to making tenuous claims to Indian identity to bolster their position (Springwood 2004).

The conflict over Indian mascots is primarily an instance of Weberian status politics. The public debate provides an opportunity to construct the definition of Native Americans in the public sphere. Correspondingly, much of the discourse on mascots focuses on whether Native Americans are honored or denigrated by the practice. American discussions of immigration, by contrast, are a mix of class and status struggles.

Immigration Policy

Immigration is a continuing feature of American society and nativist sentiments have long been bound up with hostility towards racial and ethnic minorities (Feagin 1997; Lippard 2011; Schueths 2014). Much scholarship has uncovered how nativist discourse

depicts immigrants as threats to the well-being of American communities, economy, and culture (Feagin 1997; Mehan 1997; Cacho 2000; Ono and Sloop 2002; Santa Ana 2002; Lakoff and Ferguson 2006; Chavez 2008; Lio, Melzer, and Reese 2008; Dove 2010; Kim et al. 2011; Fryberg et al. 2012; Brown 2013; Luque et al. 2013; Bloch 2014; Kil 2014). These studies show that nativists address both class interests (e.g., concerns about the economic effects of immigrants) and status issues in their discourse (e.g., defending the primacy of the English language in American public life). Despite the severity of the claims leveled against (predominantly non-White) immigrants, many nativists draw on color-blind ideology which marginalizes immigrants without explicit appeals to white power (Moras 2010; Bloch 2014; Kil 2014; Douglas, Sáenz, and Murga 2015). The degree of color-blindness, however, can vary significantly (Brown 2013). How, then, do the challengers of racist-nativism contend with color-blind norms?

This analysis focuses on discourse that occurred between June 16, 2012 and July 16, 2012. There were two especially salient events that occurred during this time. First, U.S. President, Barack Obama, initiated the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program on June 15, 2012. DACA as a substitute for the stymied Dream Act, which proposed legislation that sought to provide legal status for young undocumented immigrants (Miranda 2010; Preston 2012). DACA grants a work permit and two year delay of deportation to undocumented immigrants under 31 years of age who arrived in the United States before age 16, spent a continuous 5 years in the U.S., are in school, high school graduates, or honorably discharged veterans, with relatively unblemished crim-

inal records (Napolitano 2012; Preston 2012). DACA was billed as “prosecutorial discretion” (Napolitano 2012), but critics argued that it was an unconstitutional overreach by a President who is eager to win the favor of Latina/o voters (Preston 2012). More than a half million DACA applications were accepted by the U.S. government (Svajlenka and Singer 2014). With the election of Donald Trump to the U.S. Presidency, the program is in jeopardy¹ (Harlan and Markon 2016). A second noteworthy event occurred during the period we observed, on June 25 the American Supreme Court ruled on *Arizona v. United States*. The court upheld the portion of Arizona’s punitive 2010 law that calls on local police to inspect the immigration status of suspicious detainees. The court rejected the law’s creation of criminal penalties for unauthorized immigrants who seek employment (Liptak 2012; also see: Scotusblog.com).

Data and Methods

The analysis presented below emerged from other studies of discourse over Indian mascots (Silva 2007; 2013) and immigration (Silva 2015). Insights from this previous work allowed us to draw a theoretical sample (see: Altheide and Schneider 2013; Charmaz 2014) of letters to the editor. That is, I sought to collect data that would allow me to identify theoretical categories (how individuals frame their arguments), and I was less concerned with finding a representative sample. Letters to the editor are an interesting place to examine discourse over race. Although newspaper readership is declining, they are still read by mil-

¹ The 2016 U.S. Presidential Campaign of Donald Trump, however, resulted in not-so-color-blind framings of immigration.

lions of Americans (Kohut et al. 2012) and letters are among the more well-liked sections of the newspaper (Wahl-Jorgensen 2007). People define reality by considering how others do so (Mead 1934) and letters allow one access to others' views (Wahl-Jorgensen 2004). Letters are authored by non-media professionals, so they differ from elite dominated venues in the mass media (McFarland 2011; Young 2011). Unlike comments made online, however, letters pass through a gatekeeping process, which excludes hate speech and defamation (Wahl-Jorgensen 2004). The fact that letters are filtered, so to speak, allows us to understand public political culture (Perrin 2005:171). That is, we can see what counts as appropriate. For a variety of reasons, letters to the editor do not offer a pure reflection of what people are privately thinking (Reader, Stempel, and Daniel 2004). The letters section, then, provides a range of publicly acceptable opinions. Letter writers operate within a cultural context, accordingly the way partisans frame the support for their opinion will reflect this milieu.

For this study, letters were collected from the Lexis-Nexis academic database. Pro-immigrant letters were obtained using the search terms "immigrant," "immigration," "dream act," and "letter" for the dates June 16, 2012 to July 15, 2012. Due to the complexity of the issue, we used a relatively short time period. That is, we wanted the majority of the letters to be focused on similar current events. An immigration letter was selected for further analysis if it directly supported policies that would decriminalize unauthorized immigration (e.g., praising President Obama's decision to implement DACA) or if it provided arguments that indirectly supported unauthorized immigrants (discussing how immigrants are good for the United

States without also offering any negative framings of immigrants). Anti-Indian mascot letters were drawn using the search terms "Indian," "Redskin," or "Native American," paired with "logo," "symbol," "mascot," or "nickname." There are fewer letters published about Indian mascots, so we have a larger time frame (between January 01, 2007 and July 18, 2014). The longer time frame is acceptable because the issue is relatively stable. A mascot letter was included in the sample if it argued for or defended the retirement of an Indian mascot or otherwise casted Indian mascots as problematic. For the time period, 18 anti-mascot letters were published in 2007, four in 2008, two in 2009 and 2011, 21 in 2013, and 11 in 2014. We examined the material that was collected and agreed that 58 letters on mascots and 111 letters on immigration were sufficient to capture their discursive options and to make a comparison between cases. There are myriad Indian mascots in the United States. The three frequent topics were the Washington Redskins of the National Football League (19 letters), Indian mascots in general (16 letters), and the imagery formerly used by the University of Illinois (11 letters). These anti-mascot letters were written by 46 authors, 40 authors wrote one letter, four authors wrote two letters, one author wrote three letters, and another wrote four, three letters did not include authorship. The letters were published in 20 newspapers from 12 states and Washington, DC. The pro-immigrant letters come from 36 newspapers in 18 states and were written by 106 distinct authors (author information for one letter is missing). Immigration is an exceptionally complex issue, but given the short time frame, the letters were somewhat focused. The top three topics were DACA (59 letters), immigration in general (32 letters), Arizona's immigration law (12 letters).

Table 1. Anti-mascot letters published by newspaper.

NEWSPAPER	STATE	NUMBER OF LETTERS
Bismarck Tribune	North Dakota	1
Buffalo News	New York	2
Capital Times	Wisconsin	1
Chico Enterprise-Record	California	1
Christian Science Monitor	National	2
Columbian	Washington	1
Contra Costa Times	California	6
El Paso Times	Texas	1
Herald News	New Jersey	1
Monterey County Herald	California	1
Pantagraph	Illinois	4
Salt Lake Tribune	Utah	1
San Jose Mercury News	California	1
Spokesman Review	Washington	3
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	Missouri	1
State Journal-Register	Illinois	9
USA Today	National	3
Vallejo Times Herald	California	4
Washington Post	Washington	4
Wisconsin State Journal	Wisconsin	11

Source: Self-elaboration.

Table 2. Pro-immigrant letters published by newspaper.

NEWSPAPER	STATE	NUMBER OF LETTERS
Atlanta Journal Constitution	Georgia	1
Austin American Statesmen	Texas	3
Berkshire Eagle	Massachusetts	2
Buffalo News	New York	6
Chicago Daily Herald	Illinois	6
Columbian	Washington	1
Contra Costa Times	California	7
Daily News of Los Angeles	California	1
Dayton Daily News	Ohio	1
Deseret Morning News	Utah	1
Herald News	New Jersey	3
Houston Chronicle	Texas	2
Las Cruces Sun-News	New Mexico	2
Las Vegas Review-Journal	Nevada	5
Lebanon Daily News	Pennsylvania	1
Lewiston Morning Tribune	Idaho	2
Marin Independent Journal	California	1
New York Times	New York	5
Palm Beach Post	Florida	6
Philadelphia Daily News	Pennsylvania	3
Philadelphia Inquirer	Pennsylvania	2
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	Pennsylvania	2
Public Opinion	Pennsylvania	1
Record	New Jersey	2
Richmond Times Dispatch	Virginia	3
Roanoke Times	Virginia	1
San Antonio Express-News	Texas	5
San Bernardino County Sun	California	1
San Francisco Chronicle	California	7
San Jose Mercury News	California	4
Spokesman Review	Washington	1
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	Missouri	5
St. Paul Pioneer Press	Minnesota	3
Star Tribune	Minnesota	4
Tampa Bay Times	Florida	6
Tampa Tribune	Florida	2
Virginian-Pilot	Virginia	3

Source: Self-elaboration.

Table 3. Findings.

LAMINATIONS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	EXAMPLES OF FRAMES USED BY OPPONENTS OF INDIAN MASCOTS	EXAMPLES OF FRAMES USED BY SUPPORTERS OF DACA	RACE ACKNOWLEDGED?	DISCRIMINATION ACKNOWLEDGED?	CONTEXT PROVIDED?
ABSTRACTION	"humans not mascots"	"politics" "contributing Americans" "blameless"	No	No	No
PIGMENTATION	"Native American"	"Latina/o"	Yes	No	No
DISCRIMINATION	"blatant racism"	"show me your papers"	Yes	Yes	No
CONTEXTUALIZATION	"history of colonization" "comparisons to discrimination against African Americans" "perspective of Native Americans"	"economic history" "comparisons to non-Latina/o immigrants" "perspective of Latina/o immigrants"	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Self-elaboration.

As noted above, this study is an ethnographic content analysis (Altheide and Schneider 2013), meaning we are interested in examining media (in this case, letters) to uncover the processes by which people construct meanings. The analysis of anti-mascot letters was conducted by the first author and the second author, while the analysis of the pro-immigration letters was conducted by the first author and the third author. Aided by the Nvivo qualitative software program, codes were developed by exploring the data in multiple rounds. In general, our approach to the coding follows suggestions laid out by Lofland and colleagues (2006) to move from open-ended initial coding to

focused coding. The open-ended coding began in the aforementioned studies of Indian mascots and immigration. Based on these previous studies and Bonilla-Silva's scholarship on color-blind ideology, we coded the letters for whether or not they acknowledged race. We also open-coded the new set of immigration letters. The development of a focused coding scheme from our open-ended coding emerged by examining these initial open codes, comparing the coding for mascot and immigration discourses, and by using the concepts of laminations and color-blind racism as sensitizing concepts. For instance, we found that the claims of discrimination varied drastically when compared

against each other. We also discovered that in the mascot discourse, race was nearly always acknowledged, but it was often ignored in the immigration letters. We also noticed that Native American subjectivity was much more likely to be considered than was the worldview of immigrants. Following Goffman (1974), we conceptualized these differences as distinct laminations in the discourse. Once a focused scheme was established, we independently re-coded the letters and then discussed cases where we had different codes.

Laminations of Color-Blindness

In this section, we present our answers to our two research questions. These findings are outlined in table one. In answer to our first question (*How do anti-racists navigate norms of color-blindness in the public sphere?*), those who oppose institutional discrimination address one of four levels of laminations of color-blindness. We conceive of these four options as levels along which individuals confront race and racism. In the abstraction lamination, actors discuss the institutional practice without acknowledging race or ethnicity. Next, in the pigmentation lamination, authors acknowledge race or ethnicity, but not discrimination. The third option is to speak to the discrimination lamination. In the final lamination, they add context to their criticisms. The second question (*How does context influence how people confront institutional discrimination?*) is answered by comparing the degree to which racism was acknowledged by supporters of DACA and opponents of Indian mascots. Namely, the specific ways that mascot opponents are more likely to acknowledge racism.

Abstraction Lamination

In the abstraction lamination, the victims of the discriminatory practice are constructed without reference to their racial or ethnic identity—one does not even acknowledge racial or ethnic distinctions. The abstraction lamination represents a more extreme version of the abstract liberalism described by Bonilla-Silva (2006). Such unacknowledgement of color occurred much more frequently in letters defending immigrants (75 percent, 80/111) than in letters opposing Indian mascots (5 percent, 3/58).

