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Mortality Moves Masses: Social Movements as Evolved Responses to Pandemics

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Abstract

The theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development predicts that massive mortality events produce population-level responses in which humans shift toward the psychological characteristic of early human history: practical intelligence is prioritized over abstract intelligence and social intelligence is oriented toward furthering the community aims rather than individual aims. Social movements appear to manifest heightened practical intelligence and collectively oriented social intelligence, so the theory predicts that massive mortality events will result in large social movements. Prior research shows that the COVID-19 pandemic, the largest mortality event in US history, amplified several important social movements. This essay tests the generality of this principle by investigating whether significant social movements were associated with the second and third-largest pandemics in US history: the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. The research demonstrates the generality of this principle by showing that each of these massive mortality events coincided in time with the magnification of pre-existing social movements. The HIV/AIDS pandemic was accompanied by expansions of both the gay rights movement (reflecting the initial threat to homosexuals) and the anti-nuclear movement (reflecting the broader threat of AIDS that later emerged). The 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, a threat to the entire population, was accompanied by a national explosion of race riots and augmentation of the women's suffrage movement.

Introduction

As the endpoint of life, death defines our biological existence. To some, death is a new beginning, to others, death is the end of all ends. To all, death matters. This basic fact has remained consistent across time and culture, even extending throughout the animal kingdom. Not only does mortality have a major personal impact on people, but the goal of this essay is to show that major mortality events have profound effects on society. This goal is accomplished by analyzing the largest pandemics in US history through the lens of the theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development.[1] The theory predicts that mortality events that make the environment feel more dangerous cause human psychology to shift in a way that optimizes the creation of large social movements.[2,3] Earlier research confirmed this hypothesis in the case of COVID. Three social movements expanded to unprecedented size and strength during the pandemic: the Black Lives Matter movement, the voter turnout for the 2020 presidential election, and the January 6th insurrection. The purpose here is to generalize the model connecting social movements to mortality events and test the prediction that all major pandemics augment the size and intensity of social movements. This essay, therefore, analyzes the next two most fatal pandemics in American history – the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic and the HIV/AIDS pandemic – to test the hypothesis that, like the COVID-19 pandemic, these major mortality events amplified pre-existing social movements.

Theory of Social Change, Cultural Evolution, and Human Development

The theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development models how cultures shift in reaction to changes in

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[1] Patricia M. Greenfield, "Linking Social Change and Developmental Change: Shifting Pathways of Human Development," *Developmental Psychology* 45, no. 2 (2009): pp. 401-418, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014726.
[2] Noah F. G. Evers and Patricia M. Greenfield, "A Model of How Shifting Intelligence Drives Social Movements," *Journal of Intelligence* 9, no. 4 (2021): p. 62, https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence9040062.
[3] Noah F.G. Evers, Patricia M. Greenfield, and Gabriel W. Evers, "Covid-19 Shifts Mortality Salience, Activities, and Values in the United States: Big Data Analysis of Online Adaptation," *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 3, no. 1 (2021): pp. 107-126, https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.251.

sociodemographic variables.[4,5,6] It states that cultures exist on a spectrum from the subsistence ecologies in which humans evolved, to the commercial ecologies that most people inhabit today. Subsistence ecologies are characterized by small isolated villages, short life expectancy (including high infant mortality rate), low material resources, and basic survival activities – people produce their own food, shelter, and clothing. These survival activities engage practical rather than abstract intelligence. In commercial ecologies, people have substantially longer life expectancies, access greater material resources, and purchase rather than produce food, shelter, and clothing. Subsistence ecologies are associated with a collectivistic value system, whereas commercial ecologies are associated with an individualistic value system.

Subsistence ecologies were the environments of human evolution and were prevalent during humanity's early history but have almost entirely been replaced today by commercial ecologies. That said, some indigenous communities around the world do resemble the subsistence ecologies of early human history, and this theory was initially developed through studying one of these communities for several decades. Among many important sociodemographic and cultural factors, subsistence ecologies have very high mortality and mortality salience (cultural expressions of death), engagement in subsistence activities (producing and preparing food, constructing shelter, and making one's clothing), and collectivism (contributing to one's community instead of oneself).

Over decades of theory building and experimentation, starting with modeling how the first indigenous village of interest changed over time and then testing and refining that model through analyzing a wide range of cultures around the world and at different points in history, Greenfield and collaborators showed that when sociodemographic variables shift in either direction, toward resembling those found in subsistence ecologies or toward those found in commercial ecologies, psychological and behavioral features also shift. Many sociodemographic variables cause shifts, such as formal education, urbanization, communication technologies, resource availability, and community size, but mortality rates and mortality salience are likely the most important.

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[4] Greenfield, "Linking Social Change and Developmental Change: Shifting Pathways of Human Development," 401-418.
[5] Patricia M Greenfield, "Social Change, Cultural Evolution, and Human Development," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 8 (2016): 84–92, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.10.012.
[6] Patricia M. Greenfield, "Studying Social Change, Culture, and Human Development: A Theoretical Framework and Methodological Guidelines," *Developmental Review* 50 (2018): 16–30, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2018.05.003.

Mortality salience in this context refers to the general psychological importance of death.

The theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development and its predictions have been supported by a large body of empirical research around the world, some spanning hundreds of years.[7,8,9,10,11] As countries such as China or villages such as a Maya community in Chiapas, Mexico, urbanized and became more technologically sophisticated, life expectancy increased and the death rate fell.[12,13] The cultural salience of death declined at the same time.[14] In Mexico, urbanization, technological development, and increased formal education were accompanied by a rise in the use of abstract representation, a component of abstract intelligence; a decline in the subsistence skill of weaving clothing, a manifestation of practical intelligence; and a decline in cooperative activity, a manifestation of collectivistic values.[15,16] Illustrating the effects of the reverse direction of

[7] Patricia M. Greenfield, "The Changing Psychology of Culture from 1800 through 2000," *Psychological Science* 24, no. 9 (July 2013): pp. 1722-1731, https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797613479387.

[8] Amalia Ionescu et al., "The Effects of Sociocultural Changes on Epistemic Thinking across Three Generations in Romania," PLOS ONE (Public Library of Science, March 8, 2023), https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0281785.

[9] Ashley E. Maynard, Patricia M. Greenfield, and Carla P. Childs, "Developmental Effects of Economic and Educational Change: Cognitive Representation in Three Generations across 43 Years in a Maya Community," *International Journal of Psychology* 50, no. 1 (2015): pp. 12-19, https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12129.

[10] Michael Weinstock et al., "Societal Change and Values in Arab Communities in Israel," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 46, no. 1 (2014): pp. 19-38, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022114551792.

[11] Rong Zeng and Patricia M. Greenfield, "Cultural Evolution over the Last 40 Years in China: Using the Google Ngram Viewer to Study Implications of Social and Political Change for Cultural Values," *International Journal of Psychology* 50, no. 1 (2015): pp. 47-55, https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12125.

[12] Ashley E. Maynard et al., "Social Change, Cultural Evolution, Weaving Apprenticeship, and Development: Informal Education across Three Generations and 42 Years in a Maya Community," *Applied Developmental Science* (2023): pp. 1-24, https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2022.2151445.

[13] "Life Expectancy at Birth, Total (Years) - China," World Bank Open Data (The World Bank, 2022), https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=CN.

[14] Evers, Greenfield, and Evers, "Covid-19 Shifts Mortality Salience, Activities, and Values in the United States," 107-126.

[15] Maynard et al., "Developmental Effects of Economic and Educational Change: Cognitive Representation in Three Generations across 43 Years in a Maya Community," 12-19.

[16] Camilo García, Natanael Rivera, and Patricia M. Greenfield, "The Decline of Cooperation, the Rise of Competition: Developmental Effects of Long-term Social

social change, when material wealth declined during the Great Recession, young people in the United States became more communitarian in their values.[17]

The COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 provided a natural (albeit tragic) experiment to test the theory's predictions concerning the effects of higher mortality rates and increased household isolation produced by stay-at-home orders. When the pandemic struck, Patricia Greenfield, the creator of the theory, and colleagues carried out three large-scale studies, a survey study, and two studies of online activity. The survey study, replicated in two US states, showed that mortality salience, the psychological correlate of increased mortality, rose during COVID-19 and drove increases in subsistence activities, a manifestation of practical intelligence, and interdependence, a manifestation of collectivistic values.[18]

The second COVID-19 study explores the same issues using a different method: the analysis of naturally occurring internet behavior. Researchers monitored and examined the behavior of conceptually relevant linguistic terms across blogs, forums, Twitter, and Google searches during the 70 days before and the 70 days after Donald Trump declared COVID-19 as a national emergency. Confirming the first study, terms referring to mortality (e.g., "death," "cemetery"), subsistence activities (e.g., "growing vegetables," "baking bread"), and collectivistic values (e.g., "share," "help"), the hallmark characteristics of subsistence ecologies, all increased on social media and Google searches during the first 70 days of COVID-19.[19] In the third study, the researchers find that the augmentation of mortality terms, that is, an increase in the psychological salience of mortality mirrors relative excess COVID-19 mortality rates across four countries.[20]

Change in Mexico," *International Journal of Psychology* 50, no. 1 (January 14, 2015): 6–11, https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12120.

[17] Heejung Park, Jean M. Twenge, and Patricia M. Greenfield, "The Great Recession," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 5, no. 3 (July 11, 2013): 310–18, https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550613495419.

[18] Patricia M. Greenfield, Genavee Brown, and Han Du, "Shifts in Ecology, Behavior, Values, and Relationships during the Coronavirus Pandemic: Survival Threat, Subsistence Activities, Conservation of Resources, and Interdependent Families," *Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology* 2 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cresp.2021.100017.

[19] Evers, Greenfield, and Evers, "Covid-19 Shifts Mortality Salience, Activities, and Values in the United States," 107-126.

[20] Noah F. G. Evers, Gabriel W. Evers, Patricia M. Greenfield, Qinyi Yuan, Felicity Gutierrez, and Gabrielle Halim, "COVID-19 increased mortality salience,

A Model of How Shifting Intelligence Drives Social Movements

This background research shows that concrete, practical intelligence (in the form of subsistence activities) took on increasing value in the United States under the conditions of heightened mortality produced by COVID-19.[21] As a result, Greenfield hypothesized that, when mortality becomes more salient, groups prioritize solutions that involve the actual doing of something (practical intelligence) to benefit their community (collectively oriented social intelligence).[22] Groups of people enacting practical solutions that benefit their community are the broad strokes definition of a social movement. This situation contrasts with the status quo of American society, where abstract intelligence, the employing of solutions that concern theory and ideas, reigns supreme, along with the prioritization of social intelligence in the service of individual goals.

This model identifies a mechanism by which these shifts toward communitarian values and practical intelligence on the population level should increase social movements. Therefore, this model led to the prediction that, as the largest mortality event in US history (over a million deaths),[23] COVID-19 would amplify the size and intensity of social movements. The model was tested and confirmed with COVID-19.[24]

Specifically, during COVID-19, three social movements expanded to unprecedented size and strength: the Black Lives Matter movement, the voter turnout for the 2020 presidential election, and the January 6th insurrection. The mechanism of action for each of these movements was in line with the theoretical predictions. They were protest movements, which is one of the most concrete and practical forms of social movement. Pre-pandemic, these movements were more theoretical and ideological, existing primarily on the internet, the quintessential abstract medium. However, during COVID-19 they became practical boots-on-the-ground movements. These were also

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collectivism, and subsistence activities: A theory-driven analysis of online adaptation in the US, Indonesia, Mexico, and Japan," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (2024).

[21] Greenfield, Brown, and Du, "Shifts in Ecology, Behavior, Values, and Relationships during the Coronavirus Pandemic."

[22] Evers and Greenfield, "A Model of How Shifting Intelligence Drives Social Movements," 62.

[23] Dave Roos, "The Deadliest Events in US History," History.com (A&E Television Networks, May 18, 2022), https://www.history.com/news/deadliest-events-united-states.

[24] Evers and Greenfield, "A Model of How Shifting Intelligence Drives Social Movements," 62.

collectivistic movements, associated with furthering a community's aims rather than the aims of any particular individual.[25]

Selection of Pandemics and Social Movements

In terms of mortality, the COVID-19 pandemic was followed in size by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and then the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic.[26] To take a conservative, systematic, and unbiased approach, this essay explores whether, like COVID-19, these two pandemics coincided in time with the expansion of existing social movements – social movements that were (1) carried out by the population for whom mortality was salient and (2) were not connected to or were generalized beyond the mortality event itself and its medical cause.