Immigration Letters

Beyond the numerical differences, pro-immigrant letters had a richer vocabulary of abstract characterizations than did anti-mascot letters. Frames of politics, criminality, and productivity allowed for letter writers to construct unraced immigrants.

Politics Frame

Some authors would focus on legal and political matters to the exclusion of race. For example:

President Obama's critics were quick to decry his immigration initiative as election-year politics. Of course it was. That's one of the important reasons we have elections: to induce political leaders to carry out the will of the electorate. [Margolis 2012]

This author discusses campaigning and the accountability of elected leaders. A focus on democratic theory provides a level of abstraction that

elides race. In another letter, after mentioning that President Obama is a legal scholar, the author challenges a nativist:

How about it: The president and you mano a mano in a debate on the fine and esoteric points of constitutional law. That could get embarrassing for you quite quickly. [Dillon 2012]

Again, a political frame, referencing constitutional law, provides a means to un/intentionally justify Obama's immigration policy *without* including the fact that most immigrants are minorities.

Contributing Americans Frame

Pro-immigrant authors also developed the abstraction lamination by framing immigrants as economic and social contributors:

Most of these dreamers are extraordinary young people who have excelled, graduating from universities with high honors, some with multiple degrees. Others are entrepreneurs who have created jobs. They have a strong work ethic and a love for this country. [Gutierrez 2012]

The above excerpt casts immigrants as industrious, accomplished, job creators. Such descriptors are abstractions that facilitate the unacknowledgement of race or ethnicity.

Blameless Frame

Likewise, others unacknowledge race by describing young unauthorized immigrants as blameless:

There are an estimated 50,000 to 65,000 undocumented students who graduate from our high schools each year...Many came to the U.S. at a young age, have grown up in American schools, developed American values and are American in every sense except their citizenship. [Czarlinsky 2012]

This letter emphasizes both the Americanness of unauthorized immigrants and also argues that they are not responsible for any legal violations. For another example:

President Barack Obama...did the right thing by issuing an order to stop the deportation of children who were brought here illegally through no fault of their own and who have worked hard and lived by the rules. [Bottone 2012]

While this letter supports unauthorized immigrants, it does so without acknowledging race and ethnicity. That is, the charges of racism and discrimination go unused in this lamination. The author casts certain unauthorized immigrants as untarnished. Of course, this framing indirectly implicates the parents of these children. The author does not strengthen the accusation with contextual information about how and why immigrants came to the United States.

Indian Mascots

By contrast, the complete unacknowledgement of race by mascot opponents was very rare. It was possible, however:

Bottom line—human beings are not mascots. [Dambrauskas 2007]

Here, the author uses a common framing of Indian mascots, but does not include any racial frames. In this context, the abstraction lamination is unusual. The data cannot tell us why authors have not acknowledged race or the consequences of having done so. Comparisons with other laminations that will follow, however, will demonstrate that authors have the option of addressing other laminations.

Pigmentation Lamination

The second way that anti-mascot and pro-immigrant authors would negotiate norms of color-blindness was to contribute to the pigmentation lamination. Here, race and ethnicity are acknowledged, but, as the label suggests, such recognition is only skin deep. Those who take this option do not recognize discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities. We found the pigmentation lamination in 7 percent (8/111) of pro-immigration letters and 10 percent (6/58) of anti-mascot letters.

Immigration Letters

For example, the following author recognizes the ethnicity of immigrants without acknowledging the discrimination they face in the United States:

many Muslims come to the United States to flee from persecution they face in their lands...for instance...the Pakistani government has stripped the Ahmadi Muslims of all basic human rights. [Saifa 2012]

The letter identifies immigrants as a racial and ethnic minority. And while it relates discrimination that they face in Pakistan, it does not suggest that Amer-

icans are guilty of any wrongdoing. Likewise, in another letter:

Thank you, President Obama, for giving young people like Alberto the opportunity to pursue their dreams. [Terry 2012]

The immigrant being named Alberto suggests ethnicity, but the letter does not mention institutional discrimination against Latina/os. The author stages America as providing opportunity. Charges of American complicity in creating both push and pull factors go unmade.

Indian Mascot Letters

This lamination was occasionally formed by critics of Indian mascots. After mentioning problems with education, infrastructure, public pensions, and taxes, the author sarcastically chastises a State Senator who fought to defend the University of Illinois mascot:

Don't worry about all those other issues. They'll work themselves out in the long run. But this Chief Illiniwek. Now that's an important issue. [Pearce 2007]

The use of the word "Chief" serves to address the pigmentation lamination by acknowledging race. But, the contention that the matter is simply a waste of time unacknowledges the discussion of discrimination that is often attended to the debate on the Indian mascots.

Discrimination Lamination

The third option for confronting institutional racism was to align with the discrimination lamina-

tion. Authors achieved this lamination by issuing de-contextualized charges of institutional discrimination or prejudice. We found it in 4 percent (4/111) of pro-immigration letters and 16 percent (9/58) of anti-immigration letters.

Immigration Letters

For example, in a pro-immigrant letter:

The Supreme Court has upheld the most damaging element of SB 1070, Arizona's cruel anti-immigrant law. The "show me your papers" provision allows law enforcement to profile people based on the color of their skin. A community in which racial profiling is permitted—even invited—is a community deprived of its basic right to safety and dignity. [Flinchum 2012]

This author identifies racism, but does not acknowledge the context in which racial discrimination occurs. That is, it does not include the sort of frames that would lend depth to the charge of discrimination.

Indian Mascot Letters

This lamination also exists in the discourse on Indian mascots. For example:

This issue is not about being politically correct. It is about removing blatant racism. [Reid 2013]

The author explicitly criticizes Indian mascots as racist and thus forms a lamination that stands atop the mere acknowledgement of race. The author does not, however, provide a wider framework that could

support the claim. It is in the subsequent lamination that authors provide a more extensive framing of racial discrimination.

Contextualization Lamination

The final possibility for navigating color-blind ideology was to contribute to the contextualization lamination. It is at this level of the discourse where authors placed discrimination within a larger, multidimensional environment. In both cases, actors build this lamination with framings of history, comparisons to other racial and ethnic groups, and the perspective of the racial and ethnic minorities towards the allegedly institutionally racist practice. It occurred much less frequently in pro-immigrant letters (14 percent, 15/111) than in anti-mascot letters (69 percent, 40/58).

History

One way to construct the contextualization lamination is through the use of historical frames that situate the challenged institutional practice in relation to other, unambiguously and now widely discredited racist practices.

Indian Mascot Letters

Such framing was common in anti-mascot letters (31 percent, 18/58). For instance:

The name is a painful reminder of the atrocity that American Indians had to endure since the arrival of the white settlers in this country several centuries ago, and the massacre of the American Indians by those

settlers who felt that they were standing in the way of expansion. [Trice 2014]

More than 100 million Native Americans were killed by North American settlers in what has become known as the “American Holocaust.” The conscious and purposeful dehumanization of Native Americans to the level of animals allowed Europeans and the American colonists to kill Native Americans with a clear conscience for their land and resources. [Valenti 2007]

Examples of terrible atrocities, as the above excerpts demonstrate, come effortlessly in the discussion of sports team mascots. They pair the current institutional practice as not merely offensive but another link in a chain of oppressive acts.

Immigration Letters

As in the discussion of Indian mascots, authors characterize the current situation as a function of past events. Interestingly, however, such framing is quite uncommon (5 percent, 5/111).

[They] didn’t sneak across the border; they were permitted—maybe even encouraged—to walk across freely in order to perform menial agricultural and service tasks that many Americans, even in our recession, are unwilling to do. In this light, our current outrage over the presence of illegal residents rings a bit hollow. [Crisp 2012]

immigrants...confront a military-level response to the trade policies that have made it impossible for South American neighbors to sustain native agricul-

ture in the face of United States subsidies and “fair trade” policies that impoverish both our peoples. [Burrows 2012]

Both authors use an “economic history” frame to remind readers of how American policies create both push and pull factors for immigrants. Such framing shifts the focus from defending unauthorized immigrants to placing blame on the U.S. political and economic leaders. Despite their infrequency, these excerpts show that it is possible for immigration advocates to use historical frames.

Comparisons

Letter writers would also use comparison frames to add to the contextualization lamination. These frames associate the experiences of unauthorized immigrants and Native Americans with other indisputable instances of discrimination. Pro-immigration letters had comparison frames 9 percent (10/111) of the time and anti-mascot letters had them in 40 percent (23/58) of cases.

Indian Mascot Letters

Anti-mascot authors offered numerous comparisons between mascots and discredited practices. For example:

Identifying a group of people by the color of their skin is not a show of respect. We no longer refer to Asians as yellow-skinned or Hispanics as brown-skinned for the same reasons we no longer refer to Native Americans as Redskins. [Edgerton 2014]

Institutional stereotypes like Little Black Sambo, Jim Crow and the Ku Klux Klan also had long traditions. [Haukoos 2007]

The hypocrisy of racial discourse in this country is confusing. On one hand, the public is so outraged over the racist comments made by Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling, with justice coming swiftly and the NBA banning him for life. On the other hand, why is it we do not make that same connection when professional sports continues to ridicule Native Americans? [DeOcampo 2014]

The above excerpts draw a comparison between mascots and other racialized imagery. In so doing, they direct attention to the norms of American racial and ethnic relations. If a practice is unacceptable in one setting, it should also be deplorable in similar situations. Such analogies add dimensionality to the assertion that mascots are discriminatory. Likewise, the following letter creates the contextualization lamination by pointing out that the Washington, DC professional football team also had a history of discriminating against African Americans.

Here is a fun fact: In the 1960s, Washington was also the very last NFL franchise to desegregate. [Reising 2013]

The author compares discrimination against African Americans a half century ago to imagery that is offensive to many Native Americans today. This framing enhances claims of discrimination. Indian mascots are not merely offensive; they are a part of a more complex system of racial domination.

Immigration Letters

Pro-immigrant letters writers occasionally advanced comparison frames. For example:

I wonder how many individuals with fair complexion and light eyes or hair would be thought of by the police as having sneaked across the Rio Grande? [Marquez 2012]

Most people who write in are fairly transparent in that their issue is not with “the borders,” but rather with one border in particular. Recent analyses find that immigration from Mexico has gone down, if not reversed, so I’m confused why you never hear these people complain about immigration from Asia. [Turpel 2012]

The above letters go beyond the discrimination lamination by comparing the experience of victims to non-victims. The author confronts color-blind discourse by claiming that immigration policy will not influence Whites, but will affect Latina/os. The second letter undermines color-blind justifications by suggesting that nativists are focused on immigration from Mexico but not Asia. Additionally, she asserts that nativists’ racism is belied by their relative silence about Asian immigration.

Perspective

Letter writers also constructed the contextualization lamination by considering the subjective experiences of racial and ethnic minorities. To demonstrate this version of the contextualization lamination, we will provide a counter-example where it is absent:

Try not to confuse “freedom of speech” with exclusion and perpetuating hate and intolerance in our country. [Alexich 2007]

This author does not make any claims about how actual Native Americans feel about Indian mascots. The frames of hate, intolerance, and freedom direct attention to defenders of the imagery and away from Native Americans. By contrast, in both debates, a lamination developed where authors present the perspective of racial and ethnic minorities. This framing occurred in 6 percent (6/111) of immigration letters and 50 percent of (29/58) anti-mascot letters.

Indian Mascot Letters

As noted above, the constructed opinion of Native Americans is frequently a deciding factor in disputes over a particular team’s imagery. Correspondingly, critics of Indian mascots often claim that Native Americans are offended by the practice:

My relatives have been dehumanized since the Colonists “founded” this nation and we are 1 percent of the population. However, we are humans, just like you, and deserve the same respect and rights as everyone else. [Swenning 2013]

In this excerpt, the author presents herself as Native American. By claiming to be Indian, the author is providing an example of a Native American who seeks to eliminate Indian mascots. In doing so, she presents a claim of authority to define the practice (see: Silva 2007).

Immigration Letters

Much less frequently pro-immigration letters constructed the perspective of Latina/os. After identifying the Arizona’s immigration law as targeting non-Whites, the author explains:

Under the constant threat of police harassment and possible detention, even simple daily outings—running errands, driving to work, grocery shopping, taking your child to the doctor—become fraught with fear and very real risk. In Alabama, mothers drop their children off at school not knowing if they’ll be back to pick them up. [Dutt 2012]

Here, depth is added to the criticism of nativist policies towards unauthorized immigrants by describing the subjective experience (fear and uncertainty).