In the case of the Spanish flu, like COVID-19, the entire US population felt at risk; hence the two social movements discussed, a national epidemic of race riots and the women's suffrage movement, were not restricted to a particular group within the country. In the case of HIV/AIDS, initially, mortality was salient for only the homosexual population, and one of the associated social movements discussed – the gay rights movement – reflects the concentration of mortality salience in this population. However, later in the pandemic, everyone realized they were at risk; hence, the other social movement discussed, the anti-nuclear movement, was not concentrated among gay people, but had a broader base.

Pandemics have been selected, as opposed to all-cause mortality events, which would have included wars, because pandemics represent a purer case study as there are elevated death rates and socialization is discouraged (ostensibly discouraging social movements). However, note that World War I, which overlapped in time with the Spanish flu, does come into the analysis of the women's suffrage movement.

HIV/AIDS Epidemic

The HIV and AIDS epidemic is the second deadliest pandemic in US history and took the lives of more than 700,000 Americans.[27] In the United States, the HIV/AIDS pandemic began in 1981, and mortality

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[25] Evers and Greenfield, "A Model of How Shifting Intelligence Drives Social Movements," 62.
[26] Roos, "The Deadliest Events in US History."
[27] Roos, "The Deadliest Events in US History."

from the disease continued to increase in the United States into the mid-1990s.[28]

The first cases of what is now known to be AIDS were reported on June 5, 1981, in a report published by the CDC in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* or MMWR.[29] This report identified five gay men in Los Angeles who had been diagnosed with a rare immune infection called *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP). That very same day, the CDC was informed that multiple gay men in New York had been diagnosed with Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS), which is a cancer that, like PCP, weakens the immune system.[30] Scientists were confused by this spike in cases of KS and PCP among gay men, as these diseases were traditionally very rare. After more similar cases popped up across the country, scientists hypothesized that this pattern of infection is caused by the transmission of an "infectious agent."[31] Soon the pattern gained national recognition, and headlines like "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals," spread hysteria across the US homosexual population and the country as a whole.[32] Nicknamed the "gay cancer," AIDS became a national issue in a matter of months because of its deadly nature.[33] At that time, there was very little information available to the hundreds of previously healthy Americans who rapidly became deathly ill by the end of 1981.

In the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, information about the spread of the disease was not known. At first, people thought it was spread only through gay sex. However, once heterosexual persons began contracting the disease, the danger of AIDS expanded to the US population in general. Many false theories surrounding the spread of AIDS, such as the possibility of infection through saliva, made the STD appear to be an even larger threat, as people were unsure whether they were at risk.[34]

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[28] Max Roser and Hannah Ritchie, "HIV / AIDS," Our World in Data, November 2014, https://ourworldindata.org/hiv-aids.

[29] "Pneumocystis Pneumonia - Los Angeles," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 5, 1981), https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/june_5.htm.

[30] "Timeline of the HIV and AIDS Epidemic," HIV.gov, accessed April 17, 2023, https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/history/hiv-and-aids-timeline/#year-1981.

[31] "The AIDS Epidemic in the United States, 1981-Early 1990s," David J. Sencer CDC Museum: In Association with the Smithsonian Institution (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 26, 2021), https://www.cdc.gov/museum/online/story-of-cdc/aids/index.html.

[32] "Timeline of the HIV and AIDS Epidemic."

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic created a dangerous societal landscape, and people experienced widespread increased mortality salience in the 1980s.[35] As was observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant increase in mortality salience appears to have primed the affected populations for social movements.

Expansion of the Anti-Nuclear Movement in the Time of HIV/AIDS

The Anti-Nuclear Movement Before the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The anti-nuclear movement was a social movement that sought to control the threat of nuclear weapons.[36] One of the largest anti-nuclear groups in the period leading up to the HIV/AIDS pandemic was SANE, the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. On May 19, 1960, SANE organized an anti-nuclear rally at Madison Square Garden with 17,000 attendees.[37] Additionally, anti-nuclear protests were also organized by Women Strike for Peace. On November 1, 1961, 50,000 women in 60 US cities carried out a daylong strike to protest the use of nuclear weapons.[38]

The Anti-Nuclear Movement During the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The anti-nuclear movement greatly expanded in the 1980s during the time of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The movement became massively popular during the pandemic and culminated on June 12th, 1982, in New York City when around 1,000,000 supporters of nuclear disarmament took to the streets to create a change.[39] In an article titled, "Throngs Fill Manhattan to Protest Nuclear Weapons," published on the front page of

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[35] Peter Ebbesen, Mads Melbye, and Jørn Beckmann, "Fear of AIDS: A Communication from Biologists to Psychologists/Sociologists," *Scandinavian Journal of Social Medicine* 14, no. 3 (1986): pp. 113-118, https://doi.org/10.1177/140349488601400301, 115.

[36] Victoria L. Daubert and Sue E. Moran, "Origins, Goals, and Tactics of the US Anti-Nuclear Movement" (RAND Corporation, March 1985), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/notes/2005/N2192.pdf.

[37] Catherine Falzone, "Emergence of Protest," International Disarmament Institute News, 2012, https://disarmament.blogs.pace.edu/nyc-nuclear-archive/antinuclear-movement-1950s-1960s/protest/.

[38] Kathy Crandall Robinson, "The Power of Women Strike for Peace," Arms control Today, November 2021, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-11/features/power-women-strike-peace.

[39] Vincent Intondi, "The Fight Continues: Reflections on the June 12, 1982 Rally for Nuclear Disarmament," Arms Control Now (Arms Control Association, June 10, 2018), https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2018-06-10/fight-continues-reflections-june-12-1982-rally-nuclear-disarmament.

The New York Times on June 13th, 1982, the day after the protest for nuclear disarmament, reporter Paul L. Montgomery describes the events of the previous day. Montgomery details the endless stream of peaceful demonstrators that "overwhelmed Central Park and midtown Manhattan."[40]

Compared to the anti-nuclear protests of the prior decades this description and the massive surge in participation exemplify the novel size and intensity of both this protest and the anti-nuclear movement as a whole. In a 1984 article titled "The Anti-Nuclear Weapons Movements," Michael Mandelbaum of the Lehrman Institute comments on the explosion of the movement, stating, "The fear about the nuclear future that created some of these groups and turned the attention of others to nuclear issues seemed to arise suddenly, like an abrupt, unexpected change in the weather."[41] Additionally, according to historian Vincent Intondi, many participants in the protests also believed nuclear weapons to be connected to other social issues. For example, Intondi claims that "for many black participants, there was a direct link between the money President Reagan was spending on nuclear weapons and poverty in their communities."[42]

Analysis of the Relationship Between the HIV/AIDS Pandemic and the Anti-Nuclear Movement

According to the theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development, involvement in social movements should be amplified when society is perceived to be in danger. The anti-nuclear movement conforms to this theoretical model because the movement reached the greatest participation and support when society was at its highest perceived danger.[43] This movement also shows direct manifestations of practical intelligence and collectivism as predicted by the theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development. The practical intelligence came in the form of the massive protests, most notably the New York protest in June of 1982. Protests are manifestations of practical intelligence because they entail participants attempting to alter their circumstances through physical participation. Additionally, the manifestation of collectivism or collectively oriented

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[40] Paul L. Montgomery, "Throngs Fill Manhattan to Protest Nuclear Weapons," *The New York Times*, June 13, 1982, https://www.nytimes.com/1982/06/13/world/throngs-fill-manhattan-to-protest-nuclear-weapons.html, 1.

[41] Michael Mandelbaum, "The Anti-Nuclear Weapons Movements," *PS* 17, no. 1 (1984): pp. 24-32, https://doi.org/10.2307/419117, 25.

[42] Intondi, "Reflections on the June 12, 1982 Rally for Nuclear Disarmament."

[43] Ibid.

social intelligence in the anti-nuclear movement was that many participants in the movement justified their opposition to nuclear weapons by the idea that they were combatting problems facing their communities. The timeline of the movement, along with the manifestations of practical intelligence and collectively oriented social intelligence, point to the fact that the unprecedented size and strength of the anti-nuclear movement was a product of increased mortality salience caused by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Expansion of the Gay Rights Movement in the Time of HIV/AIDS

The Gay Rights Movement Before the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The Stonewall riots in 1969 where patrons of the Stonewall Inn, a Manhattan gay bar, fought back against a discriminatory police raid is widely considered to be the primary catalyst for the modern gay rights movement which continued to grow over the next decade.[44] The largest gay rights protest seen in the 1970s was the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights where around 75,000 people protested in Washington DC to "demand equal civil rights and urge for the passage of protective civil rights legislature."[45] This march was two years before the first AIDS cases were reported; the beginning of the pandemic dates from 1981. At this point, mortality salience began to skyrocket in the homosexual community, and as is shown in the next section, the gay rights movement grew exponentially in size.

The Gay Rights Movement During the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The HIV/AIDS pandemic was associated in time with a massive surge in the gay rights movement, as homosexuals were disproportionately affected by the disease. Counterintuitively, but as predicted by the theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development, this increased danger for homosexuals increased "organizational activities" and activism.[46]

For the sake of this paper, increased social action is quantified by examining protest movements during the HIV/AIDS epidemic, more

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[44] Savannah Cox, "How the Stonewall Riots Changed the Course of the Gay Rights Movement," All That's Interesting, November 7, 2021, https://allthatsinteresting.com/stonewall-riots.

[45] "Milestones in the American Gay Rights Movement," PBS, accessed January 23, 2024, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/stonewall-milestones-american-gay-rights-movement/.

[46] Ebbesen, Melbye, and Beckmann, "Fear of AIDS," 113-114.

specifically the two largest protests: the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights and the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation; both were direct offspring of the 1979 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights mentioned earlier.

The second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights on October 11th, 1987, which comprised approximately 200,000 protestors, represents a significant escalation in the size and strength of the gay rights movement from the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.[47] By the importance of mortality salience in the theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development, this protest occurred in a year with 15,100 deaths from AIDS. As a result, compared with its predecessor march on Washington eight years earlier, which had taken place before the first AIDS cases, this march garnered more than double the participation.[48] In line with the postulate that the psychological salience of mortality reflects actual mortality, this expansive trend continued: on April 25th, 1993, in a year with over 40,000 deaths from AIDS and a year before the all-time peak in the US. AIDS mortality,[49] an estimated 800,000 to 1,000,000+ protestors filled the National Mall in Washington DC to protest for LGBT rights.[50]

Analysis of the Relationship Between the HIV/AIDS Pandemic and the Gay Rights Movement

An important aspect of these protests, and an essential component of this paper's theoretical framework, is that, despite occurring during a pandemic and being led by a group disproportionately affected by mortality caused by the pandemic, the main goals of these protests were not medical. Instead, the main goals were gay rights as a

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[47] Lena Williams, "200,000 March in Capital to Seek Gay Rights and Money for AIDS," *The New York Times*, October 12, 1987, sec. A, https://www.nytimes.com/1987/10/12/us/200000-march-in-capital-to-seek-gay-rights-and-money-for-aids.html.
[48] "HIV Prevalence Estimates and AIDS Case Projections for the United States," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 30, 1990), https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00001896.htm.
[49] Roser and Ritchie, "HIV / AIDS."
[50] Nadine Smith, "The 20th Anniversary of the LGBT March on Washington: How Far Have We Come?," HuffPost, April 25, 2013, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-20th-anniversary-of-the-lgbt-march-on-washington_b_3149185.

whole and an end to discrimination against members of the LGBT community.[51,52]

The 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic

The 1918 Spanish flu pandemic is the third deadliest pandemic in US history.[53] This influenza pandemic began in February 1918; its end was declared in April 1920.[54] The "Spanish flu" itself was a novel strain of influenza that, due to lack of a vaccine or antibiotics, resulted in the deaths of over 675,000 Americans.[55] According to the Centers for Disease Control, the Spanish flu was an "H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin," meaning that it is believed to have originated amongst birds and eventually was contracted by humans.

The Spanish flu is not dissimilar from most other flu pandemics like the "Asian flu" pandemic in 1957, the "Hong Kong flu" pandemic in 1968, and the "swine flu" pandemic in 2009 because most influenza strains that caused pandemics originally started in animals and eventually mutated to infect humans.[56] Despite having a similar origin to the flu pandemics in 1957, 1968, and 2009, the Spanish flu pandemic was unique in its mortality rate. While the pandemics in 1957, 1968, and 2009 all had mortality rates of less than 1.0 percent, the Spanish flu pandemic is estimated to have killed around 675,000 in the United States, at a mortality rate of 2.5 percent.[57] The Spanish flu pandemic was so deadly because of a lack of modern medicine and a lack of understanding of influenza pathogens. As a result, the Spanish flu pandemic was not addressed through research for a vaccine or some other pharmaceutical solution, but instead, during the 1918 pandemic, as during COVID-19, non-pharmaceutical measures were taken such as "isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings."[58] These measures led to the creation of a very similar

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[51] Ibid.
[52] Williams, "200,000 March in Capital to Seek Gay Rights and Money for AIDS."
[53] Roos, "The Deadliest Events in US History."
[54] Wan Yang, Elisaveta Petkova, and Jeffrey Shaman, "The 1918 Influenza Pandemic in New York City: Age-Specific Timing, Mortality, and Transmission Dynamics," *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses* 8, no. 2 (March 2014): 177–88, https://doi.org/10.1111/irv.12217.
[55] David Robson, "Why the Flu of 1918 Was so Deadly," BBC Future (BBC, October 30, 2018), https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20181029-why-the-flu-of-1918-was-so-deadly.
[56] Robson, "Why the Flu of 1918 Was so Deadly."
[57] Ibid.
[58] "History of 1918 Flu Pandemic," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 21, 2018,

societal dynamic to that present during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dissimilar to COVID-19, however, no vaccine or cure for the Spanish flu was ever developed; eventually, the US population developed herd immunity because infected persons either died or gained immunity.[59]

The Spanish flu pandemic affected the whole country and made people's environments extremely dangerous. In fact, despite having significantly fewer deaths, the proportion of sick people who died from the Spanish flu in the United States was more than twice as high as from COVID-19.[60] The theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development therefore postdicts that this high mortality risk would have augmented the psychological salience of mortality and that, in turn, heightened mortality salience would produce social movements of dramatically increased size and strength during the Spanish flu pandemic. The Red Summer of 1919 and the women's suffrage movement both provide evidence for this thesis.

Expansion of Race Riots in the Time of the Spanish Flu

Race Riots Before the Spanish Flu Pandemic

In an article titled, "Racial Violence in the United States Since 1526," the organization BlackPast lists a total of eight violent race riots occurring in different cities from 1900-1917.[61] These riots took place in five different years and most years in this period did not experience a race riot in any city. Issues that incited these riots varied from riot to riot; they included police harassment, voting rights, incidents of black-on-white violence, black migration to white neighborhoods, and the replacement of white workers by black workers.[62]

Chicago provides a case in point. There, racial tension had been growing significantly due to the large number of World War I soldiers

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https://archive.cdc.gov/#/details?url=https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-commemoration/1918-pandemic-history.htm.

[59] Jennifer D. Roberts and Shadi O. Tehrani, "Environments, Behaviors, and Inequalities: Reflecting on the Impacts of the Influenza and Coronavirus Pandemics in the United States," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, no. 12 (June 22, 2020): p. 4484, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17124484.

[60] Elizabeth Gamillo, "Covid-19 Surpasses 1918 Flu to Become Deadliest Pandemic in American History," Smart News (Smithsonian Magazine, September 24, 2021), https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/the-covid-19-pandemic-is-considered-the-deadliest-in-american-history-as-death-toll-surpasses-1918-estimates-180978748/.

[61] "Racial Violence in the United States since 1526," BlackPast, accessed January 21, 2024, https://www.blackpast.org/special-features/racial-violence-united-states-1660/.

[62] Ibid.

returning home in late 1918 to find that many of their jobs were being worked by African Americans who had come up North from the South.[63] The theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development posits that tribalism and ingroup bias increase with the level of environmental danger. This dynamic seems to have played out in the form of increased racial tension between white and black groups in Chicago, later amplified by the increased danger brought on by the Spanish flu.

Race Riots During the Spanish Flu Pandemic

Although the racial issues remained the same, there was a massive increase in the number of race riots during the period of the Spanish flu, that is from February 1918 to April 1920: BlackPast lists seven in these two years alone.[64] The website of the National World War 1 Museum states that outbreaks of racial violence affected at least 26 cities during the infamous "Red Summer" of 1919.[65] This timeline coincides with the peak of Spanish flu mortality between the winter of 1918 and the summer of 1919.[66]

There was also an increase in intensity. The Chicago race riot provides a perfect example of this. *Chicago Magazine* described the Chicago race riot of 1919 as "the worst spasm of racial violence in the city's history." It occurred during a one-week period that started on July 27th, 1919, following the drowning of a black teenager in Lake Michigan who was killed for not following the "unofficial segregation of Chicago's beaches," and ended on August 3rd, 1919.[67] The riots were violent and destructive and resulted in the deaths of 38 black and white Chicagoans as well as the destruction of around 1,000 black families' homes.[68]

Indeed, the summer of 1919 came to be known as the Red Summer because so much blood was shed around the country. Darhian Mills writes, "The so-called 'Red Summer' of 1919 was a series of violent

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[63] History.com Editors, "The Chicago Race Riot of 1919," History.com (A&E Television Networks, August 6, 2020), https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/chicago-race-riot-of-1919.
[64] Ibid.
[65] "Red Summer: The Race Riots of 1919," National WWI Museum and Memorial, accessed January 21, 2024, https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/red-summer.
[66] Thomas Ewing, "Measuring Mortality in the Pandemics of 1918–19 and 2020–21," Health Affairs Forefront (Health Affairs, April 1, 2021), https://www.healthaffairs.org/do/10.1377/forefront.20210329.51293/.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.

riots, predominantly whites against blacks, which lasted from May until October of that year and resulted in an estimated six hundred deaths across the nation."[69] Indeed, this number of deaths represents a massive increase in the intensity of race riots during the period of the Spanish flu. In the period from 1900 to 1917, the maximum number of fatalities during race riots in any one year had been about 35.[70]

Analysis of the Relationship Between the Spanish Flu Pandemic and Race Riots

While this racial conflict was extremely damaging in nature, this conflict follows the same pattern seen in the other social movements highlighted in this essay: increased societal danger leads to practical intelligence being valued over abstract intelligence leading to amplified social movements. In the case of the Chicago race riot, the segregationists did not seek to fix their "problem" of African Americans invading their communities through legislation or compromise, which would be expressions of abstract intelligence. Instead, the white Chicagoans demonstrated practical intelligence by taking to the streets and attempting to physically remove black people from their communities by means of burning their homes and physical harm.[71]

Further, the Chicago race riot was a collectivistic movement in both the white and black communities. The whites believed they were "protecting" their communities from African Americans, and the blacks were defending their communities against threats of white violence and aggression. For example, the neighborhoods of Hyde Park and Kenwood Property Owners Association stated in March of 1919, "Their presence [the African Americans] here is intolerable. Every colored man who moves into Hyde Park knows that he is damaging his white neighbor's property."[72] This quote exemplifies the outgroup threat experienced by white Chicagoans, for it shows how they truly believed African Americans to be a threat to their property and livelihoods. The Chicago race riot of 1919 is a perfect example of how the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic created a more dangerous society, a situation that led to a social movement of increased size and strength in which people exhibited both practical intelligence and collectivistic thinking.

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[69] Darhian Mills, "Knoxville Race Riot (1919)," BlackPast, March 20, 2016, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/knoxville-race-riot-1919/.
[70] "Racial Violence in the United States since 1526"
[71] Ewing, "Measuring Mortality in the Pandemics of 1918–19 and 2020–21."
[72] Robert Loerzel, "In Their Own Words: The 1919 Race Riot," Chicago Magazine, July 23, 2019, https://www.chicagomag.com/chicago-magazine/august-2019/1919-race-riot/.

Success of the Women's Suffrage Movement During the Time of the Spanish Flu

The Women's Suffrage Movement Before the Spanish Flu

Although the word suffrage, according to Oxford Languages, is defined as "the right to vote in political elections," the women's suffrage movement fought for women's rights as a whole.[73] The suffrage movement lasted for 72 years and spanned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[74] The first women's rights convention was held at Seneca Falls in 1848. One hundred attendees signed a Declaration of Sentiments and Grievances. The Declaration included resolutions supporting women's rights, including the right to vote. It was modeled after the Declaration of Independence – a clear product of abstract intelligence. A series of national conventions, women's periodicals, and the establishment of women's organizations followed.[75,76] These could all be characterized as resulting from the application of abstract rather than practical intelligence in that they did not involve physical action.

However, World War I, a major mortality event that started in 1914, a few years before the Spanish flu, began to move actions for women's rights from more theoretical and abstract to physical action on the ground. In January 1917, the Silent Sentinels, a branch of the National Woman's Party, began to picket the White House, the first time this had ever been done. Women carried banners demanding the vote. They were violently attacked by a group of drunken men, but police ended up arresting over 200 picketers for blocking the sidewalk. They continued their protests for two and a half years.[77]

But it was not only the use of direct action that increased during World War I. The scale of collective action also increased. In 1915, participants in a transcontinental tour gathered over a half-million

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[73] Susan Ware, "Leaving All to Younger Hands: Why the History of the Women's Suffragist Movement Matters," Brookings (The Brookings Institution, May 2020), https://www.brookings.edu/essay/leaving-all-to-younger-hands-why-the-history-of-the-womens-suffrage-movement-matters/.

[74] Patricia F. Dolton and Aimee Graham, "Women's Suffrage Movement," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (2014): pp. 31-36, https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.54n2.31.

[75] Elizabeth Hilfrank, "Womens Suffrage Movement," History, March 8, 2023, https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/womens-suffrage-movement.

[76] "Women's Suffrage in the United States," Wikipedia, accessed February 13, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage_in_the_United_States.

[77] Ibid.

signatures on petitions to Congress for women's suffrage.[78] The entry of
the US into World War I in April 1917 gave a significant boost to
women's rights as women replaced men who entered the military by
moving into formerly all-male occupations, such as steel mills and oil
refineries.[79] This was an example of the use of practical rather than
abstract intelligence because women were altering their circumstances
through participation in physically demanding industries. In September
1918, President Wilson spoke to the Senate in favor of the suffrage
amendment as a war measure.[80]

By the time, World War I ended in November 1918, there were
116,708 American military deaths.[81] Hence, World War I overlapped in
time with the Spanish flu which began in February 1918 and extended to
April 1920. While its mortality was overshadowed by the 675,000
Americans who died from the Spanish flu, its cost to human life was still
very significant.

The Women's Suffrage Movement During the Spanish Flu

The women's suffrage movement had a long history made up of
hundreds of small victories. But the most important victory was elusive
until the time of the Spanish flu. Indeed, the victory that outweighed
them all was being awarded the constitutional right to vote. For 72 years,
women and their male allies had fought for women's right to vote, and,
in 1919, their hard work paid off when Congress approved the
Nineteenth Amendment.[82] Why was 1919 the year that Congress finally
sympathized with the suffrage movement?

In 1918 and 1919, primed for social movement by the Spanish flu
pandemic, protests for women's rights spiked.[83] The Silent Sentinels,
who had been protesting for women's suffrage outside the White House
since 1917, ramped up their efforts in 1918 and 1919, even burning a
model of President Wilson. Over this period, 2000 women used silence

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[78] "Women's Suffrage Timeline," The American Bar Association, accessed February
13, 2024, https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/programs/19th-
amendment-centennial/toolkit/suffrage-timeline/.
[79] "Women's Suffrage in the United States."
[80] Ibid.
[81] Nadège Mougel, "World War I Casualties" (European Network for Education and
Training, 2011).
[82] "Today in History - June 4," The Library of Congress, accessed April 4, 2023,
https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/june-04/#.
[83] Hilary Parkinson, "19th Amendment at 100: Women Are First to Protest White
House," Pieces of History (National Archives and Records Administration, January 8,
2020), https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2020/01/08/19th-amendment-at-100-
women-first-to-protest-white-house/.

as a protest tactic. These protests continued until the 19th Amendment was ratified.[84] By June 4, 1919, the day the amendment was approved, 550,000 Americans had already died from the Spanish flu.[85]

Analysis of the Relationship Between the Spanish Flu Pandemic and the Women's Suffrage Movement

The women's rights movement was small and the actions – such as writing resolutions – were primarily abstract until the time of World War I. As a significant mortality event, World War I began the transition of the women's suffrage movement from the use of abstract intelligence to practical action. As a collective movement, it also expanded, witnessing the half-million signatures gathered during the transcontinental tour in 1915.

It is reasonable to think of World War I's mortality as providing a transition to the much greater mortality that occurred during the Spanish flu pandemic and coincided with the real-world success of the suffrage movement – the constitutional right for women to vote. Increased collectivism under the threat of death likely contributed to public support for the women's rights movement reaching an all-time high during the Spanish flu pandemic. The movement for women's rights in the US was intrinsically collectivistic as participants were fighting for the rights of all women. As was observed during the COVID-19 pandemic and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the Spanish flu's mortality amplified an already existing social movement, catalyzing its growth to previously unseen size and strength.