Discussion and Conclusion

We add to the literature on how color-blindness shapes responses to discrimination (Every and Augoustinos 2007; Goodman 2010; Rojas-Sosa 2016) with a comparative analysis that examines how anti-racists confront institutional racism in two separate contexts. This study answers two questions: *First, what general options do anti-racists have for navigating norms of color-blindness in the public sphere? Second, how does context shape their rhetorical choices?* Our answers to these two questions provide important contributions to our understanding of the social construction of race in the public sphere. Theoretically, this article offers a new way to conceptualize racial discourse. To answer the

first question, we drew on Goffman's underused concept of laminations to demonstrate the basic options anti-racists have for confronting institutional racism. By uncovering these laminations, we now have a framework with which to examine cultural norms. The answer to our second question also furthers our theoretical understandings of color-blindness. While we already knew that anti-racists have difficulty acknowledging race, we show that the avoidance of race is uneven. Race is avoided or lightly applied in pro-immigrant discourse, but it is more thoroughly acknowledged in anti-mascot discourse. This finding reveals the variability of the power of color-blindness. We will now elaborate on the significance of our answer to each question and conclude with a discussion of the limitations of this project.

The answer to our first question allows us to see anti-racist discourse in more detail. Uncovering the laminations that appear in different contexts allows us to observe features that are less salient in a particular case. For instance, we discovered the existence of the abstraction lamination. Were we to only have focused on the discourse over a particular case of institutional racism, we would not have detected it. The abstraction lamination is exceptionally fragile. It only takes a bit of framing—just a word or two—to reach the pigmentation lamination. Moreover, the abstraction lamination would seem untenable; how can it be that actors can discuss instances of racial and ethnic conflict with no acknowledgement of these characteristics? Nonetheless, many of those who speak on behalf of immigrants avoid any mention of race and ethnicity. Perhaps, they do not want others to accuse them

of “playing the race card.” Maybe Americans are so uncomfortable with racial and ethnic relations that they will evade it whenever possible? Regardless of the motive, the prevalence of such an objectively tenuous lamination speaks to the strength of the norms of color-blindness in the American public sphere.

Authors can easily transform the abstraction lamination into the pigmentation lamination. The potential power of the pigmentation lamination is that it recognizes the obvious issue that racial and ethnic dynamics are involved in the discussion without acknowledging discrimination against a particular group. Regardless of authorial intent, it unacknowledges discrimination without straining reality as thoroughly as the abstraction lamination. The pigmentation lamination is more stable than the abstraction lamination. It is simple to add in the frames that acknowledge race and comparatively difficult to discuss the discrimination that is based on racial and ethnic differences.

To create the discrimination lamination, one needs to claim that an issue is discriminatory (or directly address claims to the contrary). The contextualization lamination is more developed than the discrimination lamination. Some research suggests that framings of reality that include evidence are more effective than those that do not do so (Cress and Snow 2000; McCammon 2009). One practical implication of this study is that anti-racists should try to construct the contextualization lamination rather than the discrimination lamination. The contextualization lamination requires the use of frames that build on such claims. Greater knowledge is needed to contribute

to the contextualization lamination than to the discrimination lamination. A second practical implication, then, is that more educational work needs to be done for racists *and* anti-racists.

Second, we consider the importance of our answer to the second question in more detail. The willingness to move from the abstraction or pigmentation laminations to the discrimination or contextualization lamination is quite variable. We found that pro-immigrant authors are far more hesitant to acknowledge race than are anti-mascot letter writers. This finding suggests that topics vary regarding their *acknowledgeability*, that is, *the relative ease with which the contextual lamination is developed in racial discourses*.² Acknowledgeability, from this comparison, would appear to be connected to material interests, or the interpretation of material interests. The discontinuation of an Indian mascot will not *directly* affect the earnings of most Native Americans or non-Native Americans. That is, the relationship between an athletic team's symbolism and class interests is, at best, unclear. Moreover, actors do not typically frame it as a financial struggle. Immigration, however, certainly has economic effects. And, while those economic consequences are likely neutral or positive for most Americans (Ottaviano and Peri 2006; Peri 2011; 2012), many Americans believe that immigration jeopardizes their financial interests. Correspondingly, individuals frequently frame immigration as an economic matter. By

contrast, status conflicts often lend themselves to considerations of subjectivity. As we saw here, the conflict over Indian mascots pushes individuals to consider how Native Americans interpret this imagery. Based on this analysis, we hypothesize that acknowledgeability will be more likely in disputes over matters of collective identity and representation than in economic conflicts. That is, Weberian status politics (1968) will lend themselves to the development of the discrimination and contextualization laminations. Conversely, acknowledgeability is inhibited to the extent that actors perceive disputes as conflicts over economic or class interests. Economics, with its emphasis on abstract formal models, provides a convenient means for the unacknowledgement of race.

An alternative or supplemental interpretation of these findings is that the American collective memory of crimes against Native Americans is more developed than the collective memory of American influences unauthorized immigration. Interestingly, American contributions to unauthorized immigration are chronologically closer to the present than are the worst atrocities against Native Americans. Perhaps it is easier to collectively "remember" more distant atrocities. Further comparative analyses should help to establish the ways in which selective collective memories are variably formed.

This study does have some significant limitations. While the quantitative differences between the laminations found in pro-immigration and anti-mascot letters are striking, they are discovered by way of qualitative coding. Thus, the reliability of

² We derived the acknowledgeability from Armstrong and Cragg's (2006) concept of "commemorability," which refers to an event's potential for being collectively remembered. Similarly, certain issues have properties that more readily lend themselves to the development of pigmentation, discrimination, and contextual laminations.

these findings has not yet been established. Future studies should address this matter. Second, letters to the editor are but one arena of the public sphere. Other forums, such as blogs or comments made on Internet message boards, should also be explored. Perhaps, the forum influences acknowledgeability. Finally, these findings should be compared with the acknowledgeability of the discourse over other instances of institutional discrimination. Further research should identify the factors that strengthen or weaken color-blindness. It is our hope that

the conceptualization of laminations developed here will improve how we understand how individuals construct race and ethnicity in a variety of contexts.

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“Holding the Dream”: Women’s Favorite Reading Matter in a Portuguese Prison

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Abstract The reading practices of women, mediated by a prison library in Portugal, constituted an interesting case study. In Santa Cruz do Bispo prison, female prisoners were increasingly aged and excluded from social groups, less literate, and educated. Many were first-time library users and some were beginning readers. This research aimed to understand their reading practices and preferences, their self-assigned meanings, and the roles of reading in prison. Having become aware that industrial literature romance novels were the most requested items, a critical comparative analysis of the three most requested titles was contrasted with readers’ favorite passages to foster a deeper understanding of their preferences and sustain an integrated analysis. Furthermore, a consensualized definition of a “good read” is presented. The results from ethnography and interviews to readers and staff are analyzed taking into account class, gender, ethnicity, age, occupation, and education of the detainees. Conclusions address the fact that although the prison’s educational service and imprisonment conditions propitiated an increase in reading generally, the library was oriented by educational targets and irresponsive to certain demands expressed by readers. Secondly, women readers were using the available top-selling romance novels to sustain their introspective and prospective work, while reckoning with their past and planning for their future. In addition to this reflexive stance, escapist entertainment and knowledge building were important reading purposes.

Keywords Female Prisons; Reading; Women; Prison Libraries; Light Literature; Romance Novel; Popular Romance; Cultural Tastes

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The Special Penal Establishment of Santa Cruz do Bispo, a female prison created in 2004 within the Porto metropolitan area, is jointly run by the Ministry of Justice and the Santa Casa de Misericórdia of Porto, a Catholic charity. The municipality of Matosinhos held a protocol with the penal establishment which allowed a few women, under a special

detention regime, to work as unskilled aids outside the prison. The establishment relied on the mobile municipal library to supplement their book offer.

The prison's education service, with a director appointed by the Charity, comprised a library. One convict was responsible for maintaining the library and assisting readers. Unlike most Portuguese public library readers and beyond their sex, these readers had specific traits: they were predominantly working-class and possessed a low schooling capital. A recent decrease in schooling capital was explained by the rising numbers of incarcerated aged women, a social group still imprinted by illiteracy in Portugal in a peculiar crossing of class, gender, and age (Ávila 2006; Lopes 2011). Added to this, an over-representation of Roma women (Gomes 2003) reinforced my expectations of finding an incarcerated population with much lower literacy levels than those of the general population. However, library visits were frequent, according to the preliminary information provided by the education service. With a new daily time allocation and freed from (at least some of) their usual domestic tasks, literate women were expected, on the other hand, to have more time to read while in prison.

Starting this research, my aim was to understand women's reading practices within the scope of the prison library, their motivations and the meanings self-assigned to those practices, and how they experienced reading in confinement.

From Theory to the Research Questions

To design an adequate approach for this case of a female prison, I sought a theoretical framework to

inform and orient my initial concerns and insecurities. On the one hand, prisons remain a controversial research ground (Wacquant 2002). On the other, women's reading practices and preferences, even in other contexts, are a terrain for speculation and biased statements, but not much research in recent years. A sustained gender perspective deepened the complexity of this framework, all the more so since gender would be a structural dimension not only to address the imprisonment of women but also the reading modes of the inmates. Prison as a gendered institution and women's reading in prison are the theoretical topics I shall address next.

The Gendered Prison System

The growth of the prison population in recent decades in some Western countries bears no apparent connection to an intensification of criminal acts, but is rather a penal response by neoliberal states to the conflicts arising from poverty and the deflation of the cushioning effect provided by social welfare (Wacquant 2010). Recent research in Portugal refers to a growth in the female prison population, along with an increase in total incarceration rate (Fonseca 2010; Ribeiro 2014).

Beyond figures, Portuguese female prisoners had evidenced particular demographic traits: women were often convicted following drug seizures by the police, specifically directed at social housing estates (Cunha 2002). The concerted workings of the penal and penitentiary systems thus eventually established a process of mutual reinforcement among the prison, the housing for the working-class poor and the traffic of illicit drugs (Cunha 2010). Many

of those who worked outside the home, in formal or informal economic activities, were not benefiting from any social protection. Foreign women were frequently convicted as drug couriers (Fonseca 2010).

The type and duration of penal punishment enforced upon Portuguese women has a gendered imprint, ensuing from gender role expectations, which reflect both on an unequal weight in sentences, especially when offences contradict a docile natural female condition (Matos and Machado 2007; Fonseca 2010), and on the centering of rehabilitation being placed on housewifery (Cunha 2002).

At this point, it is interesting to recall that the history of the modern prison in Europe, starting in the late seventeenth century, is a gendered history from its inception and one clearly shaped by patriarchal standards of female sexuality. Morally dangerous women could be detained in hospitals. While most were prostitutes, others were kept in punitive or preventive custody requested by ascendant male relatives to protect family reputations, especially if women were left unsupervised at home for a long time. Then, reformation was enforced through forced female labor and religious predication (Bosworth 2000)

Reading in Prison

Some literature has been produced about reading by women incarcerated in the United States. Megan Sweeney (2008) mentions how prescribed reading was meant to have bibliotherapeutic purposes at a time when the penal system discourse was constructed around the social rehabilitation of inmates.

As the efficiency of rehabilitation programs was questioned in the 1970s, such an instrumental approach to reading was undermined and a new impulse, according to Barone (1977), was given to a demand of the right to read, on its own, independently from those programs, a right envisaged as the main rationale for prison libraries.

Taking women's own point of view as a narrative source, present-day imprisoned women are considered as investing in reading for different, varied purposes; according to Sweeney (2004; 2008), reading is a means to regain the humanity of which the institution robs them, to reassess their personal histories, to deepen self-awareness, to attribute new meanings to their lives through the experiences they live vicariously while reading, and to experiment with new subject positions through processes of projective identification. To enhance self-esteem and improve literacy are other purposes reported by Perez Pulido (2010).

Departing from this theoretical framing, social class and gender were construed as analytical dimensions along with ethnicity and education.