Conclusion

Political and social movements are defined as practical, collective responses to important problems challenging a community. In the face of imminent threats, the most practical solutions are also the fastest responses. In the ancient era, if people around them were dying at higher rates than normal, they needed to adapt fast and create change to counteract their mortality. The proposal is that oftentimes these ancient ancestors found that safety, not by separating themselves from the larger

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[84] "Silent Sentinels Picket the White House," State Archives (Oregon Secretary of State), accessed April 12, 2023, https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/exhibits/suffrage/Pages/events/sentinels.aspx.
[85] "History of Flu (Influenza): Outbreaks and Vaccine Timeline," Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (Mayo Clinic, 2022), https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19/history-disease-outbreaks-vaccine-timeline/flu.

group, but instead by finding safety in numbers and adapting as a collective, a simple manifestation of a social movement.

The aim of this essay was to test the generality of the theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development by investigating whether significant social movements were associated with the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. During the HIV/AIDS epidemic when Americans were confronted with a novel sexually transmitted infection that took the country by storm, the gay rights movement and the anti-nuclear movement massively increased in size at an unprecedented level. During the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, the women's suffrage movement, created in response to the threat of sexism, reached its climax with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, and the Red Summer of 1919 was one of the most significant racial conflicts in the United States since the Civil War. The existence, scale, and augmentation of these pre-existing social movements confirm the thesis of this paper that massive mortality events amplify social movements.

This historical review of the connection between major mortality events and social movements in the United States, as modeled by the theory of social change, cultural evolution, and human development, provides insight into the way that humans interpret death. When society becomes more dangerous as a result of pandemics like COVID-19, HIV/AIDS, and the 1918 Spanish flu, the salience of mortality, interest in subsistence activities, and collectivism significantly increase.[86] Based on that evolutionary reaction, the increase in collectivism and subsistence activities creates a shift in valued intelligence from individually oriented social intelligence to collectively oriented social intelligence and from abstract to practical intelligence.[87] This shift in valued intelligence drives social movements because social movements are manifestations of practical intelligence and collectively oriented social intelligence. This evolutionarily conserved reaction to death in a society provides insight into the psychology behind social movements. While there are a variety of different factors that contribute to social movements, by analyzing the largest pandemics in American history and their associated social movements, it appears that, as heightened mortality augments mortality salience, society's disposition toward social movements also increases, magnifying the size and intensity of pre-existing movements. Based on the findings of this paper, it could be

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[86] Evers, Greenfield, and Evers, "Covid-19 Shifts Mortality Salience, Activities, and Values in the United States," 107-126.
[87] Evers and Greenfield, "A Model of How Shifting Intelligence Drives Social Movements," 62.

argued that much of the history of social change in the United States can be told as a history of massive mortality events and correspondingly massive social movements.

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MAGNA

World History

Universal Equality vs. Neo-Confucian Class Structure in the Late Period of Joseon

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Abstract

The Joseon dynasty (1392-1897) adopted the Neo-Confucian class system as a means of upholding social stability. Despite its inherent flaws, especially slavery, this class structure played a role in supporting Korean society in the early and middle periods of Joseon. However, in the 18th century, the introduction of Western studies and the rise of Catholic communities spurred individuals to question the legitimacy of the existing class structure. This paper examines the collision between the Western concept of universal equality and the Neo-Confucian class system in Joseon, detailing the process and characteristics of this clash. The research illuminates how the idea of universal human rights found its way into Korea, a society that was, at the time, devoid of the concept of equality. Despite decades of persecution that resulted in the execution of thousands, Joseon Catholics taught and practiced universal equality within their religious communities. Serving as pioneers who fundamentally challenged the Neo-Confucian class structure, Joseon Catholics exemplify a compelling instance of historical progress toward safeguarding human rights and universal equality. However, their meek Christian approach toward political power hindered the transformation of their conviction from becoming a full-fledged political and social revolution. The findings of this paper underscore the profound impact the ideological clash had on the development and articulation of human rights discourse in the Korean context.

Introduction

The Joseon Dynasty, a monarchical state that flourished on the Korean Peninsula from 1392 to 1897, had an entrenched neo-Confucian caste system. Based on the hierarchical Confucian understanding of humanity, this caste system perpetuated discrimination and oppression between social classes in Joseon society. However, in the eighteenth century, the introduction of Western studies – a Catholic doctrine that was localized to avoid exasperating Chinese and East Asian scholars – to Joseon prompted a shift in the perspective of Koreans regarding the caste system. Western studies, in principle, taught that "all men are equal before God," and the ruling class and rigid Confucian scholars of Joseon perceived this idea of universal equality as a challenge to the social order. However, a few progressive Confucian scholars and the lower class accepted the idea of universal equality as a legitimate tenet of human existence. Eventually, the ideological conflict between the Joseon ruling class and proponents of Western egalitarian ideas ignited, culminating in an extended eighty-five-year Catholic persecution within Joseon during the nineteenth century.

This paper investigates the ideological clash between Western studies' egalitarian ideas and Confucianism's hierarchical view of human beings in Joseon, spanning from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. The historical evidence of the Joseon Catholic community embracing the idea of equality despite facing severe persecution can be seen as a testament to the notion that historical progress inherently facilitates the dissemination and solidification of the idea of equality. This acceptance reflects the undeniable reality of human existence, emphasizing the intrinsic dignity of everyone. In addition, this paper examines why the egalitarian ideas of Western studies did not result in a broader social revolution but were instead confined to acceptance and practice within the Joseon Catholic community. The Joseon Catholics refrained from dismantling the monarchical apparatus or implementing sweeping societal alterations, as they rigorously upheld the Catholic doctrine, which emphasized their obligation to obey the authority of the state. The politically moderate stance exhibited by Joseon Catholics served as an impediment to the widespread dissemination of discourses pertaining to human dignity and universally applicable principles of equality within the Joseon societal construct.

Joseon's Neo-Confucian Caste System and Its Challenges

Prominent Neo-Confucian scholars like Dojeon Jeong, the architect of Joseon's fourteenth- and fifteenth-century governance

structure, held the conviction that legal distinctions were indispensable for societal equilibrium.[1] Adherents to this school of thought established a stratified societal system comprising five distinct tiers: *wangsil, yangban, jungin, sangmin,* and *cheonmin*.[2] *Wangsil*, the royal family, was the highest ruling class, and *yangban* referred to well-educated neo-Confucian scholars who worked as high-ranking bureaucrats or military officers.[3] *Jungin* occupied subaltern officialdom, primarily engaged in technical and administrative functions. Sangmin comprised the agrarian populace, primarily engaged in agricultural pursuits.[4] *Cheonmin* constituted the lowest class. They held jobs that Joseon people considered lowly, such as *nobi* (unfree people or slaves), butchers, monks, jesters, and courtesans.[5] *Cheonmin* endured denigrating pronouncements and prejudicial attitudes from members of all other societal strata. Their labor was ruthlessly exploited, and they were frequently subjected to acts of physical brutality.[6] Even among *cheonmin*, the lowest of the low were the slaves (*nobi*).[7]

During the Joseon era, two primary methods fueled the institution of chattel slavery. First, during widespread famines, destitute farming families, facing the imminent threat of starvation, were often compelled to relinquish their young children into servitude within wealthy *yangban* households.[8] Second, during periods of dynastic strife, the Joseon government engaged in the brutal practice of executing not

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[1] "The Veritable Records of King Taejo, vol. 1, July 28, Year 1 (1392)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 10, 2023, https://sillok.history.go.kr/popup/viewer.do?id=kaa_10107028_003&type=view&reSearchWords=&reSearchWords_ime=.

[2] "The Veritable Records of King Taejong, vol. 27, April 2, Year 14 (1414)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 10, 2023, http://contents.history.go.kr/front/hm/view.do?levelId=hm_084_0020.

[3] Michael D. Shin, "The Intimate Past: An Introduction to the Joseon Period," in *Everyday Life in Joseon-Ear Korea: Economy and Society*, ed. Michael D. Shin (Boston: Global Oriental, 2014), 4.

[4] Ibid., 6.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Sang-hyuk Lim, *I am a Nobi: The Law and Society of Joseon Seen through Lawsuits* (Goyang: Yeoksa-bipyeongsa, 2020), 7.

[7] Joong-hwan Lee, "A Book for Choosing Inhabitable Towns, introduction (1751)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 11, 2023, http://contents.history.go.kr/front/hm/view.do?levelId=hm_107_0010&whereStr=%40where+%7B+IDX_TITLE%28HASALL%7C%27%EC%A1%B0%EC%84%A0+%EB%85%B8%EB%B9%84%27%7C100000%7C0%29+or+IDX_CONTENT%28HASALL%7C%27%EC%A1%B0%EC%84%A0+%EB%85%B8%EB%B9%84%27%7C100%7C0%29+or+IDX_ALL%28HASALL%7C%27%EC%A1%B0%EC%84%A0+%EB%85%B8%EB%B9%84%27%7C1%7C0%29+%7D.

[8] Jong-seong Kim, *Nobi in Joseon: Lowborn but Special* (Goyang: Yeoksaeui-achim, 2013), 7.

only the defeated faction, irrespective of their elevated social standing within the *yangban* class or even the royal family, but also extended their punishment to enslave the dependents and close kin of those deemed politically undesirable.[9] The members of *wangsil*, y*angban*, *jungin*, and *sangmin* had the authority to buy and sell slaves;[10] wealthy and powerful slaveholders had the authority to subject their slaves to torture or even execution, provided there was a justified reason for such punishment.[11] Furthermore, it was not uncommon for slaveholders to subject their female slaves to sexual assault through coercion, often utilizing threats as a means of control.[12] While it was illegal for slaveholders to inflict punishment or take the lives of their slaves without a valid reason,[13] the government rarely penalized those who mistreated or abused their slaves.[14] Slaveholders did possess the right to emancipate their slaves if they desired and acquired permission from the local authorities.[15] Yet, since enslaved individuals were essential for providing labor that sustained the economic power of their households, it was uncommon for a slaveholder to release their slaves willingly.[16]

The hierarchical social order informed by Neo-Confucian tenets, established during the nascent Joseon Dynasty, remained largely intact for approximately two centuries until the late sixteenth century. However, in 1592, Japan's invasion of the Joseon Dynasty plunged the nation into a widespread and devastating war, jeopardizing the very survival of the Joseon royal lineage. As the nation plunged into an acute existential crisis, the administrative apparatus underpinning the Joseon caste system was largely dismantled, significantly destabilizing the very foundations of societal stratification. In 1592, the outbreak of war prompted the royal family and government to flee northward, seeking

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[9] Ibid., 66-67.

[10] "The Veritable Records of King Taejo, vol. 1, August 20, Year 1 (1392)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 11, 2023, https://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kaa_10108020_003.

[11] "The Veritable Records of King Taejo, vol. 12, July 25, Year 6 (1397)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 11, 2023, https://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kaa_10607025_004.

[12] "The Veritable Records of King Jungjong, vol. 71, June (intercalation) 10, Year 26 (1531)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 12, 2023, https://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kka_12606110_001.

[13] "The Veritable Records of King Sejong, vol. 105, July (intercalation) 24, Year 26 (1444)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 12, 2023, https://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kda_12607124_003.

[14] Kim, *Nobi in Joseon*, 40.

[15] Kyoung-mok Jeon, "The Sok'ryang (a lowborn becoming a commoner by paying a price) and Survival Strategy of Slaves in the Late Chosun Dynasty," *Namdo-minsok-Yeongu* 26 (2013): 331.

[16] Lim, *I am a Nobi*, 7.

refuge from the advancing Japanese army. Meanwhile, in the abandoned Joseon capital (present-day Seoul), enslaved individuals, left behind amidst the chaos, initiated an act of defiance by setting fire to the Ministry of Rites and the Ministry of Justice, consuming in flames all records pertaining to their enslavement, resulting in a substantial lacuna in the Joseon government's documentation of its servile population. The *Revised Veritable Records of King Seonjo* describes the situation as follows:

> When King Seonjo's carriage left the capital city [to escape the Japanese invasion], the mob set fire to the Ministry of Rites and the Ministry of Justice. The mob set fire to these two government offices because they contained official slave documents.[17]

Faced with the overwhelming numerical advantage of the Japanese forces, high-ranking government officials and Joseon military commanders desperately sought to bolster their ranks by mobilizing enslaved individuals. In a controversial move, the Joseon government offered conditional emancipation to any enslaved person who could demonstrate their loyalty and prowess by killing a Japanese soldier in battle and presenting proof in the form of the enemy's head.[18] This policy served as a potent catalyst for the destabilization of the hierarchically structured Joseon slave system during the period of armed conflict. A considerable segment of the privileged *yangban* strata also witnessed a paradigm shift in their societal standing, enduring the confiscation of their landed estates and the dispossession of their previously held territorial domains. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the war, the exacerbated depletion of the national coffers necessitated novel revenue-generating measures. The Joseon government promulgated a policy whereby sinecures within the state bureaucracy were bestowed upon individuals of opulent means in exchange for monetary contributions. This novel system facilitated the upward trajectory of individuals born outside the privileged confines of the *yangban* elite, thus enabling them to achieve a hitherto unattainable degree of social mobility.[19] As a result, Japan's invasion significantly weakened the social order of Joseon.