The Research Process

Acknowledging both the features of this readership and of their reading led me to consider this prison's library an interesting context to construct a single case study (Burawoy 1998) of female reading in confinement. A flexible research design was drawn to accommodate the expected uncertainty in the actual field of research. A qualitative approach was adopted, comprehending ethnography, in-depth in-

interviews, and focus group sessions. Empirical work was done from February to May 2012. A theoretical sample was constructed to reflect the perceived diversity of social class, age, education, ethnicity, occupation, and frequency of visits to the library. To acquire this perception, I requested and was granted access to some internal statistical data collected by the educational service of the Penal Establishment. In spite of the willing cooperation of interviewees, the traits of the life-cycle in prison, including the duration of detention, did not allow for a full and deep follow-up of each of the nine women initially selected for the sample, only six were constant participants during the period I visited the prison library—their data will be informed in further footnotes—others had an irregular presence. Issues raised in individual interviews were supplemented and deepened in focus groups sessions where eight to fourteen prisoners participated.

Reading practices were researched through a set of tools. Ethnographic observation was focused on the library and extended through occasional visits to the adjacent educational services facilities, the social services wings, and one visit to the cell blocks. I visited the prison library several days a week and used it to read and take notes, while observing prisoners' reading modes, how they chose and commented on their reading, and both their expectations and desires as to the library's range of books. I also focused my attention on their reading practices inside the library and asked them about their reading inside the cells. Furthermore, I could also engage in informal conversations with prisoners visiting the library, both borrowers and non-borrowers, and prison guards. I had several meetings with social service

professionals, and one with the education service manager.

During this process, the fact that some education service staff expected these women to be more easily attracted to gain reading habits through light literature novels led me to question this view and address it while observing their reading practices. To do this, even if tentatively, I organized a reading group with twelve women, including the aforementioned six. The prisoners and I collectively read and commented on a short story that did not fit the genres they were familiar with (Pires 2006).

Finally, I presented and debated the main results with most of the participating readers and with the social assistant who was assigned by the Establishment to accompany my research. The prison director was unavailable during my fieldwork. The names of prisoners used in this text were self-chosen for anonymity.

The Penal Establishment

The prison facilities are located in a small town near Porto, in a region with some manufacturing companies, several small scale and subsistence agricultural fields, which is now mostly marked by big supermarkets and large commercial and logistic areas. Another prison, for men, is located in a neighboring parish.

The building has a functional design and good quality materials. Courtyards, some decorated with green flower beds, are used by young children to play and to stroll. Prisoners may work for

companies under a special contract with the prison's management for a few hours a day, usually in unskilled tasks with very low pay. Convicted women are distributed among four wings, one with special cells for mothers with children, and an internal daycare center in a separate area of the compound. Cells are frequently personalized with televisions and radios, occasionally with vividly colorful curtains.

Visitors may have their image of a penal establishment shaken, as the whole compound appears strikingly normal, exhibiting an efficient and utterly clean space. This space is still clearly marked by the watch tower and barbed wire on the outside and security procedures at the entrance hall, while inside, gates, guards, and the pace of routines are constant reminders. Loudspeakers calling prisoners by given numbers punctuate intervals of silence. The real prison, a stricter space, for prisoners and guards only, begins beyond a further gate. Above it, the label Penal Establishment indicates the separation between staff, social care, and educational areas and the cell blocks. Inside the cell blocks, visual control is assured from ground level, and the two upper levels of cells, serviced by a mezzanine, open onto a common space in which sound resonates.

Characterizing Women Prisoners

Socio-demographic data from the prison's statistics relating to 2011, national statistics relating to women during the same year (in brackets), and data from Fonseca's study (2010) on this very prison were all used for comparison and comprehensiveness of this study. Data from a previous decade and another lo-

cation—Tires, Lisbon county—were also taken into account (Cunha 2002).

Santa Cruz inmates have a certain social homogeneity as far as age and social class are concerned, according to internal data and to Fonseca (2010), which is in line with the findings from other female prisons (Cunha 2002).

According to the prison records, 281 women were incarcerated by the end of 2011, one third preventively. Almost two thirds were in the 30-49 years age group. Almost 15% were foreigners (compared to a national total of 3.9% foreign residents). About 14% were illiterate (6.8%, nationally), 60% had 4 to 6 years of basic schooling (35.4%, nationally), and fewer than 4% held a university degree (13.6%, nationally in 2010). The majority worked outside the home, others were housewives or unemployed, and a small number were retired. The most common economic activity outside the home was that of a peddler or stallholder at markets.

As for ethnicity, inmates were mostly White, while the Roma/Gypsy¹ population accounted for 17% (against an estimated 0.6% in society at large) and the Black population for 1.6% of the total. A large majority lived in the north of the country. Drug and drug-related offences accounted for 58.5% of convictions, while 35.9% were recidivists. The vast majority were mothers. Though allowed to have intimate visits once a month, married or not, only 9.6% actually gained access to this privilege (Fonseca 2010; Campos 2011; Nogueira 2013).

¹ Gypsy is the term chosen by this ethnic community in Portugal to designate itself, the reason why I have kept it.

Family ties were always present in the interviewees' narratives and children were especially mentioned. Even in prison, as a particular gender trait, women continue to have an important care-giving role (Cunha 2002; Zaitzow 2003). In Santa Cruz, several women working inside the prison used to send a substantial part of the little they earned to their families. Relatives have their visiting time on Sunday afternoons.

The Prison Atmosphere

The prison resembles a hospital with its long corridors and clean facilities. Female guards watch over the cell's wings, male guards are responsible for the general security tasks.

The atmosphere is strangely calm, especially out of the cell's wings. However, emotional responses to incarceration are still noticeable. Constrained emotion and depression emerge in many faces; at times some women walk by with eyes red from crying.

Learning how to interact and behave is a permanent challenge. Inmates complained vehemently about an extensive row of prohibitions regarding conduct—to their knowledge all tacit and permanently changing—a reason for a permanent state of alert and instability. According to Jim Thomas (2003:3), behavior control in prison may be achieved through a multiplicity of devices, from the enforcement of rules and uniforms, to unusual schedules, and to paternalistic attitudes from managers and staff, driving inmates to a state of "learned helplessness." Medication and occupational therapy are also commonly used to modulate behaviors in Santa Cruz.

Revolt and resentment at unjust treatment appear to be more common during the first months of incarceration, especially for those claiming to have been unfairly sentenced. It is very likely that these women have suffered prior abuse from parents or male partners—at least half, in studies from the U.S. (Ferraro and Moe 2003; Sweeney 2004). One social worker stated that, from her empirical knowledge, the same applies in this prison, although women may not, themselves, conceive of those situations as abusive. The female guard servicing the library area provided some advice to counteract what she interpreted as the expression of deep sorrow or depression: "Now, you wipe your tears, make your face up, and I don't want to see you in such a state again," "Be aware, don't get involved with the wrong kind of people here!," "Take this book, read it, and go to the gym, you'll feel better."

Besides school, arts, and handicraft workshops, library attendance—all from Monday to Friday—and occasional reading groups promoted by the education department, other scheduled activities are limited to the morning religious instruction and Sunday Mass. Prisoners are awoken at 7h00 and locked back in their cells at 19h00. Common areas, such as the school, the workshops, the library, or even the adapted chapel—the use made of the gym on Sundays—are places for discreet conviviality as conversation among prisoners, other than in the context of an organized activity is not allowed. Prison routines enact another form of incarceration.

The prisoners' discourse of atonement is frequently marked by a religious tone, absent in other conversation contexts. They may be voicing the prescribed,

legitimized speech of their custodians. Suspicion is a current defense tactic: I was clearly aware of the mistrust my presence triggered on occasion. Compliance with and subjection to the system are facets of prison life. Prisoners may end up internalizing the staff's speech in a defensive way when questioned. At some moments, many interviewees expressed regret, their present condition being frequently voiced as an "opportunity" for betterment. Additionally, and in a most striking paradox, imprisonment may be experienced as a relief, compared to their prior living conditions (Zaitzow and Thomas 2003; Matos and Machado 2007), as some confided. Now they have easier access to education and medical care—on the premises—which is particularly important for the many drug addicts or for those in need of dental care.² Manuela³ explained that she would probably have died, if she had not been treated for drug addiction in prison. She got control over her life back and she was also proud that her personal achievement might constitute an example for her children. By having arts and crafts classes, acting in a play, women discover, as I was often told by Celeste⁴ and Margarida,⁵ forms of creativity and expression which "they didn't know they had in them." "There are gypsy women who are able to read!" Maria, a 55-year-old Roma woman, assured me with a confident, proud smile. The Roma women referred to the opportunity of getting a secondary school certificate, after facing a gendered barrier to school attendance imposed by fathers—Maria her-

self—or husbands—as in the case of Dayara.⁶ Helena⁷ said: "The only good thing I'll be leaving with is schooling; apart from that, our brain gets slower and slower, day after day after day. I feel increasingly distanced from society, more and more afraid of what I'll find outside. Because it's too long! Isolated. But, who am I to go against the system? So I have to endure." This mixed ambience of vigilance, intimacy, deprivation, and powerlessness produced a curious resemblance, in Maria João's⁸ mind, to that of the "Catholic boarding school" she unwillingly lived in during her adolescence. Surprisingly, the difference she retained from her memories is that the boarding school had much stricter rules and was even more oppressive.

Due to ambivalence about their prison experiences, women were often confronted with a need for deep self-reflection and a constant reassessment of their past acts.

Deprived of freedom, dealing with guilt, regret, solitude, rage, homesickness, they resisted the dehumanizing process of imprisonment and they voiced it through their life narratives. Affective life is improved through investment in individuation practices such as detailed attention to clothing, make-up, and cell decoration. "Inside here, under detention, we feel everything in a stronger way," Margarida explains, "twice as much," Celeste cuts in, "We live everything more intensely!" says Maria João, nod-

² The Public Health system does not provide for dentistry.

³ 50 years, White, lower-class, taking secondary classes.

⁴ 43 years, White, clerical technician, lower-middle-class, upper-secondary education, educated abroad.

⁵ 41 years, White, industrial technician, lower-middle-class, upper-secondary education.

⁶ 30 years, Gypsy, peddler, taking secondary classes.

⁷ 18 years, White, did not complete her 9th year at school, worked in a shop owned by her lower-middle-class family.

⁸ 54 years, White, artistic professional who studied abroad, with an academic degree, lived frequent moves from middle- to lower-class.

ding in agreement. Going to school, reading previously unknown authors, they get glimpses of realities and emotions that widen the horizons of their expectations. These activities reinvested them with the humane, sensitive traits of which their condition as prisoners deprived them, and could give way to appreciation and recognition from others within and outside prison, as was the case of a theatrical performance staged outside the prison which gained media coverage.

This does not mean that they assumed justice was being done, which was even more clear as many of those surveyed represented prison as a "crime school." Profiting from every single opportunity to combat solitude and to collect skills and resources, whether cognitive or emotional, was a form of resisting the depersonalization and the stigma associated with imprisonment and of grasping the hope of a better future, one important facet of life in prison.

Reading and Library Practices Before and During Prison Time

Books in the library were shelved by subjects and genres. No catalogue was used and, instead of browsing, readers usually sought advice from a co-prisoner, Celeste, who performed the duties of a library assistant. "Read this, it will do you good!," was the phrase with which she would frequently dismiss them. She was by far the *reference system* most invoked by prisoners, closely followed by their teachers' suggestions.

In contrast to the noisy cell wings, the library is felt by prisoners as a quiet place. Though officially not

allowed, it is occasionally used as a place for concealed conversations. Most of the reading is done within the cells with borrowed books, when there are no programmed activities, and since prison nights "last long."

Reading the only daily newspaper title was a habit for a very few library frequenters, most of whom said they preferred to watch the news in their cells to keep informed. The available magazines were not much appreciated either, except for handicraft magazines. In most cases, they were carelessly browsed just to pass the time. Some popular women's magazines focusing on the lives of socialites were the object of scorn by two of the youngest interviewee prisoners, who felt those lifestyles were alien to them. In a total of 8000 books, several thousand monographs are mostly left untouched: the books on art, literature, or science sections, especially targeted at an academic, specialized audience, donated by a philanthropic foundation, are neither browsed nor promoted. In stark contrast, the sections classified as *Novels*—romance novels, *Life Stories*, what book sellers would designate as *Misery Books*, and *Self-Help*—present very worn books, a few of which have duplicate copies. A poetry title is especially coveted, as I will refer to further on. Teachers working under the adult secondary school certification program bring in and suggest some other books specifically for school assignments. The most requested books were sometimes hidden from view by the assistant, in an—unfruitful—effort to draw attention to the rest of the collection. On the other hand, as readers tended to enquire as to what was most requested, this practice eventually reinforced the overuse of some titles.

Younger women indulge in computer games, only occasionally, on the two computers available. Internet access is only possible in the classrooms and under the supervision of the teachers. A few dozen CDs and video cassettes were displayed. Video watching was an appreciated group activity and a specific purpose for some frequent visitors, including some who do not read books.