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[17] "Revised Veritable Records of King Seonjo, vol. 26, April 14, Year 25 (1592)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 12, 2023, https://sillok.history.go.kr/id/knb_12504014_028.

[18] "The Veritable Records of King Seonjo, vol. 51, May 8, Year 27 (1594)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 13, 2023, https://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kna_12705008_007.

[19] Han Kyo Suh, "The Implementation and Its Outcomes of the Napsok Measure in the 17-18th Century," *History Education Review* 15 (1990): 130-131.

After a few years, the Joseon government, which had recovered from the damage of the war to some extent, focused on strengthening the praxis of neo-Confucianism and spreading it throughout Joseon society to restore the weakened social order. This new school of thought led by eminent Confucian thinkers to strengthen the Confucian governing order was generally called "the study of rites" by Joseon scholars.[20] The study of rites emphasized the strict practice of Confucian rituals throughout society, from the home sphere to the public sphere. It aimed to reinforce the patriarchal and authoritarian hierarchy of the daily lives of the Joseon people. The study of rites successfully reinforced the Confucian social hierarchy in Joseon society. Eventually, Joseon's neo-Confucian caste system became far more rigid than before the war against Japan, and this retro social atmosphere continued for about 150 years until the mid-eighteenth century.[21]

The entrenched rigidity of social mobility across more than a century exacerbated the stagnation of Joseon society in terms of national development and fomented internal social discontent. The royal family and the high-ranking *yangban* officials, who benefited from a system of entrenched privileges, displayed little to no interest in modernizing administrative structures or bolstering the national economy. Instead, their primary focus remained entangled in the machinations of court politics, aimed solely at preserving their institutional and economic dominance.[22] As most of the capable *yangban* lower-ranking officials and *jungin* people were not able to become high-ranking officials, they did not have sufficient opportunities to exercise their abilities in the operation of the state. *Sangmin* and *cheonmin* people could not even think of escaping their low social status, so they led a passive life of just maintaining their livelihood. Even the ostensible impartiality of the government evaporated, accompanied by a concomitant stagnation in agricultural productivity.[23]

In the mid-eighteenth century, some *yangban* lower-ranking officials who observed the accumulation of social problems within Joseon society began to seek new ideas and cultures that would bring

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[20] MoonHyoung Choi, "An Analysis of the Modern Interpretation of the Study of Rites in the Joseon Dynasty: With Focus on the Social Philosophy of Adorno and Horkheimer," *Journal of Eastern Philosophy* 64 (2010): 118-119.
[21] Soo-chang Oh, "18th Century's Political Thoughts of Joseon Dynasty Seen in the Historical Perspective of Before and After," *Yoksa Hakbo* 213 (2012): 37.
[22] Joo-sin Chong, "A Study on the Party Strife in Late Joseon Period," *The Journal of Northeast Asia Research* 22-1 (2007): 95.
[23] Do-won Jeong, "A Study on the Philosophical Characteristics and Political Implications of the 17th Century Korean Neo-Confucianism," *The Journal of T'oegye Studies* 147 (2020): 143.

about a transformation. They determined that the excessively metaphysical and formalist study of rites was the leading cause of blocking the historical progress of Joseon society. Thus, they tried to create a new academic trend, focusing on the spirit of "seeking truth from facts", which prioritized solving problems in the reality of life.[24] The lower-ranking officials who responded to the new academic trend led by the reformist neo-Confucians such as Ik Lee and Jiwon Park were deeply interested in the Western religious thought and academic system that were introduced to Joseon through China at that time.[25] As Joseon people had almost no contact with foreign countries other than China, the newly imported Western thought and culture were exotic and fascinating to them. The Joseon scholars referred to this new knowledge as "Western studies".

The Origin of Western Studies and Joseon Neo-Confucian Scholars' Response to Western Studies

The scholarly pursuit known as Western studies originated in China's Ming Dynasty, rather than in Joseon Korea. Credit for its inception is generally attributed to Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), a Jesuit missionary active within the Ming Dynasty during the seventeenth century. Arriving in China in 1583, Ricci embarked on a mission to disseminate Catholicism, and in the process, catalyzed the emergence of this novel intellectual movement.[26] He deeply pondered how to widely spread the Catholic faith in the Ming Dynasty, given its entirely distinct cultural environment from that of Europe. Acknowledging the discrepancies between Catholic doctrines and local Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist beliefs, Ricci devised an approach to propagate Catholicism that would not elicit unfavorable sentiments among the Chinese people, particularly the ruling class and intellectuals. After mastering the Chinese language and literature, Ricci meticulously analyzed the dominant spiritual cultures of the Chinese: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Based on his profound understanding of these Eastern philosophies, Ricci repeatedly debated religion and philosophy with Chinese intellectuals and reconstructed the teachings of Catholicism in a way that Chinese intellectuals could accept without any sense of rejection. He wrote a book in Chinese titled *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* and

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[24] Tae-Heui Kim, "Reconstruction of Silhak Discourse and Yang Deuk-joong's Proposal of 'Silsagusi,'" *Korean Silhak Review* 41 (2021): 22.

[25] Oesoon Ahn, "The Development of Joseon Silhak Thought in Response to the Acceptance of Western Learning," *Dongbanghak* 5 (1999): 405.

[26] R. Po-Chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xiii.

distributed it to Chinese intellectuals.[27] In addition, Ricci authored several books introducing Western science and technology, such as astronomy, mathematics, and calendar, as well as Catholic doctrine.[28]

At that time, the invasion of the Qing Dynasty, which the Manchus in northeastern China founded, greatly shook the declining Ming Dynasty. Many Ming Dynasty officials and scholars believed that Ricci's introduction of Western science and technology would assist in the restoration of national power and strengthen the military, so they eagerly read Ricci's books. Several scholars were intrigued by Ricci's Catholic doctrine and later converted to Catholicism.[29] Ricci's missionary strategy using their interest in Western science and technology was a significant success. Ricci died in 1610 in the Ming Dynasty, which collapsed in 1644. However, intellectuals in China continued to circulate the Catholic doctrine and Western science and technology books that Ricci left behind. Joseon was an extremely closed country, but it never stopped sending diplomatic and trade envoys to China. The envoys who visited the newly founded Qing Dynasty enthusiastically embraced China's advanced culture and technology. They also brought back Joseon books on Western science and technology, along with Catholic doctrine books written by Ricci and his colleagues.[30]

The ruling class and intelligentsia of Joseon exhibited a nuanced approach toward Western studies. Notably, the neo-Confucian elite harbored no inordinate antipathy toward Western scientific and technological advancements. They recognized the inherent utility of Ricci's introduced Western astronomy and calendar system for bolstering the agricultural sector, the lifeblood of Joseon. Consequently, the adoption of Western scientific and technological texts by Joseon's neo-Confucian scholars proceeded with minimal resistance. However, Ricci's proselytizing efforts through his Catholic doctrine books elicited profound consternation among the neo-Confucian scholarly community.[31] One of the main reasons Joseon neo-Confucians were outraged upon encountering the Catholic doctrine book was that the teachings of Catholicism taught that all human beings are equal before God. Since the neo-Confucians were critical of Western studies' ideology of equality, they focused their attack on Ricci's Catholic doctrine, which

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[27] Harold A. Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith & Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 255.

[28] Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, 111.

[29] Ibid., 122-123.

[30] Hyeon Beom Cho, "Confucian Scholars and 'Western Learning' in the Late Choseon Period: A Critical Review on the Dichotomy of 'Religion/Science,'" *The Society for Study of Korean History of Thoughts* 50 (2015): 99.

[31] Ibid., 120.

emphasized worshipping God over humans. They criticized the Catholic teachings for encouraging people in society to abandon their duties to serve their superiors, including the monarch, and neglecting their obligations to their parents in their homes. According to their perspective, such teachings fundamentally deconstructed Confucian ethics, which strictly follows the hierarchy of class, character, and age. In this context, Hoodam Shin, a Joseon neo-Confucian, wrote the following criticism of Catholicism in 1724:

> The Catholic Church's pursuit of heaven is like a son who does not care about serving his parents, and a minister who does not care about serving his king. The Catholic Church's teachings despise ethics, violate propriety, and remain in the pursuit of selfish interests. How can we not hate it deeply![32]

Joseon Catholic Christians' Practice of the Ideology of Equality

The central theory of Western studies originated from Christian theology, and as a result, the anthropological view that Western studies put forward included the ideal of equality for all people. This idea directly conflicted with the Confucian understanding of human beings, the ideological system that dominated social ethics in East Asia. Unlike Western thoughts, Confucianism maintained a relatively strict hierarchy based on innate character differences. Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, classified human beings into four categories in his *Analects*. These classifications were: "those born with understanding," "those who study and gain understanding," "those who face difficulties and yet study," and "those who face difficulties but never study."[33] This system of classification implied that people were born with different moral qualities, and Confucius believed that those born with high qualities were entitled to virtuous rule over those born with low qualities. Zhu Xi further sophisticated Confucius's theory of human nature with his theory of *li* and *chi*, which stated that all things in the universe exist because of two forces: *chi* as a material force, and *li* as a principle. Since both *li* and *chi* are inherent in the material world, *li* corresponds to the actual manifestation of *chi*. "Every material being has its corresponding *li*, or principles."[34] In other words, the different moral qualities that

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[32] Hoodam Shin, "Discussions on Western Studies," in *Writings That Repel Evil Ways and Follow the Right Teachings*, ed. Manchae Lee (Seoul: Youlhwadang, 1971), 39.
[33] Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius*, tr. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 32.
[34] "A Collection of Conversations of Master Zhu, vol. 15, verse 36," Chinese Text Project, accessed December 16, 2023, https://ctext.org/zhuzi-yulei/15.

Confucius observed were differences in a person's "qualities of *chi*."[35] Within Zhu Xi's philosophical framework, individuals within a societal structure were enjoined to acquiesce to the prevailing hierarchical order, owing to its perceived inherent potential to contribute to the flourishing of morality within the broader community.

Contrary to this view was the idea that Western studies upheld, namely that there is intrinsic equality among human beings. Through his teachings, Ricci asserted that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God:

> Although human beings make distinctions between sovereign and subject, father and son; when they are seen in their relationship to the common fatherhood of the Lord of Heaven, they all become brothers with an equal standing; it is essential to understand this principle.[36]

As Ricci elucidated, Catholic Christians acknowledged the existing social hierarchy, but in terms of the divine-human relationship that transcends the social order, they advocated universal equality.[37] They believed that all human beings, formed in the image of God, had religious potential to believe in and serve God faithfully, regardless of their social status or abilities in the world they live in. Therefore, in Catholic views of human nature, all human beings are equal on a fundamental level, in terms of their religious standing before their Creator. Most neo-Confucian scholars in Joseon regarded Ricci's idea of universal human equality as impure. However, a small number of progressive and reform-minded Joseon scholars, such as famous scholars Seunghoon Lee and Yakjong Jung, accepted the teachings of Catholicism and converted to the religion in 1784.[38] Ricci's *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* was the most influential catechism among early Catholic converts in Joseon.[39] They learned Catholic doctrine from Ricci and

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[35] "A Collection of Conversations of Master Zhu, vol. 4, verse 50," Chinese Text Project, accessed December 16, 2023, https://ctext.org/zhuzi-yulei/4.

[36] Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, trs. Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen (Chestnut Hill: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 2016), 355.

[37] Jong-ik Chon, "Introduction of Roman Catholicism and Equality during King Jeong-Jo Era," *Korean Journal of Legal History* 44 (2009): 115.

[38] Kwang Cho, *The Late Joseon Society and Catholicism* (Seoul: Kyoungin-munwhasa, 2010), 115.

[39] Yong-pil Noh, "Characteristics of Annotation on Korean Manuscript of T'ien-chu Shih-i & its Historical Significance," *Research Journal of Catholic Church History* 14 (2017): 227.

accepted his 'moderate' notion of equality.[40] Though they did not pursue the abolition of the neo-Confucian hierarchical system through a nationwide revolution, they actively advocated for its abolition within the Catholic community.[41]

Early Joseon Catholics did not distinguish between *yangban*, *jungin*, *sangmin*, and *cheonmin* during their meetings and educational activities. In the Joseon Dynasty, a person of low social status sitting down or conversing with a person of high social status on an equal footing was considered disrespectful and impolite. Their families and villages severely criticized those who violated this taboo, and in some cases, local officials officially imposed punishments on them. Even when a child was born to a *yangban* and an enslaved woman, the child was considered a slave because he followed his mother's status. Therefore, he could not call his *yangban* father "father" for the rest of his life and had to treat his biological father only as a master.[42] Likewise, those with high status were extremely reluctant to associate with those of low status in Joseon society. However, the first Catholic Christians in Joseon realized that these taboos did not conform to the Christian idea of equality introduced by Ricci. They believed that all humans are fundamentally equal because they all bear the image of God, and they did not accept the traditional justification of inborn discrimination in Joseon society. Yakjong Jeong, one of the key leaders of the early Joseon Catholic Church whom the Joseon government executed during the Catholic Persecution of 1801, justified the idea of equality for all by basing it on the creation story in the Bible:

> God created the first two people and gave them the ability to have children. All the people in the world are their descendants. Therefore, we should love each other as brothers and sisters who were born from the same parents.[43]

Thus, there was no discrimination based on social status in the Joseon Catholic community. This egalitarian community culture greatly impressed the *sangmin* and *cheonmin* people, who were first invited to Catholic meetings. For instance, Ilkwang Hwang, a *cheonmin* who worked as a butcher, reported being deeply moved by the equality within the

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[40] Cho, *The Foundation for the Study of Catholicism in the Late Joseon Period* (Seoul: Kyoungin-munwhasa, 2010), 28.
[41] Ibid., 34-35.
[42] Kim, *Nobi in Joseon*, 111.
[43] Yakjong Jeong, *The Essentials of the Lord's Teaching*, vol 2 (Seoul: Bible Printing Press, 1897), 39 a.

Catholic community. He said, "For me, there are two paradises, one on earth because of the too honorable way I was treated given my condition [class], and the other in the afterlife."[44] Some Catholic Christians practiced the idea of universal equality more radically than others. Recognizing the inconsistency of Joseon's slavery system with the Catholic faith, they took action and emancipated their slaves, granting them the status of *sangmin*. Gunmyeong Ryu stands as a prominent exemplar of such individuals.

Ryu, hailing from a wealthy *yangban* family in Myeoncheon, Chungcheong Province, owned a significant amount of land and possessed a number of slaves.[45] He was a person of gentle character, so it is unlikely that he recklessly abused or used violence against his slaves. However, as a member of the neo-Confucian elite in Joseon, he acknowledged the legitimacy of the slave system and felt no conviction about exploiting their labor. Ryu faithfully adhered to the ethical teachings of neo-Confucianism until his conversion to Catholicism. And as Charles Dallet (1829-1878), a French Catholic missionary and ecclesiastical historian who worked for the Paris Foreign Missions Society, recorded of Ryu's pre-conversion life: "He (Ryu) was called the excellent man, or, even, the pious son, because of his good conduct toward his parents and the assiduous care he lavished on them."[46] Although the exact year is not known, Ryu converted to Catholicism at the age of fifty-nine, when Western studies spread through the Chungcheong Province in the 1790s.[47] After receiving baptism and becoming a formal Catholic, he emancipated all the slaves belonging to his family and used his wealth to provide charity to the poor in the surrounding areas. as evidenced in Dallet's further writing:

> He [Ryu] always showed himself to be a model for his brothers, sharing all his income with the poor and the unfortunate. He freed his slaves and made it his main occupation to instruct and exhort the numerous Christians who came to him.[48]

While there had been instances of freeing slaves in Joseon before, Ryu was the first person in historical records to grant freedom to his slaves based on the principle of human equality. It is probable that there

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[44] Charles Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée*, Tome 1 (Paris: Librairie Victor Palmé, 1874), 140.
[45] Ibid., 271.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.

were others among the Joseon Catholics during Ryu's time who also emancipated their slaves.[49] A neo-Confucian scholar in the early nineteenth century strongly criticized the early Joseon Catholics for their belief in human equality:

> As those who believe in evil studies [Catholicism]… deny that social classes exist, they treat even slaves and lowborns as brothers when the slaves and lowborns join their community. This is an effective way to mislead naïve people.[50]

Based on this record, it is reasonable to infer that some Catholic believers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Joseon, as Ryu did, would have rejected the slave system and freed their slaves.

The Conflict Between the Social Order of Neo-Confucianism and the Egalitarian Thinking of Western Studies

In 1801, the Joseon government initiated a widespread persecution of Catholics, deeming that the Catholic doctrines posed a fundamental threat to the neo-Confucian social order. In January 1801, the Grand Queen Dowager Jeongsun, who was ruling Joseon in place of the young king Sunjo, declared the reason for her decision to persecute Catholics as follows:

> Those who believe in evil studies [Catholicism] nowadays have neither parents nor kings, and they are falling apart in terms of humanity and [neo-Confucian] education, regressing to a state of barbarism and savagery.[51]

The persecution resulted in the deaths of at least one hundred Catholic Christians, either by torture, execution by poison, or beheading. Furthermore, about four hundred Christians were exiled to remote areas with extremely harsh living conditions.[52] For example, Ryu, who was mentioned earlier, was among those exiled. The local officials of Chungcheong Province imprisoned Ryu due to his reputation as a devout Catholic believer. They proceeded to interrogate him, demanding

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[49] Kwang-ho Woo, "The Life of Gyowoo-chon Catholics," *Catholic Times*, September 17, 2006, https://m.catholictimes.org/mobile/article_view.php?aid=156860.
[50] Si-je Hong, *The Summarized Records of Nul-am* (1814), 12.
[51] "The Veritable Records of King Sunjo, vol. 2, January 10th, Year 1 (1801)," National Institute of Korean History, accessed December 18, 2023, https://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kwa_10101010_001.
[52] Andrew Eungi Kim, *The Rise of Protestantism in Modern Korea: A Sociological Perspective* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022), 42.

that he recant his faith in God and universal equality, but he refused to do so.[53] After repeated torture, the Joseon government decided to exile him to a remote location with deplorable living conditions. Having lost both his social status and privileges as a *yangban*, Ryu had to live an impoverished life in exile for about twenty years under the surveillance of local officials and residents.[54] However, despite the difficult conditions he faced, Ryu held firmly to his Catholic faith. And it is recorded that, at the age of eighty-six, he passed away while kneeling in prayer.[55]

In addition to Ryu's case, many Christians gave up their wealth and social status and fled their hometowns to live in poverty and hardship to avoid arrest, torture, and execution. For example, Gangyi Kim, who originally belonged to the *jungin* class, acquired a considerable amount of wealth, but after converting to Catholicism, he escaped the persecution of 1801 by abandoning his wealth and becoming a peddler. Afterward, he sought refuge in the mountains of Gyeongsang Province, where he sustained himself through farming and managed to establish a small Catholic faith community. To evade further persecution, he relocated multiple times. In 1815, however, he was imprisoned in the prison of Wonju due to the denunciation of a fellow believer who had apostatized. He was tortured in prison and sentenced to death by beheading, but he died in prison before being executed due to the sequelae of torture.[56]

The persecution of Catholics in Joseon began in 1801 and continued intermittently until 1886, a period of eighty-five years. The persecution was finally ended by the signing of the France–Korea Treaty of 1886.[57] This treaty allowed for trade and commerce between Joseon and France and for French Catholic missionaries to freely proselytize in Joseon. Before this, there were four major persecutions in Joseon, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 Catholics.[58] The response of Catholics in Joseon to the government's persecutions, which occurred intermittently for eighty-five years, was radical from a religious perspective, but somewhat passive from a political perspective. Confronted with the specter of death, torture, or exile, devoted Catholics

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[53] Dallet, *Histoire de l'Église de Corée*, Tome 1, 271.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 272.

[56] Ibid., 286-287.

[57] Franklin Rausch, "Christian Martyrdom in Korea," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Christian Martyrdom*, ed. Paul Middleton (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2020), 408.

[58] Johnnie Moore and Jerry Pattengale, *The New Book of Christian Martyrs: The Heroes of Our Faith from the 1st Century to the 21st Century* (Carol Stream: Tyndale Momentum, 2023), 329.

demonstrated unwavering resolve in resisting apostasy. Within their community, they steadfastly embraced the tenet of equality among believers, even though this very egalitarian practice constituted the primary catalyst for their persecution. However, Joseon Catholics did not actively endeavor to propagate the notion of universal equality beyond the confines of their community nor did they engage in revolutionary action aimed at overthrowing the established caste system.

The Significance and Limitations of the Egalitarianism Transplanted to Joseon through Western Studies

Adherents of Catholicism within Joseon, whose faith was deeply rooted in and animated by the egalitarian tenets embedded within Western studies, were perceived as a potent threat to the hierarchical edifice of the Joseon Confucian caste system by the ruling elite. Although their aspirations for its complete dismantlement remained unrealized, the indelible mark left by the Joseon Catholic community's embrace of egalitarian ideals cannot be expunged from the historical narrative of human rights development in Korea. The introduction and diffusion of egalitarianism through Western studies represented a paradigm shift in how individuals within Joseon, a society with its distinct notions of human relations and responsibilities, came to understand themselves and their place in the world. The idea of universal equality has never existed in Korea, even in principle, for over 1,600 years since the establishment of the first full-fledged monarchy in the 1st century CE. In Korea, the value of a human being was perceived as being inherently different, depending on the size of wealth, power, knowledge, and fame, and the power of the family.[59] In particular, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the idea of discriminating against the value of a human being was even more firmly established as a social convention due to the extreme neo-Confucian study of the rites.

In this situation, the egalitarianism of Western studies had a profound impact on Joseon society. *Wangsil*, *yangban*, and *jungin* people, who had vested interests in society, considered the idea of universal equality a great threat. Conversely, the lower class, such as *sangmin* and *cheonmin*, accepted the egalitarianism of Western studies, which was propagated and practiced through the Catholic community, as a belief that opened up opportunities for a more humane life. In the end, the egalitarian thinking of Western studies instilled the concept of class struggle, albeit vaguely, in the Joseon people who had taken for granted

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[59] Laura C. Nelson, *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 20.

the rigid hierarchical class system.[60] Those who experienced the abolition of class segregation within the Catholic community inevitably doubted whether the class discrimination outside the Catholic community was justifiable. In particular, Catholic Christians who had learned and experienced egalitarianism, even to a small extent, could not ignore the social injustice caused by the deception and evil deeds of the immoral and greedy individuals among the *wangsil* or *yangban* families toward the lower class. The idea of universal equality in Western studies enabled Joseon people who had come into contact with Catholic doctrine to keenly sense the absurdity and harm of the neo-Confucian understanding of human beings prevalent in Joseon society. Within the context of Joseon's modernization period commencing in the late nineteenth century, the evolving thought patterns embraced by Joseon Catholics constituted a pivotal historical foundation for Korean Christians to become the initial adopters and practitioners of modern Western ideals of equality and human rights.[61]

However, the egalitarian ideology of the Joseon Catholic community had clear limitations in spreading the concept of human rights in Joseon society. First, Joseon Catholics seldom tried to realize their egalitarianism through political movements or revolutions. Their education and practice on equality were carried out actively within the Catholic community. There were two reasons for their detachment from socio-political actions. First, Joseon Catholics valued the reward in the afterlife rather than the transformation of reality.[62] They firmly believed that they would receive eternal rewards in the afterlife when they overcame the social injustice and persecution of reality with their unwavering faith. This attitude of expecting rewards in the transcendent realm made Joseon Catholics look at the absurdity and suffering of reality with a somewhat detached attitude.[63]

Second, the Joseon Catholic Church learned the biblical doctrine of obedience to state power through Ricci and faithfully followed this teaching. With a few exceptions, almost all Joseon Catholics did not seek to bring about the collapse of the Joseon government or the Confucian system. They maintained the position of the oppressed weak against the

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[60] Chang-won Park, *Cultural Blending in Korean Death Rites: New Interpretive Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 37.

[61] Seon-hye Choi, "The Growth of Catholicism in Late Chosŏn and the Fall of Patriarchal Society," *Research Journal of Korean Church History* 38 (2012): 37.

[62] Anselm K. Min, "A Rational Approach to the Study of Korean Religions: An Overview," in *Korean Religions in Relation: Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity*, ed. Anselm K. Min (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 7.