Personal Histories of Reading, Library Usage, and Preferences

“Each case is just one case, we’re all equal and all different, that is, we’re all equal because we’re all in the same situation, we’re all different because each one of us has our own kind of reading,” thus did Celeste summarize the basis of her recommendation procedure, a procedure she contends is based on prior detailed feedback given by readers.

According to personal histories, most visitors had not been closely acquainted with books before imprisonment. Among the interviewed, I met only one frequent library user and a few occasional ones. Almost all declared that, when living with their families, they could not find the desired free time to read. Additionally, some made a point of saying that books were unaffordable for their families of origin or constituted ones. Those who were frequent readers previously now devoted more time to reading. The library had revealed authors and titles which they would have missed in their usual course of life, some added. On the other hand, those few who used to be and were frequent readers had their relatives bringing in books upon request.

The library offered the possibility to choose among genres and types of documents such as poetry, romance, historical or detective novels, self-help, biographies/misery books,⁹ cooking, newspapers, magazines, videos, allowing for some individuality in tastes within what might be classified as easy-reading. In comparison to an ordinary public library collection, however, past or present canonical literature was barely represented. Teachers occasionally offered romance novels they had read and thought would be suited for the prisoners’ reading skills and tastes. Some benefits and shortcomings of the library’s reading offer were apparent. First of all, the library actually propitiated more reading to many: those who entered the prison as frequent readers had developed more intensive practices, and some who had not previously acquired that disposition had experienced new and enjoyable opportunities. Secondly, observing actual usage of the library unveiled how the opportunity to read diversely was not being fostered by the institution. Some foreign convicts expressed disappointment at the absence of canonical authors they were familiar with. Kadija,¹⁰ born in Guinea-Bissau, regretted not being able to find any title by Mia Couto: “I like African authors.” A South-American woman confirmed in surprise: “You don’t have any Benedetti?!” Similar requests were barely or tardily met by a municipal mobile library with decreasing routes, apparently due to staff shortages.

⁹ A book marketing category which consists of supposedly factual life stories in which protagonists endure long and extremely painful, deprived life conditions.

¹⁰ 51 years, Black, domestic servant, recent descent into lower-class, taking secondary classes.

As to collection criteria, there were no explicit, institutional reading promotion policies. Reading was instead functionally oriented by teaching targets and tacitly shaped by the representations, framed by class and gender, of what education and social service professionals considered suitable reading contents for women who would most probably be under-schooled, excluded, and poor. Judging from other experiences during this research, I would also contend that leisure reading, reading as a pleasurable activity, was not inscribed in the institutional, disciplinary frame of the prison.

Secondly, and beyond reading frequency, the imprisonment experience produced dispositional shifts in the reader subjects, ensuing from emotional, social, power deprivation (Skeggs 1997), which led to the resignification of the practice, even while rereading known texts. While denying that their reading habits changed after detention, these women actually claimed to remain unspoiled by an environment morally constructed as negative and denied the stigmatization of the prisoner condition, as became clear in other conversations. Some women regained intimacy with reading or discovered motivation to read anew, in a condition of affective deprivation: "Here, I have found myself again in literature," says Manuela. Margarida asks: "Do you know who my best lover is every night? It's a book because I sleep with that book and I have lots of emotions!" "We need beautiful things! Who doesn't love love stories?," declares Celeste, jumping into the conversation.

Thirdly, and, in my view, however pleasurable, these experiences were actually produced with the

books that were within arm's reach in everyday life. If pleasure was not a foreseeable purpose for reading in prison, choices were actually limited by the sameness of the collection, not counting the erudite and study books.

Representations and Significance of Reading

Projecting into romance characters' identities, vicariously living their experiences, gauging their own past deeds against those of fictional characters, as if rehearsing alternative lives, were strategies frequently mentioned during the interviews. These strategies are a fundamental part of the intensive, introspective work performed by women reckoning with their past and planning for a future (Sweeney 2008).

Discussing what reading means in the focus group provided some clarification: "I'm going to see if I'm a good mother," Maria João said, by reading a book recommended on television. "We are always expecting there'll be passages, there are phrases, [that come] to identify with our lives," she explains. Manuela declared similarly: "I'm already 50, [but] such an alternative had not come to my mind, and if I had planned the alternative I found in the book, maybe the solution would've been different" and she would not have been convicted. Margarida nodded in agreement. Going from everyday life to romance and back was a constant journey, the literary narrative coupled with the self-narration of personal lives, as novels could provide models for world-interpretation (Meretoja 2014). Memoirs were also appreciated. Reading the story of

Christiane F.¹¹ made 18-year-old Helena feel “good” about her accomplishment, as she herself had “managed to get off drugs.” Having an important affective role by facilitating emotional work, reading is frequently represented in these readers’ discourse as a “sacred remedy” to ease them to sleep, as “therapy,” “consolation,” “escape.” On the other hand, it may also be a form of “adrenaline,” fostering the “excitement” of which a totally routine and structured life is devoid. Romance novels “don’t have to be true,” in Celeste’s opinion; this awareness did not deter them from reading eagerly. Reading and writing became intimately associated. “Making our stuff” in the workshops, writing, and drawing may, for Margarida, “become almost an addiction” while in prison.

Reading was also represented as instrumental to improving writing skills for those schooled abroad or barely schooled, and for non-native speakers of Portuguese.

Briefly, representing reading assumed different contours. The most evoked representations were grounded in emotional work—a search for balance, for excitement—or grounded in questioning of identities—self-assessment, projection onto characters, prospective exploration, and the consideration of alternative ways of life. Additionally, representations emerged as being grounded in escapism (Pereira, Pimenta, and Miranda 2011) and entertainment, and, for the less literate, on knowledge building. For heavier and more experienced readers, with a more

diversified, cumulative reading mode, associations were more complex, mixing several representational images.

Analyzing Favorite Titles and Genres

A list of most requested titles was checked against the personal preferences of frequent library visitors, and especially of active participants in this research.

Teresa Machado’s *Con-sensualidade*,¹² an erotic poetry book, was probably the most requested. Readers picked verses to compose love letters, in a process similar to those informed by Álvarez and Álvarez (2011) and Sweeney (2010).

The self-help books were shelved close to the misery books with an exotic nuance¹³ and to memoirs having prison or drugs as a central theme. Some of the most read romance novels also contained a self-help facet, delivering advice and accentuating forms of conduct. Light literature, also known in academia as industrial literature or para-literature, was the core genre of the most used library section. It should be noted that some of these novels may be commonsensically referred to as kitschy or tacky. Within academia, these best-selling genres are not frequently researched, and likewise a current academic categorization for these book trade labels is difficult to trace. On the other hand, categorization was irrelevant for readers who used the library’s signage labels to communicate.

¹¹ “H.”: *Autobiography of a Child Prostitute and Heroin Addict* by Christiane F., Susanne Flatauer, Kai Hermann, Horst Rieck. London: Arlington Books, 1980.

¹² Wordplay with *Consensualidade* (consensuality) and *Com* (with or in a), *sensual*, *idade* (age).

¹³ E.g., *Sold: A Story of Modern-Day Slavery; Burned Alive*.

Having identified the most requested titles and comparing them with the interviewees' favorite titles, one particularly requested genre attracted my attention: the romance novel. This led to a number of secondary research questions: how and why did these women value specific titles, and what were their most valued traits. Answering these questions would allow me to understand not only why they read but also the kind of reading they would call a good book.

In dialogue with the interviewees, three titles were selected among the most read in the library: Nora Roberts's *Holding the Dream* (2005), Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* (2007), and Sveva Casati Modignani's *Ed infine una pioggia di diamanti* (2006).¹⁴ These titles were then analyzed, focusing on plot and narrative structure, theme and/or ideological background, character building, stylistic devices, and language level.

All three authors are known to write so-called light literature novels. The authors themselves may classify them differently; Modignani designated her works as rose-tinted novels,¹⁵ Paulo Coelho seemed to prefer esoteric or self-help novels, and Margarida Rebelo Pinto made a point of calling them pop novels (Sousa 2006).¹⁶

For the readers, the novels were, nevertheless, a single category, all possessing the criteria for a favorite read, which were debated during our focus group

sessions: first, a story with characters they could empathize; second, a story written according to their literacy skills; third, a pleasurable reading experience—"not a bunch of misfortune," "we already have enough of that"; unless compensated for by the fourth condition, that of a repairing, but not necessarily happy ending.

The interviewed readers were asked to extract two or three favorite passages from their own favorite titles.

At this point it should be stressed that consensus was not uncommon during group sessions on matters of taste and related issues, and that convergent answers were also obtained from individual interviews. Alongside the previously mentioned social homogeneity, interaction with detainees also revealed that reading tastes are a subject for conversation and that a negotiation of meanings occurs, along with peer recommendation, as part of their socialized reading process.

First, I shall briefly analyze each title selected and compare the main common characteristics. Second, I shall address the reasons stated by the readers for their preferences for such titles and such passages.

Nora Roberts's *Holding the Dream*

Holding the Dream pertains to a series of three books, the serialization becoming patent from the shared use of the word *dream* in the titles.

A girl is adopted by a rich family, her father having died after being accused of embezzlement. As an adult, she will be the target of a similar accusation,

¹⁴ *And Finally a Shower of Diamonds*, apparently not translated into English.

¹⁵ Literally translated.

¹⁶ Margarida Rebelo Pinto, best-selling author, declared that light literature is a derogatory classification, preferring to use "pop" to designate her novels, stressing that she objects to the use of an intellectual, academic stance in her writing.

and will have to fight to prove her innocence. Being depicted as an independent, rational, tough woman (an accountant), she eventually gives in to a marriage proposal by a man who patiently pursues her, thus eventually breaking down her emotional defenses and leading her to admit to being in love, too.

The characters are described within their groups of close friends more as types than as individuals: *Margo's going to be a sex fiend, you're going to search for love, and I'm going to bust my ass for success. What a group.* Occasional similes are trite: *soft baritone voice that flowed like honey*—"baritone" apparently being a commonly used adjective by the author to qualify male voices in other books. The male protagonist has an aristocratic touch to his name, Byron DeWitt.

Ideologically, what first struck me was the blatant, unquestioned use of gender role stereotypes. The female hero has personality traits which are initially depicted with emotional distance—a successful career woman who appears not to be feminine enough—only to be cherished by the author's script when she overcomes her reticence and accepts the idea of getting married, that is, when she is soothed into femininity by the hand of a wiser, experienced man. Along with this, social class ascendancy is presented as a natural reward for a hard-working person, the accomplishment of a dream for a girl of lower-middle-class origin. Both aspects constitute the happy ending's essence.

Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes*

A naive young woman, raised in a small village in Brazil, immigrates to Switzerland, and ends up as

a prostitute who makes a great deal of easy money. Following her amorous disappointments during adolescence, she embraces her profession unquestioningly, only deciding that, to be strong, she must be the best. That there is no explanation for the way the universe works, that one should surrender to life's course and accept one's own future is the motto of the plot. Eleven minutes was the usual duration of sex sessions with clients. The protagonist admits to feeling attracted to a painter—Hart, seemingly a wordplay with heart—who is capable of seeing the "inner light" in her, yet incapable of experiencing sexual pleasure. After indulging in sadomasochism with a client according to a pristine ritual, a new path to pleasure is revealed to her through emotional rebirth. When finally making love to the painter, he is also driven to an emotional awakening, both finding true love in sacred sex.

The psychological portrait of the characters is feeble: the consecutive transformation from a naive girl into the most requested prostitute and then into a sacred one, ending up as a true lover, follows a fuzzy process, mostly left unaccounted for. Sudden switches in locations and psychological atmosphere are frequent. The succession of arousal and disgust, due to the intense and voyeuristic S&M sex scenes, is delivered in close resemblance to the roller-coaster metaphor used to depict life's course and the impossibility, or inefficiency, of individual choice. This emotional stirring and disorientation precedes the spiritual turn offered by the happy ending. Since moral advice is instilled by the plot and made explicit by the narrator's commentary, this novel may also, to a large extent, be considered of the self-help type.

Sveva Casati Modignani's *A Shower of Diamonds*

Despite being born into a rich family and becoming poor, a man dies leaving a huge fortune to quarrelling descendants, including a handful of diamonds hidden in a place known to none of the living. A family imbroglio is plotted around the struggle for the multi-millionaire's wealth. The main female character, sexually abused as a child, abhors coital sex. Born poor, and now a successful fashion model profiting from her seductive looks, she is an independent, intelligent woman who is introduced to high society by the hand of a rich man she does not love. Overcoming a reluctance to acknowledge she too has fallen in love, she re-encounters him, after he has been castrated by mobsters, which makes him more suited to her desires. Upon his death, and reacting to the heirs' greed, she eventually discovers the secret spot based on a unique comprehension of his mind, leaving the diamonds untouched only to be found by chance after her death.

The plot is confusing and baroquely intricate, characters lack psychological definition, appearing to be purposefully constructed in a retrospective fashion to fulfill their roles. Suspense is not achieved, as the location of the diamonds becomes quite obvious early on in the narrative.

Coldness, suspicion in interpersonal relationships, and a tactical alliance with a rich man together with a twist of fate are presented as a recipe for upward social mobility and success. Aversion to a lower-middle-class status is clearly stated in utterances such as: *Would she be able to escape that ob-*

tuse mediocrity of the village's well-off? References to a lesbian and a gay man are occasionally dropped and ridiculed, while stereotypical gender roles are ascribed to the main characters.

Preferred Passages

Selecting preferred passages was an uncomfortable exercise for some of the interviewees as they were confronted with the effort of both reflexivity and documenting their preferences, which required occasional clarification and incentive. Not unsurprisingly, the most educated, avid readers were enthusiastic.

Almost all of the passages were selected for an alleged similarity to self-lived experiences. Contrary to a purely escapist reading mode, they were instead actively and selectively focusing on vicarious experiences as part of a process of identity re-building. Along a frequent purposeful selection of titles as appropriate for introspection, the selection of passages reflected a reading mode oriented to self-assessment, projection onto characters, prospective exploration of alternatives for future life stages. The importance assigned to emotivity and excitement in reading was activated by reasoning about their present condition and an expectation of empowerment to plan ahead (Meretoja 2014).

As for stylistic devices, a single expression was selected: "a warm gush of tears," considered more refined writing than a plain "cry." While imprisonment had enhanced readers' emotivity, which might account for a need for emotional stimulation and its naturalization, similar devices were not as

commonly used in their favorite reading, as I had anticipated.

Another selection was a maxim of magical nature considered to convey wisdom, extracted from Paulo Coelho's *The Valkyries: Everything that happens once can never happen again. But everything that happens twice will surely happen a third time.*

Responding to a Proposed Dissimilar Narrative

Further to clarify the mentioned criteria for a good read, I proposed to a group of twelve women that they read and debate a short-story, known to none. The renowned award-winning writer Jacinto Lucas Pires (2006) resorts to, and humorously surpasses a soap-opera-like plot, countering the slant of a commodified narrative. A football celebrity and his capricious lifestyle are the center of a narrative with a most unexpected turn, and a striking, darkly comedic end, written in a mix of elaborate literary and quotidian language. Seated in a circle, participants took turns reading the story aloud, which was smoothly understood, vividly commented on, and appreciated. Additionally, my questions were addressed and answered straightforwardly. Commentaries developed from condemning the lifestyle of the male star as too obsessed with success and money and who disregarded his family, and the approval of moral values such as reciprocity and family support. The author's uncommon style was acknowledged, the gory details of the closure comprehended as appropriate for the context. The absence of a stereotypical happy ending was allegedly overcome by a captivating narrative and by the eliciting of shared moral values.

Comparing Titles: An Updated Recipe for Commercial Success

Comparing the three selected novels, some common traits emerge. The formulaic features of the three novels are evident: the narrative is centered around a woman, in an upward social trajectory reached through matching with a wealthy, older man. Love—a synecdoche for heterosexual love—naturally happens at first sight following a sequence of mishaps, at times threatened by sexual issues, only to be overcome by true love. Female heroes, even if depicted as independent and reluctant before the ties of love—in consistency with the individualistic, competitive successful woman role model (McRobbie 2009)—eventually give in, as beings who eventually find completeness in marriage and maybe in motherhood. Male protagonists are mature, both in age and in mind, calm and strong and, being rich, provide perfect financial and emotional support. Blurred psychological and/or physical portraits facilitate the readers' emotional projection.

Work and money-making are surrounded by omissions; fortunes just happen to accumulate even under adverse circumstances. Social issues are absent or named just to be dropped (war, in Modignani's novel) or ridiculed (street demonstrations, in Coelho's).

Narrative structures are filled with inconsistencies—according to posts on sites such as Goodreads, personal blogs, or online bookstores, fan readers detect them. The same applies to the repetitiveness of plots and situations which prison readers sometimes acknowledged, but by which they felt undeterred.

Both inconsistencies and repetitiveness are the consequences to be expected from massive output, as authors may deliver several titles a year. Characters may be serialized, as in Modignani's "Dream" series, much like televised serials.

Many of these traits are coincidental with those underlined by Amorós (1968) when referring to the *novelas rosa*, published from 1946 up to 1968 by Corin Tellado, a top selling author of pulp literature for women in Portugal during those decades.¹⁷ The contemporary light novel incorporates permanences such as the repetitive formulae, the stereotypical plot, theme and characters, the emotional stock of the Tellado novels, to mention an author familiar to many Portuguese readers.

A most striking difference is that contemporary women protagonists are invested with a stronger character; it is women who are now endowed with some masculine traits, being averse to marriage or deep emotional investment. Fifty years later, women are re-framed as secundarized subjects, angled from a conservative perspective that recovers traditionalist values of femininity, via a repackaging of narratives which tacitly outdates emancipatory ideas passed off as unnecessary in a post-feminist society, as McRobbie (2009) suggests.

The bourgeois upper-class's (supposed) mode of life appears to be a model for the social aspirations of middle-class women, the marketing target for these industrial literature novels.

¹⁷ These novels were published in Portugal by different imprints until the end of the 1990s.

However, addressing an issue ignored by Calinescu (1987), I align with Radway's (1984) and Sweeney's (2010) standpoint that reading is also an instance of agency and resistance, and that readers may appropriate narratives to different ends, as this empirically based research has unveiled and confirmed. As Olalquiaga (1998) puts it, recalling Walter Benjamin, in times of crisis, the symbol is emptied of its significance and allegory takes its place, as an external form which may take on new meanings in the process of appropriation that reading is. In her view, kitsch is a response assuming the form of a sensibility of loss, building on the re-creation of memories or fantasies of an idyllic past. Moreover, dispositions and satiety claimed by readers may be interpreted as preceding and succeeding an aesthetic engagement which does not exclude yet requires reflexivity (Felski 2011).

Appropriations, as Certeau (1984) stressed, are the tactics of the weak, not denying dominance relations, but corroborating them instead: in this case, readers appear to be either picking or overlooking pieces of the romantic narrative which they assemble in purposeful, reflected, and pleasurable modes of reading, their choices being socially framed and conditioned, last but not the least, by the actual offer of books inside the prison.

Although other genres and styles might fulfill the mentioned list of criteria for appreciated reading—with the likely exception of that typical happy ending—it is light literature titles that are massively present in the library and that are

promoted, even if unthinkingly, as suitable for a readership conceived of as socially and educationally limited. Commercial availability, aggressive marketing campaigns, and affordability encourage the purchase of industrial literature in society at large. The prison library's offer is not exempt from this constraint, a tendency recently also signaled and the object of criticism in some public libraries.

Conclusions

An unusual allocation of time, and the double opportunity to access books and schooling have increased reading among the women detained in Santa Cruz. Reading preferences vary, spanning through several genres, within individual tastes. Light literature books are the most appreciated, especially as providers of support for the emotional well-being and reflexive work required by readers reckoning with their past and projecting their future. Escapism, along with knowledge acquisition, also plays an important role among reading purposes.

I do not contend that the prison library—or any other—should prescribe taste and eliminate light literature, especially being aware that such a judgment may derive from class or gender prejudice. The library should, nevertheless, promote a diversification of genres and authors in order to facilitate and inform taste formation and to foster pleasurable reading, while compensating for the disadvantages of a homogenization that conceals, while it reinforces, a disregard for social, cultural, and linguistic inequalities. Group reading should

also be favored, beyond individualized practices, both to compensate for and accommodate diverse levels of familiarity with literature and to promote a collective critical analysis of texts.

This case study analysis leads me to stress that these women workers, salaried or not, some with low literacy levels, revealed preferences that are not too far from a majority of book buyers who have been consuming romance novels, thus giving way to the term best-seller.

What is currently labeled light literature may be considered as a successor to the kitsch and *rosa* novel. This literature has very clear commercial targets, and the ideology many of these books bathe in may be characterized as regressive. And it should also be stressed that reading purposes, which elicited mixed rational and emotional responses, along with aesthetic engagement, all reflect detainees' tactical and meaningful appropriations of light literature as a readily available means to cope with their life in prison, a place where social markers are present and made salient by the very distance from their original places of fabrication.

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Book Review

Bentz, Valerie Malhotra and Vincenzo M. B. Giorgino, (eds.). 2016. *Contemplative Social Research. Caring for Self, Being, and Lifeworld*. Santa Barbara: Fielding University Press

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In the preface to the reviewed volume, Sander Tideman expressively outlines: “The field of *contemplative science* offers fresh perspectives on our subjective experience of life, our ‘inner reality’ or the first-person perspective, which complements our understanding of ‘outer’ phenomena—that is, the second- or third-person perspectives” (p. 10). The word “fresh” can be regarded as essential, as for decades the world of science has appeared to be completely “deaf” to the evidences coming from first-person experience. It has been based on the belief that such experience has no connections with objective methods. Furthermore, such experiences should be limited to human/social branches, as well as to art or religion. However, as it has been shown in many academic works (e.g., Wallace 2007), first-person testimonies could have been considered at least as an addition to the “objective” measures. For instance, the scanning of human body, brain with the state-of-art technology can be supported by verbal/written experiences of a “scanned” person. Especially when it comes to people with a high level of skills in meditation practice. It therefore appears

that science does not have to lose its epistemological abilities due to using the first-person experiences, but it could benefit from it. If science is thought to be the device for exploring nature, it cannot ignore the human experience—the latter belongs to reality in the same way as sub-atomic sphere, genes, or instincts. Undoubtedly, it is the time to equip scientific laboratories with the laboratories of “mind.”

The first-person experiences can be immensely enriching as a tool of understanding human emotions and inner landscapes. Meditation and similar techniques serve for that. As studying of, for example, Buddhist philosophy convinces, the training of mind leads not only to individual development (aspiration for spiritual enlightenment), but also contributes to cultural and moral values (Loy 2015). The meditation practice is correlated with the attitude of compassion and work for others. It is an important topic for evaluation. Contemplative science means not only observation of human brain and estimation of how far we can train its flexibility (see: Begley 2007), but, most of all, complex, multi-

faceted inquiries of *conditio humana*, emotions, and social values.

The importance of contemplative studies is testified by, among others, the activities of Mind & Life Institute (see: mindandlife.org for details), organizing seminars, workshops (involving the 14th Dalai Lama, who supports the organization), but also an increasing number of academic publications. One of them is the book *Contemplative Social Research: Caring for Self, Being, and Lifeworld*. It contains 11 chapters and is divided in two parts.

The first part, entitled “Contemplative Knowing and Being,” is opened by the chapter of Zack Walsh on the political and social significance of contemplation. He underlines that “it is evident that the modern reduction of contemplation to an individual’s isolated experience is a historically and socially constructed phenomenon” (p. 28). Today, this process is reduced to using contemplation only as a tool for individual serenity. It sometimes seems to be one of the “products” available for modern consumer in high-developed capitalist countries. In a sense, it is related to the separation of the sphere of religion and public life and the phenomenon called the “invisible religion” (Luckman 1967). Walsh considers contemplation (referring to Christian, as well as Buddhist tradition) as shaped by social context which provides an opportunity for, for example, the incorporation of perspective of women into contemplative studies. It seems that contemplative studies could deal with the statement that “everything is political.” The author recommends some kind of “ecology of knowledge in the context of contemplative studies” (p. 43), based on, among

others, showing how these studies can be related to physical, social, political, or economical aspects of life. This proposition could be regarded as a kind of methodological advice.