[63] Choi, "The Growth of Catholicism in Late Chosŏn and the Fall of Patriarchal Society," 37.

sanctions or persecution of state power, as all pacifistic churches in Christian history did, and they had little interest in politicizing the church. As the Joseon Catholics showed a tendency to comply with the political power, the French missionaries who actively helped the Joseon Catholic mission tried to teach the Joseon Catholics that they should resist or criticize the unfair oppression of the king or officials to some extent from a Western perspective. Marie-Nicolas-Antoine Daveluy (Anthony Ahn), a French bishop who was executed with Korean Catholics in 1866, taught the following way to deal with political power: "We should reflect on how we can righteously challenge or resist the king or officials."[64] Thus, Western missionaries taught Joseon Catholics to have a somewhat critical view of political power, but the majority of Joseon Catholics generally conformed to the Joseon political system in the political sphere. As a result, the Joseon Catholic Church ultimately succeeded in preserving the idea of equality internally, but it did not attempt to pursue the ideal of universal equality through social revolution externally. The limited diffusion of egalitarian ideals beyond the confines of the Joseon Catholic Church reflects the inherent constraints within the particular interpretation of Christian equality embraced by Joseon converts. From a politico-philosophical perspective, the egalitarian tenets introduced through Western studies failed to fully permeate the fabric of Joseon society, remaining largely confined within the insulated sphere of the Catholic community and practiced in a manner characterized by relative seclusion.

Conclusion

The infiltration of egalitarian tenets associated with Western studies into Joseon society sparked awareness among a select group of progressive neo-Confucian intellectuals harboring aspirations for social change, who began to perceive the inherent flaws within the rigidly stratified caste system of Joseon. These neo-Confucians who embraced Catholicism subsequently championed the ideal of universal equality, drawing upon Christian doctrine, to the *sangmin* and *cheonmin* populations of Joseon. While it is important to note that the extent of their acceptance and active engagement with this teaching varied within these lower-class groups, it is undeniable that many found resonance with this message. However, they did not attempt radical social movements or political revolutions because they followed Christian religiosity in accepting and practicing the idea of equality. Christian religiosity is characterized by moderation in faithfully obeying the state's political power while anticipating spiritual rewards in the afterlife, rather than seeking transformation in the present world. Therefore, the Catholic

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[64] Anthony Ahn, *A Brief Record of Reflection* (1864), The Fourth Commandment, 20 a.

Christians of Joseon only taught and practiced the idea of equality within their faith community. While their efforts to instill a political notion of equality within Joseon society fell short, they diligently labored to adopt and uphold a novel conceptualization of humanity centered around the principle of equality in the ideological sense.

Amidst the prevailing neo-Confucian ideology which deemed class-based disparities as inherent and ethically justifiable, Joseon's early Christian converts, profoundly influenced by Western studies' egalitarian principles, endured significant hardships in their pursuit of challenging this system. Their tenacious pursuit, alongside the efforts of early Western studies researchers, contributed to the gradual emergence of discourses highlighting human dignity and equality within Joseon society. It is crucial to acknowledge, however, that historical progress toward these ideals is neither linear nor guaranteed. Rather, such advancements often arise from sustained struggles and complex social dynamics, and the experiences of Joseon's early Christians and Western studies scholars serve as a significant illustration of this ongoing pursuit.

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Literary Theory

Dreams vs. Reality: A Psychoanalysis of the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* and *Death of a Salesman*

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Abstract

This scholarly exploration examines the nuanced portrayal of the American Dream in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, employing a comprehensive analysis rooted in Freud's psychoanalytic theories. The research investigates the characters of Jay Gatsby and Willy Loman, unraveling their intricate use of defense mechanisms, including denial and repression, as psychological shields against the realities inherent in their pursuit of the American Dream. Delving into Gatsby's world, the study elucidates the symbolism of the green light as a representation of unattainable aspirations. Concurrently, it examines Loman's illusions of success, exploring his contradictions and the societal influences that shape his distorted perception. The comparative analysis draws parallels between the characters, offering insights into the complexities of their quests. The research contextualizes these literary works within the societal backdrop, emphasizing the broader implications of the American Dream on individuals, particularly in the distraction it provides from socioeconomic disparities. The study concludes with a thought-provoking reflection on the psychological toll incurred by the relentless pursuit of distorted ideals, urging scholars and readers to critically examine societal expectations and values that perpetuate these illusions. This research is expected to contribute to the academic discourse by offering a nuanced psychoanalytic perspective on two seminal works of American literature, enriching the understanding of the psychological complexities involved in the elusive American Dream.

Introduction

Examining the multifaceted portrayal of the American Dream in two works of American literature, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, serves as a reminder for readers of the troubles associated with working in the mid-twentieth century. Jay Gatsby and Willy Loman's stories expose the perils and pitfalls inherent in pursuing the American Dream. Deeply ingrained in the ethos of the United States, the American Dream promises prosperity, upward mobility, and the pursuit of happiness irrespective of social standing. Since its rise in popularity during the Industrial Revolution, the concept of the American Dream has promised success to all, regardless of social stature and available resources.[1] This dream is often unattainable yet irresistible, leaving many, including Gatsby and Loman, eager to buy into illusions as protection from their failures in achieving it.

Gatsby and Loman employ theories of the unconscious, posited by the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, in the face of the harsh realities associated with their desperate pursuit of the American dream. To protect their self-esteem, people unconsciously repress feelings of failure and lack of control.[2] According to Sigmund Freud, the unconscious mind includes repressed feelings, hidden memories, habits, desires, and reactions. Painful, embarrassing, shameful, and distressing memories and emotions are also stored in the unconscious. Psychologically, the unconscious can create a state of denial – a distortion of negative experiences so complete that it can block out reality altogether.[3] Denial, when coupled with repression – a companion defense that involves inhibiting the emotional responses that result from conflict – may give the appearance of a successful psychological shelter from reality. However, it distracts a person from real anxieties rather than making them disappear. Repression can also eliminate the distinction between what one believes one should feel and what one actually feels. As an unconscious defense mechanism, repression enables people to maintain self-esteem and control in the face of events beyond their influence, enabling the denial of threatening situations of reality.[4] Ultimately, using these defense mechanisms highlights the psychological

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[1] Vanneman, Reeve, and Lynn Weber Cannon. "The American Dream." *The American Perception of Class*, 257–82. Temple University Press, 1987. JSTOR.

[2] Rand, Nicholas, and Maria Torok. "Questions to Freudian Psychoanalysis: Dream Interpretation, Reality, Fantasy." *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 3 (1993): 567–94. JSTOR.

[3] Taylor, S.E., Collins, R.L., Skokan, L.A., & Aspinwall, L.G. 1989. "Maintaining positive illusions in the face of negative information: Getting the facts without letting them get to you." *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 8: 114-129. PDF.

[4] Beeley, Arthur L. "Freud and Psychoanalysis." *Social Service Review* 5, no. 1 (1931): 10–27. JSTOR.

toll of the quest for the American Dream and the lengths individuals go to shield themselves from its harsh truths.

Freud's theory of repression offers a compelling framework to understand why individuals cling to the illusion of the American Dream, which does not always align with reality. In its establishment and convoluted history, the American Dream has emerged as a complex narrative that influences the perceptions and aspirations of millions of individuals, particularly those in the proletariat class.[5] As millions of immigrants arrived on the shores of America in the hope of better lives, they were convinced of the (false) openness and classlessness of the country. A powerful narrative for millions of immigrants joining the working class, the American Dream served to distract the working class from the struggles they faced as disadvantaged members of society, further inspiring people to endure dangerous working conditions and tolerate inequality, hoping their children would not have to go through similar experiences. Gatsby and Loman's use of defense mechanisms looks different in their respective circumstances, but their responses are both triggered by illusions of the American Dream.

The Great Gatsby

Discussion of the American Dream: The Tragedies of Gatsby's American Dream

In *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald delves into the intricacies between illusion and reality, moral decay in pursuit of wealth, and the societal impact of the unabated quest for the American Dream. In the opulent world of West Egg, Jay Gatsby is an enigmatic figure, epitomizing the luxuries of the Roaring Twenties. Gatsby's character is shaped by a passionate pursuit of the American Dream; his extravagant parties, luxurious mansion, and self-made wealth project an outward image of success that misrepresents his underlying loneliness.[6] While he seemingly possesses everything, Gatsby remains unsatisfied. Gatsby struggles to distinguish between reality and illusion, shielded by the lavish parties he throws that mask his true feelings.[7] His inability to differentiate between reality and illusion stems from his pursuit of material wealth, fueled by illicit activities during the prohibition era that are primarily kept a mystery. Gatsby's illusions are intricately tied to his love for Daisy Buchanan, a woman he courted before being drafted in

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[5] Vanneman and Cannon. "The American Dream." *The American Perception of Class*.
[6] Bewley, "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America." *The Sewanee Review* 62, no. 2 (1954): 223–46. JSTOR.
[7] Finkelstein, David H. "On the Distinction between Conscious and Unconscious States of Mind." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1999): 79–100. JSTOR.

World War I. Across the bay from his extravagant mansion, Gatsby can see a green light attached to Daisy Buchanan's dock. Since their teenage romance, Daisy has wedded Tom Buchanan and effectively left Gatsby in her past. The green light hanging from her dock becomes an omnipresent symbol of what once was for Gatsby. As the book's narrator, Nick Carraway, observes,

> [H]e stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward – and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been at the end of a dock.[8]

The "single green light," a powerful symbol of unattainable dreams, becomes a metaphorical beacon of hope and aspiration for Gatsby. It represents his persistent quest for an idealized version of the American Dream, where he can return to happier times with Daisy.[9] Its "minute and far away" description symbolizes its elusive and distant nature, becoming a haunting reminder of the unreachable dream perpetuating his internal conflicts. The stretching out of his arms reflects his yearning for what he cannot have, encapsulating his relentless pursuit of a dream that seems just beyond his grasp but is, in reality, forever out of reach.[10] Despite his wealth and luxury, Gatsby's ultimate goal – winning back Daisy's love and realizing the American Dream – is depicted as remote and unattainable. The green light becomes a recurring symbol that highlights the disparity between Gatsby's dreams and the harsh realities of the world he inhabits.

Studying Gatbsy's background and the mysteries surrounding him reveals the bleakness of the American Dream. Gatsby, a young man with no family, relentlessly pursues wealth and influence by moving to West Egg to win over Daisy, whom he sees as the embodiment of the American Dream. Gatsby believes that accumulating wealth and achieving a high social status will make him more desirable to Daisy and enable him to fit into the elite society to which she belongs. This reflects the notion that material prosperity leads to happiness and popularity. Gatsby's failure to win Daisy despite having obtained that wealth suggests that the American Dream, as portrayed through Gatsby's aspirations, can remain hollow and elusive. Furthermore, Gatsby's

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[8] Fitzgerald, F. S. 1999. *The Great Gatsby* (US import ed.). Scribner., 55.
[9] Bewley, "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America."
[10] Samuels, Charles Thomas. "The Greatness of 'Gatsby.'" *The Massachusetts Review* 7, no. 4 (1966): 783–94. JSTOR.

wealth is built on illegal activities during the prohibition era, highlighting the moral compromises often associated with the pursuit of success. Despite his efforts, Gatsby's pursuit of Daisy ultimately ends in his death as George Wilson, believing Gatsby is responsible for the death of his wife Myrtle Wilson, shoots Gatsby in his backyard. In reality, it was Daisy, driving Gatsby's car, who struck Myrtle and killed her. The tragic demise of Gatsby, caused by his aspirations of winning over Daisy, underscores the disillusionment and tragedy that can accompany the relentless pursuit of the American Dream.

Without any known past, Gatsby can reinvent himself and fabricate a past in which he has a rich family history and a legacy of greatness. Gatsby exclaims, "I am the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition."[11] Gatsby creates an entirely new sense of self in his fabricated background, shielding himself from reality. Though he shares details of his past and family, Gatsby's background is shrouded in mystery and speculation. Gatsby's creation of a facade regarding his background is a crucial aspect of his attempts to achieve the American Dream.[12] By fabricating a glamorous persona and crafting an elaborate narrative about his past, Gatsby seeks to present himself as someone who epitomizes the ideals of success and wealth associated with the American Dream. Creating a facade allows Gatsby to reinvent himself and escape the limitations of his humble beginnings, as one's background and social status play a significant role in the society Gatsby wishes to join. He believes that by projecting an image of affluence and sophistication, he can fabricate a lifestyle associated with the American Dream. Gatsby's mysterious wealth and the extravagant parties he hosts contribute to the illusion of his success, attracting attention and admiration from others. The facade serves as a means for Gatsby to gain entry into the elite circles of New York society, mainly to find Daisy, but he remains an outsider. His tragic love story with Daisy and subsequent disillusionment serves as a commentary on the broken nature of the American Dream, emphasizing that prosperity does not equate to happiness.