In her chapter, Valerie Malhotra Bentz is reflecting on the relationship between phenomenology and contemplative practice. She states that phenomenology (one of the most prominent branches of contemporary philosophy) is by nature contemplative as it addresses such issues as consciousness or *epoché*. Especially, the latter might be analyzed in the context of meditation as it recommends taking one’s views and perspective in bracket. Meditation, as well as a phenomenological approach, presents the way of observing what is happening in the structure of being and—as a consequence—knowing (as human experience appears as some “projection” of minds, or, as V. Malhotra Bentz states, “we operate on our own assumptions and preconceptions” [p. 55]). Furthermore, phenomenology elaborates the existence of the “inner spaciousness” (the transcendental consciousness) shared by all beings. This, as Bentz convinces, is connected with some phenomena called “spirit,” “bliss,” or “god” (thus, with the characteristics relating to spiritual traditions). The author tends to reflect on the connection of “Atman” (inner self/soul in Eastern spirituality), “core consciousness,” and “lifeworld” concept from phenomenology.

The next two chapters are dedicated to an interesting discussion on theoretical and methodological convergences. In his chapter, Douglas V. Porpora is trying to present the connections between some branches of philosophy and spirituality. He

considers “critical realism” as more open to the contemplative sphere than, for example, positivism. It is an excellent time to test some theoretical assumptions, also due to questions of relational and the interdependent nature of reality (both in visible and, e.g., sub-atomic sphere). Whereas Xabier Renteria-Uriarte makes a proposal of contemplative science and the contemplative foundation of science (in terms of definitions, branches, and tools), he mentions that we have much to gain from contemplative studies due to their heuristic dimension. This chapter, in turn, gives rise to call for a more structural way of elaborating—there is urgent need to construct some models of contemplative science—with consistent structure, terminology system.

In his chapter, Donald McCown provides example of thinking on mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) not only for individual purposes. He accents some dimensions of MBIs, like relational, being together, or community development. The analysis is based on an empirical study of an eight-week MBI class. As the author states: “In the existential intensity of an MBI class, in which participants directly encounter their own suffering (and the possibility of death) with and through the others’ situations at the limit, strong affective charges arise, and the participants co-create a way of being with such a situation” (p. 122). It makes an understanding of community (or, human, in a broader sense) aspects of contemplation more visible, but we can look through it in a more nuanced way: it is a way of appreciating the different aspects of being contemplative—not only in terms of being focused on “consumer” ego.

The first part of the book is concluded with the chapter by Vincenzo M. B. Giorgino who reconsiders the possible relations between contemplative knowledge and social science. At first, he elaborates that the two domains belong to different realms of knowledge: the first aims to answer the human quest for meaning in life, but the second attempts to interpret social interactions. Giorgino shows, however, that step-by-step, contemplative topics become more visible in academic publications. For example, there are data indicating that there were 674 articles related to mindfulness research published in 2015, in comparison to 12 papers in 2000. He connects it, among others, with a growing meaning of secular contemplative practices, as they have appeared more as daily-basis practices than “magical/spiritual” activities. Research cannot avoid those elements that become part of everyday practices. Most of social research is based on “first-person” testimony—the subjective “state of mind” called “identity,” “personality.” The difference is, as Giorgino states, that social studies use methodology investigating states described after experience. In most cases, it is true, but we should add (especially in the context of qualitative methods of research) that social sciences are able to investigate “living” and “lived” experience during ethnographic field-work, participatory observations. Many topics—like religious communities, subcultures, sport, establish difficult spaces for research based only on “after experience” testimonies. As a consequence of encounter between social and contemplative sciences, one could reconsider the definition of self and agency, and, for example, need for critical analysis of the context in which contemplative practices are embedded.

Probably, the interconnection between social and contemplative science is more visible than one could assume. As Krzysztof Konecki points out, opening the second part of the volume, social scientists could gain a benefit from meditation during their fieldwork. He provides some practical functions of meditation for sociologists, for instance: “meditation could be a very useful tool for developing the researcher’s sensitivity and intuition... Describing our own experience of phenomena or sociological research *per se* we can locate the structures of the sociological mind during the empirical research. We can get to the essence of the experience” (p. 223). Konecki illustrates that, for example, Zen practices could support fieldwork, help to let go of all the impressions that come to the mind. In some sense, the attitude of mindful awareness seems to be crucial in every research practice as we all need to stay focused on people’s words, gestures, as well as moments of silence (which are sometimes more important than any discourse). What remains to be elaborated on in the context of using contemplative techniques during research is, for example, an issue of participation in activities which stand in contradiction with being “mindful.” For example, in research of some subcultures (football fans, rock music fans, and so on), there is a need to engage in practice like drinking alcohol. Interesting is how to connect the contemplative process and experience in such extraordinary cultural activities.

The rest of the chapters in the reviewed volume describe many different dimensions of contemplative science, sharing some spiritual insights with readers and providing some new methodological

agenda for further inquiries. Annabelle Nelson presents some interconnection between imagery and spiritual development. Focusing on image, symbols play an important role in the work on ego, as it allows reducing mental distractions. In some branches of spiritual traditions, for example, Tibetan Buddhism, the focus on saint syllable, mantra, or lama (spiritual teacher; the visualization of this form supports following a spiritual path). Nelson clearly depicts the connection between symbolic dimensions of meditation and brain physiology and psychodynamics of archetypes proposed, for example, by Carl Gustav Jung. The only weak point is that the author tries to adopt too many themes and, as a consequence, readers may feel a little confused. There is a crucial finding, however, that “There is no specific set of archetypes, nor is there a magical list to choose from. Different traditions manifest different archetypes” (p. 255). It is obvious to review many various approaches in a research paper, although in practice, the focus on one method seems to be the key to success.

Luann Drolc Fortune, using the phenomenology background, incorporates the matters of body insights into contemplative studies. She states that “Research tactics that invite the embodied lived experience of research participants, as well as the researcher are better able to convey this aesthetic dimension [connected to deeper personal insights and inspiring sense-making of one’s body—RK] to others” (p. 261). It is a topic strongly connected to both research methodology and therapeutic processes. The author presents how the analysis of somatic spheres (and sensory processes) releases the potential of individual and facilitates a deeper insight

into the self of a researcher, as well as to sensitize to different aspects of reality. This approach is visible, for example, in sport research (Allen-Collinson and Owton 2015). On the other hand, how studies by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2009) show, mindfulness can fruitfully influence some somatic aspects of life (focus on different parts of the body for pain relief).

David Casacuberta reflects on the necessity of reformulating digital contents' interface to make them serve human and moral values. He discusses the role of affordances in the sphere of interfaces, programs, and applications. There is an interesting discussion on the concept of "affordance" incorporated by Casacuberta. He shows (compiling thesis from various approaches) that affordances (generally speaking, they mean the possibility of an action) cannot be reduced to both subjective experiences and physical properties of things. The key to understanding the nature of affordances is their relational character, according to, for example, culture and ecological imperatives, affordances can become either meaningful or meaningless. The author considers the meaning of affordances in the domain of interfaces, what is particularly important as most people are functioning more and more in the "ecological" environment of Internet. We can state that affordances attributed to Internet are neither good nor bad by nature. There is advice provided by the author: "digital technologies based on conventional affordances generate plenty of distractions. Be sure that any source of distraction in the interface can be disconnected easily. Provide affordances to help the development of deep work and concentration" (p. 295). It might sound cliché, but one should be aware of how many problems

(especially young) people experience to be "disconnected" and not distracted. Perhaps the future apps and interfaces will be fitted with options: "turn off," "stay focused," "meditation mode"—the enlightened affordances for digital generations.

Christopher Mare, in the last chapter, points out the meaning of spiritual values and contemplative studies for making design decisions. He concludes: "The typical built environment of North America was constructed according to the logic of 'real estate' within the dictations of 'the markets'" (p. 322). The alternative is, for example, the project of Yoga College: "The retrofit conceptual plan emphasizes the flow of *chi* and the containment and storage of that *chi* within the campus...Entrances are reworked to facilitate an inviting openness, while other areas are designed to nurture privacy and contemplation" (p. 321). It is a kind of truism to convict that housing conditions are pivotal for well-being. With no doubt, this issue gains in significance in Polish context in which, definitely, the logic of real estate reigns. As a result, there are many residential buildings designed with no reflection on such issues as community, respect for nature, and so on.

Housing, interfaces, research methodology, psychological well-being, and many more—the reviewed book evaluates many different aspects and dimensions of contemplative studies, spaces for inquiries, and activities. As it seems, the book contributes to a branch of studies which are engaged in both cognitive processes (the study of what nature of reality and mind is) and activities contributing to creating a better world and culture. In that first mean-

ing, contemplative science seems to be an excellent “companion” for other scientific methodologies (from physics to philosophy). On the other hand, it

should be considered as an important political tool, as changing minds and hearts always influences the change of social worlds.

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Book Review

Boylorn, Robin M. and Mark P. Orbe, (eds.). 2016. *Critical Autoethnography: Intersecting Cultural Identities in Everyday Life*. London, New York: Routledge

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The book *Critical Autoethnography* dives into the humanity of sociological research. Personally and investigatively, the book looks at multiple ways in which our personal selves interact with the impersonal world. Autoethnography is a tool that can be used to investigate who we are, how the world sees us, and how we can interact with the world; therefore, through qualitative personal narrative, the book details multiple ways in which we can define self.

The central theme of this book is an investigation of how each person defines and develops self. The inclusion of various sociological theories of self also aid in the book's structure. To be defined as an autoethnography, each introspective analysis must be supported and structured by sociological theory; the book includes established explanations that could give rise to each individual's development of self.

The book is divided into four sections, each detailing different circumstances in which a definitive

"self" can be defined: 1) Complicating Mundane Everyday Life Encounters; 2) Embracing Ambiguous and Non-Binary Identities; 3) Negotiating Socially Stigmatized Identities; 4) Creating Pathways to Authentic Selves.

The first section, "Complicating Mundane Everyday Life Encounters," argues that self-identity is developed through specific experiences. One's identity is constructed through moments in which our identity is questioned, and especially how one is shaped by the experience. This chapter delves into the profound and lasting effects that experience can project on one's identity, and how one experience can become an entire identity. One example is a woman's experience as the first member of her family to go to college. She is suddenly not identified by others through her complex history with drugs, rehabilitation, and transformation of her family and choices, which were axial aspects of her developed identity. She is simply identified as a first-generation college student, and she begins to accept the new identity as well. The chapter asks,

how can one reintegrate their old identity into a new identity that forms during an experience? This is investigated in the personal reflection of a woman whose husband gets cancer, and the couple develops a “sick identity,” in which the cancer affects every aspect of their lives, including their sense of self. Ultimately, the first section outlines how identity is shaped through specific experience.

In the second section, “Embracing Ambiguous and Non-Binary Identities,” we find the definition of self through intersectionality. Each chapter tries to find identity through overlapping labels in which the subjects find applied to them. We learn about a woman who finds identity at the intersection of Black, White, woman, and lesbian. She does not identify “self” with just one of her labels, so she creates her own at their crossroads. The self that each other finds is one that they create, taking aspects of their many identities to forge a path to their own authenticity. Intersectionality is the tool used in this section, powerfully wielded to create self-identity.

In the third section, “Negotiating Socially Stigmatized Identities,” autoethnography is used to investigate how one can interact with a world that denies one’s identity; additionally, the section critically looks at how having to fight for acceptance of one’s identity can shape that identity. Focusing specifically on performance identity, the section asks, *how can a sense of self survive despite stereotypes and expectations of stigmatized identities?* Furthermore, *how do outside expectations shape the identity of marginalized people?* We find answers through autoethnography and the personal reflection of what it means

to have a marginalized identity. A self-identified “bear” performs his role as a fat, hairy, gay, man while slowly learning how to accept his own identity. A Black woman applies the many stereotypes of her identified group and compares them to her own reality; she finds her authentic self because of and through those stereotypes, simultaneously embracing and rejecting them. This section discusses the effect of marginalization on the construction of identity.

In the fourth and final section, “Creating Pathways to Authentic Selves,” the chapters highlight societal flaws that block the development of self. The section asks, *how can we change society to field the way to effective self-construction?* The idea of how society can change for us instead of how we can change our identity for society is a pivotal aspect of autoethnography. The section combines the introspective research aspects of autoethnography and extrapolates the findings. Creating a pathway to an authentic self is personal and investigative, encompassing the critical aspects of autoethnography.

The investigative tool of autoethnography is far-reaching. It is a blend of critical analysis and deep introspection. This method of sociological research is in a unique position to be used to create a very rare product: research that is personal. It is more than how one feels about a certain aspect of their environment, but a detailed assay of what, why, and how that environment exists. It is the crux of sociological work, how our personal selves interact with the world in which they are enveloped. Due to the first person style of writing,

autoethnography can provide an extremely unbiased collection of data, a feat that is difficult to replicate in the social sciences. This diverse and far-reaching collection of essays is critical to understanding the true impact and range of autoeth-

nography. It provides a curated, encompassing display of the various forms, and sets a base that describes why the method is so vital to sociological research. Truly, this is a critical collection of autoethnography.

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Book Review

Griffin, Nathan Stephens. 2017. *Understanding Veganism: Biography and Identity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.14.1.09>

The Personal Causes and Consequences of Veganism: With *Understanding Veganism: Biography and Identity*, sociologist Nathan Stephens Griffin undertakes the task of elucidating what it means to identify as vegan. The *identity* of “vegan” is contrasted sharply from the *definition* of “vegan.” Griffin repeatedly stresses that veganism is generally well-defined as a concept in terms of reducing one’s negative impact on others, but not as an identity, much like gender and sexuality. This is demonstrated by investigating different aspects of veganism (gender, sexuality, politics, ethics, advocacy, etc.) that arose from individual testimonies gathered through Griffin’s personal research.

Griffin situates his book in the context of his own veganism, having grown up in England with a family who eventually all became vegan. In his youth, he toured Europe as part of a punk band which introduced him to straight-edge culture, anarchism, and animal and political activism before deciding to explore these ideas academically. *Understanding Veganism* is a consolidation of Griffin’s graduate school research. The study utilizes semi-structured

biographical interviews in which participants were encouraged to lead a discussion on their personal vegan narratives. Participants were initially selected by spatial convenience and personal acquaintance, but branched out via subject’s associations.

After a couple introductory chapters on theory and method, the bulk of the book outlines various aspects of vegan identity which are roughly categorized as family (Ch. 3), gender (Ch. 4), and activism (Ch. 5 and 6). Family narratives encompass religious and secular influences, as well as subjects’ relationships to their parents during childhood. Gender considerations include parallels with “coming out” as non-heterosexual, and explorations of veganism as a relationship criterion. Both legal and illegal activism experiences highlight some of the unfair treatment vegans encounter because of their counter-culture lifestyle and politics, such as excessive punishments for direct action in the forms of unusually harsh fines or jail sentences, or being the subjects of gratuitous physical violence for nonviolent protesting. This reflects the normalizing of a meat-based diet and the marginalization—indeed, even criminalization—of vegan praxis. Veganism is

growing, but alongside an increase in frequency and intensity of attacks against vegans and vegan ideals. Similar experiences are had by non-vegan activists as well, and, as an example, could be applied to the violence against LGBTQ-identified people. Across family, gender, and activism, certain themes dominate the narratives. These are the feeling of being marginalized, reactions against the mainstream status quo (in various guises), and adhering to veganism as a way to meaningfully embody beliefs.

At the book's core is a discussion of how "vegan identity [is] necessarily fluid, and how vegan biographies have been found to be subject to processes of normalization." Further, Griffin finds that vegans "negotiate normalization through various performances, achieving and managing identities through these performances" (p. 117). Thus, vegan identity is shaped to a significant extent by non-vegan society at large. He also concludes that veganism can be defined by the individual in order to conform with their personal needs, such as disability. This echoes previous scholars who contend veganism is best considered as a spectrum, a lifelong and continuous aspiration to do as little harm as one feasibly can (Dominick 2015; Gruen and Jones 2015). These are important realizations to help promote awareness of and resist harmful (and untrue) vegan stereotypes, similar to racist or sexist stereotypes.

Griffin grounds his study in academic fields of critical animal studies and biographical studies, and by extension reaches into intersectionality and social justice (including nonhuman animal) advocacy. This culminates in the assertion that there exists no singular vegan identity. Intersectionality helps illuminate this by looking at how different facets of identity

(gender, race, etc.) interact differently with and within each individual, defying a standardized outcome or experience. This is reflected perhaps most clearly in "coming out" narratives of veganism. For a variety of reasons (personal, social, practical, or professional), individuals stressed and strategized about revealing their vegan identity for fear of negative repercussions.

In essence, Griffin takes society as it stands and looks at how vegans define themselves and exist within it. Other recent books on veganism (see: Wright 2015; Castricano and Simonsen 2016) have generally looked in the other direction; they have taken veganism as it exists today, and analyzed how society has reacted to its presence. The latter perspective is of a much bigger picture. Alternatively, Griffin's approach complements other texts on veganism by allowing the discourse to be dictated by individual vegans themselves, favoring lived, embodied experiences over theoretical speculations. Both viewpoints are necessary, however, to represent the dynamic phenomenon of veganism accurately. Thus, *Understanding Veganism* not only contributes to (critical) animal studies and biographical studies, but also uniquely to *vegan studies* (Wright 2015).

Often conversion to veganism hinged on expanding one's "cultural menu," that is, being exposed to alternate ways of living that are also consistent with expressing one's values. Alternative sources of cultural influence were major factors in expanding the subject's cultural menus. These included punk music, activist groups, and underground publications which helped contribute to "turning points," important moments in one's life that lead to a fundamental shift in outlook or lifestyle. Reasons for becoming vegan varied per

person. Some interviewees went vegan because it was the opposite of what they were experiencing in their own lives; others converted because veganism seemed like a logical extension of current habits. In common, though, is that all went vegan because, for one reason or another, it felt like the right thing to do to stay consistent with their values.

In light of Griffin's analysis and finding of veganism as a fluid identity, the suggestion emerges that instead of striving to reshape society to be welcoming of vegans, we should deconstruct certain norms (like those around meat-eating and masculinity) and rebuild them altogether differently. Most of Griffin's interviewees got into veganism from a single motivating factor, but later embraced other reasons as well. Some became involved in single-issue social justice issues originally (such as, but not limited to, animal rights) and then saw connections between different oppressions and branched into other causes. For some interviewees, their activism began with being vegan; for others, embracing veganism was a result of their previous activism.

This book is brief and straightforward. Griffin reports how a handful of vegans (who are admittedly lacking in diversity) construct their meaning of the term *vegan* in relation to activism. Vegans for whom activism is not part of their identity, such as those who eat vegan for health reasons, are not included. Several theoretical concepts such as "vegaphobia" and "vegansexuality" are used to provide background information to personal testimonies, and to highlight specific applications of these theories. These and other concepts are briefly described, but the reader who is not well-informed on vegan studies previously will likely have to consult some outside references to fully grasp the struggles faced by those of the included testimonies. What the book does accomplish, however, is a convincing demonstration that vegans face personal, structural, and epistemic forms of oppression similar to the outcomes of more high-profile types of discrimination from sources like race, gender, and class prejudice. More importantly, Griffin expertly demonstrates that these different prejudices interact to influence the identity of an individual, as well as the structure of a society.

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Book Review

Lloyd, Justine and Ellie Vasta, (eds.). 2017. *Reimagining Home in the 21st Century*. Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.14.1.10>

The book edited by two Australian scientists from the Macquarie University is based on the themed workshop organized in September 2013 in Sydney. The majority of seventeen authors of the chapters come from Australian sociological and anthropological environments, what opens for me, as a European scientist, an interesting insight into the patterns of conceptualizing home and the very problems connected with it in Australian circumstances.

The title of the monograph suggests the study on dwelling and/or housing. However, the content oscillates between some general statements about the contemporary human condition and a quite specific construction of sleeping equipment of Warlpiri people. In fact, the book does not concentrate (only) on home and homeliness but rather enlarges the meaning of home to the whole national/public sphere. As Pauline Hanson, the populist and anti-migration Australian politician, expressed, “if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say who comes into my country” (Chapter 8:124). With this extended definition of home as an urban space, cars, and public transportation on the one

hand, and such non-material phenomena like nation, feeling of belonging, experiencing homeliness or unhomeliness, practicing homelessness, on the other, the editors propose a very broad overview opening various questions and approaches.

The starting point for the editors is the statement that

home can no longer be seen as a purely self-sufficient concept and place, as it is indeed these external pressures that make us feel we are at home or not at home... At the same time, many people are struggling collectively to imagine new ways of being at home against these hegemonic visions of home... In this book we question the very possibility in the 21st century of any concept of a singular and self-sufficient home. The changes to our understanding of home have been as profuse as they are diverse. [Chapter 1:1-3]

This approach results, as mentioned before, with a quite heterogenic collection highlighting different aspects using innovative prospects. However, the editors have constructed a theoretical framework to connect all these contributions under the concept of *agency*. They

do not explain this proposal more deeply, but as far as I understand, this key concept is based on the practice perspective, includes identity processes, and evokes connections with migration, transnationality, homelessness, gender, alternative styles of living (like in a car), reinterpreting the patterns of traditional, ethnic ways of dwelling, et cetera. "The construction of home and belonging is a subjective phenomenon concerned with self-identities and attitudes, as well as a structural phenomenon that transforms objective biographies and life situations. Thus, it is a productive process, embedded in change that entails 'an interchange between the self and structure' (Rutherford 1990)" (Chapter 1:6). The intermediation between the structural and individual levels reminds me of the theory of structuration by Anthony Giddens (1984) and his struggles to elaborate the mechanism of the mutual interdependency between individual actors and the reproduction of structure. So I find the theoretical proposal of the editors in this phase rather general and I am excited how it will be developed in further publications.

Nevertheless, the editors divide the monograph into four parts according to four key aspects of home: "firstly, the figure of the stranger; secondly, practices of dwelling; thirdly, conditions of homeliness and unhomeliness interwoven into public domains; and, fourthly, the materialities that choreograph our senses of home" (Chapter 1:8). Two of those four parts are rather dedicated to the public sphere (*the Stranger and Publicness*), according to the clearly explicated thesis about the unsettled, mixed nature of the private and the public in the contemporary world (Sennett 1977; Habermas 1990; Honeywill [Chapter 10:150-164]). The articles included in these two parts concentrate mostly on migration processes, as well as the treating of mi-

grants (strangers) in society. In this context, I would like to mention the contribution by Aleksandra Ålund, Carl-Ulrik Schierup, and Lisa Kings about the young people and urban unrest in multi-ethnic Sweden. The authors investigated Wallachian people from Serbia searching for jobs in Sweden and Denmark during the 1970s and 1980s, and followed the sons and daughters of those migrants in the 1990s and 2000s. They claim that the second generation of the migrants experience in metropolitan Stockholm social exclusion, stigmatization, discrimination, and residential segregation, which results in frustration and dramatic riots in Swedish suburbs, but also with alternative movements struggling for ethnic justice and equal opportunities. The home can be understood in this case as a feeling of belonging in the society, *hemmastadiggörande*.

The second and the third part of this book concentrate on specific practices of dwelling, senses, and material anchors of feeling at home. I admire the very inspiring proposal by Adam Stebbing (Chapter 7:102-118) referring to homelessness. The author elaborates the problem of homelessness in terms of dwelling providing theoretical framework which has been used in further interviews with homeless people. Stebbing argues that homelessness is a form of dwelling connected with both inadequate housing and feeling/no feeling at home (lack of privacy, instability, insecurity, police harassment, etc.). His approach connects the subjective and the objective meaning of homelessness and opens a possibility for empirical searches.

The fourth part of the monograph, consisting of four contributions, relates to material objects and its arrangements composing the specific order of senses and the self-identity of the tenants. These chapters re-

fer closely to the sociology of dwelling (Jewdokimow and Łukasiuk 2014), as well as open detailed problems like, for example, the contemporary masculinity (performed in so-called “man caves” equipped with assemblages of cars and car parts, motorcycles, gym and musical equipment, weapons, alcohol paraphernalia, games, etc.) or the post-modernistic, convivial function of kitchen.

The concept organizing the monograph, as mentioned before, searches for new phenomena constructing contemporary agency referring to home and, at the same time, elaborates theoretical terms catching it. The latter start, in many cases, from classical conceptions by Martin Heidegger (1971), Georg Simmel (1950), Erv-

ing Goffman (1959), and develop creatively, according to the problems described. Some of the chapters are based on very few cases (3-4 interviews), what surprised me at the beginning, until I connected this methodology with the general purpose of detecting and reconstructing the future, re-imagined meaning of home. As I argued a few years ago (Łukasiuk 2009), migrations evoke alternative and future stages of culture; in other words, in migration processes, we can observe social practices and beliefs which probably (some of them) will grow in society in the future. The authors of this monograph constructed their proposals based on migration, but also another social phenomena existing today in niches, however, they could indicate the image of home in the 21st century.

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