Psychoanalysis: Gatsby's Repressed Realities and the Valley of Ashes

Gatsby's attempt to recreate the past and win back Daisy aligns with Freud's concept of the unconscious defense mechanism, where one engages in behaviors to protect one's self-esteem in the face of unhappy

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[11] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 127.
[12] Bewley, "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America."

realities. Freud's concept of repression, specifically the distortion of negative experiences to block out the memory of something altogether, is evident in Gatsby's attempt to recreate a romanticized past with Daisy. The illusion of control over time and his emotions becomes a defense mechanism for Gatsby, shielding him from the painful reality that Daisy is not the idealized figure he imagines, and they can no longer be together.[13] Nick Carraway, the novel's narrator, cautiously advises Jay Gatsby against expecting too much from Daisy Buchanan, emphasizing the impossibility of reliving the past. Gatsby's assertive response reflects his desperate refusal to accept the limitations of reality. "'I wouldn't ask too much of her,' I ventured. 'You can't repeat the past.' 'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!' He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand."[14] Gatsby's refusal to accept the restraints of time aligns with his broader pursuit of the elusive American Dream.

Gatsby's reinvention of himself after returning from the war is another embodiment of Freudian notions. The unconscious need to protect his self-esteem and maintain control over the narrative of his life compels Gatsby to create a persona that aligns with his aspirational vision of the American Dream.[15] However, this illusion of control ultimately crumbles, as Gatsby cannot repeat the past, and his attempt to do so leads to his demise. Gatsby dies alone, with few people attending his funeral. He is abandoned by those who attend his lavish parties every weekend, emphasizing the loneliness that accompanies a life built on illusions. Gatsby's death is a consequence of his illusions conflicting with the harsh realities of the world he inhabits. Despite Gatsby's intense and genuine feelings for Daisy, she ultimately betrays him. When faced with the choice between Gatsby and Tom, Daisy opts for the safety and social standing Tom can give her. This betrayal shatters Gatsby's fantasy of a future with Daisy. Her betrayal also highlights the fleeting nature of the American Dream as Gatsby is seemingly close to winning Daisy back, but ultimately, she does not choose him. Gatsby's perception of Daisy as an idealized figure worthy of idolization aligns with Freud's concept of the individual pushing emotions into the unconscious to eliminate the discrepancy between what one believes one should feel and what one actually feels. Gatsby's emotional investment in Daisy becomes a mask

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[13] Bargh and Morsella. "The Unconscious Mind."

[14] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 204.

[15] Welsh, Talia. "The Retentional and the Repressed: Does Freud's Concept of the Unconscious Threaten Husserlian Phenomenology?" *Human Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002): 165–83.

for the reality that she is not the perfect embodiment of his dreams and is, in fact, a very flawed person.

The Valley of Ashes, a landfill for industrial waste separating West Egg from Manhattan, unveils another layer of Freudian symbolism.[16] The desolation and decay of the Valley of Ashes represent a collective repression of societal issues and the lack of social mobility despite the promises of the American Dream. The unconscious denial of the harsh socioeconomic realities of the 1920s becomes a defense mechanism for the characters in the novel, shielding them from the uncomfortable truths associated with the pursuit of the American Dream.[17] The ashes symbolize the remnants of shattered dreams, unfulfilled desires, and the psychological and moral decay of individuals caught in pursuing material success. In Nick's words: "A valley of ashes – a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air."[18] The imagery of grotesque gardens, houses, and chimneys emerging from the ashes suggests a distorted and corrupted representation of the unconscious.[19] The "transcendent effort" indicates an attempt to rise above the ashes, surpassing the limitations of twentieth-century society. However, the men in the valley are also described as "already crumbling," emphasizing the futility of this effort. Freud's theory asserts that the filling of the unconscious mind with repressed desires and unresolved conflicts can lead to psychological decline and dysfunction. With its crumbling men and distorted forms, the Valley of Ashes reflects a society's collective unconscious grappling with the consequences of unfulfilled and unattainable dreams. The ashes can be interpreted as the repressed desires and aspirations of individuals who, unable to achieve their dreams, experience a form of denial and debilitating mental states. The valley becomes a repository for the discarded remnants of unfulfilled wishes, symbolizing the consequences of believing in the American Dream or clinging to its ideology.

Dr. T.J. Eckleburg's billboard in the Valley of Ashes stands as a powerful symbol of the illusion inherent in the American Dream, serving as a visual metaphor for the distorted promises and disillusionment faced by many characters in *The Great Gatsby*. The billboard, originally intended

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16 Samuels, "The Greatness of 'Gatsby.'"
17 Bewley, "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America."
18 Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 57.
19 Samuels, "The Greatness of 'Gatsby."

as an advertisement for optical services, features the faded and detached eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg. As Fitzgerald vividly describes,

> Above the gray land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic – their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face, but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a non-existent nose. Evidently some wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness, or forgot them and moved away.[20]

Once associated with vision and clarity, these eyes become a haunting representation of the obscured dreams within the narrative. This description enhances the symbolism of the advertisement by portraying the eyes as an omnipresent and judgmental force, detached from human emotion or expression and serving as a silent commentary on the decay of this dream. The American Dream, as seen through Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, is no longer a symbol of clarity but a reminder of the hollowness of material success. Moreover, the deterioration of the billboard emphasizes the fleeting nature of the American Dream. The illusion of prosperity, embodied by Gatsby's lavish parties and extravagant lifestyle, is similar to the fading eyes on the billboard. Like the advertisement, the dream loses its initial clarity and purpose, becoming a distorted vision that fails to deliver the fulfillment and happiness promised. The faded and unyielding eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg scrutinize the valley, silently witnessing the consequences of unrestrained ambition. As characters engage in questionable and often illicit activities to achieve their dreams, the eyes on the billboard become symbolic witnesses to the moral compromises made in the pursuit of wealth and success. The faded eyes observe Gatsby's illicit wealth accumulation during Prohibition, Tom Buchanan's extramarital relationship, and Daisy's careless actions. In this way, Dr. T.J. Eckleburg's advertisement encapsulates the disillusionment and moral decay underlying the quest for the elusive American Dream.

Death of a Salesman

Discussion of the American Dream: Willy Loman's Dreams and Contradictions

In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, an unsuccessful traveling salesman, Willy Loman, dreams of success and being well-liked. These

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[20] Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 58.

dreams mask the harsh realities of his life – that Willy is neither well-known nor successful. Influenced by the idealized image of successful salesman Dave Singleman, Willy perpetuates the illusion that being well-liked equals success. Willy's emotional state and the events leading to his downfall reveal the broader implications of the American Dream on the working-class mentality.[21] His inability to distinguish between reality and fantasy becomes a central theme, manifested in encouraging his sons, Biff and Happy, to prioritize popularity over academic success and hard work. His outlook on success and how to become well-liked leads to his downfall and influences his children by encouraging them to buy into his fantasies and believe that they, too, are better off than they really are. Pieces of reality show through in Willy's many contradictions revolving around his self-perception and societal role. They expose his deep insecurities and skewed sense of self-worth. Willy yells, "Biff is a lazy bum!" but on the very next page, he says, "There's one thing about Biff - he's not lazy."[22] By simultaneously celebrating and dismissing Biff's character, Willy reveals his inability to confront the reality that contradicts his deeply ingrained sense of the American Dream and his struggle to validate his sons' worth and, by extension, his own worth as their father.[23] This contradiction underlines Willy's escalating identity crisis while reflecting his desperate attempt to reconcile his idealized version of himself with reality.

Willy's contradictions also highlight his persistent denial of reality, projecting an illusion of success and happiness while grappling with the harsh truths of his life.[24] Willy's many contradictory statements also represent his need for external affirmation to conceal his feelings of inadequacy and failure. In comparing himself to his friend, Willy tells his children, "Charley is not - liked. He's liked, but he's not - well-liked."[25] Shortly after, he says to his wife, "You know, the trouble is, Linda, people don't seem to take to me," and, "One thing about Charley. He's a man of few words, and they respect him."[26] Emphasizing his struggle to distinguish between reality and illusion, this contradiction sheds light on the American Dream's profound impact on Willy's thoughts of self. He

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[21] Benziman, Galia. "Success, Law, and the Law of Success: Reevaluating 'Death of a Salesman's' Treatment of the American Dream." South Atlantic Review 70, no. 2 (2005): 20–40. JSTOR.
[22] Miller, A. 1981. Death of a Salesman: Certain private conversations in two acts and a requiem. Penguin Books., 21
[23] Martin, Robert A. "The Nature of Tragedy in Arthur Miller's 'Death of a Salesman.'" South Atlantic Review 61, no. 4 (1996): 97–106. JSTOR.
[24] Benziman, "Success, Law, and the Law of Success: Reevaluating 'Death of a Salesman's' Treatment of the American Dream."
[25] Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 32
[26] Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 38,39

feels jealousy toward Uncle Charley for being more popular than himself but also uses Uncle Charley as an example of someone he believes he is better than. His belief that being well-liked is the key to success, as demonstrated by his words, "Be liked and you will never want," exemplifies the contradictions inherent in the American Dream itself.[27] Willy's skewed sense of the American Dream greatly emphasizes social status and popularity, often forgetting that success also takes hard work. His contradictions reflect the internal conflict between the illusions he desperately clings to and the reality that eludes him. As the play progresses, Willy's contradictions become more pronounced, signaling the unraveling of his mental state caused by his continued need for validation. His contradictions become a poignant commentary on the consequences of living in a self-constructed world of illusions. They ultimately contribute to his tragic ending, rooted in his lack of understanding of what it takes to be successful and happy. Willy's contradictions serve as a cautionary tale of the inability to reconcile the discordance between dreams and reality, underscoring the internal conflicts that drive Willy to his end.

Additionally, the society in which Willy lives contributes to his outlook on success and his inability to reconcile with the harsh realities surrounding him. Willy epitomizes the embodiment of the American Dream gone awry. His tragic narrative unfolds against the backdrop of a society where the American Dream is both an aspiration for success and a pervasive force shaping perceptions and attitudes. Reeve Vanneman and Lynn Weber Cannon's analysis in "The American Perception of Class" sheds light on how the American Dream serves as an aspiration for success and a means to distract the working class from extreme socioeconomic disparities.

> The American Dream seemed the perfect immunization against the dangers of a militant class consciousness. It promised a shared vision to all Americans—workers and bosses, the poor and the rich. In an open America, class struggle would be unnecessary. Discontent with one's position would inspire workers to change their positions within the system rather than trying to change the system itself.[28]

For the millions of Americans in the working class, the American Dream becomes a compelling narrative that assures them they can achieve

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[27] Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 35.
[28] Vanneman and Cannon. "The American Dream." In The American Perception of Class.

success, financial freedom, and happiness. Instead of inciting rebellion against an ostensibly flawed system, the American Dream encourages individuals like Willy Loman to believe in their capacity to rise within the established framework. Newcomers and home-grown Americans alike believe in the American Dream and cling to its illusions.

Willy, a symbol of the typical American man, internalizes the materialistic ideals of the American Dream despite lacking concrete evidence or logical reasoning. In chasing the American Dream, Willy grapples with societal expectations that reduce human worth to a materialistic measure, as exemplified by the stark assertion: "The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell."[29] This pervasive societal belief encapsulates the play's exploration of the materialistic and competitive ideals that dominate the characters' lives, serving as a pitiful commentary on the dehumanizing effects of a society that places excessive emphasis on external markers of success. Willy's steadfast belief in becoming successful drives his life, compelling him to pursue success as defined by societal norms of popularity. However, as Willy's story unfolds, it becomes evident that the American Dream has led him into a spiral of disillusionment and dismay. After being fired, Willy tells his friend Charley, "Funny, y'know? After all the highways, and the trains, and the appointments, and the years, you end up worth more dead than alive."[30] Willy Loman's poignant reflection suggests a society that fails the working class, particularly in its unrealistic expectations and diminishment of individuals who tirelessly try to contribute to the country's economy.

Willy's observation encapsulates the struggles of the working class in a society that often measures success solely in financial terms, disregarding all other values. The metaphorical "highways" and "trains" symbolize the taxing journey and sacrifices made in pursuit of the elusive American Dream. Despite the persistent determination for success, represented by the countless "appointments" and the "years" passing by, Willy laments that the working class finds themselves worth more dead than alive, suggesting a systemic failure where individuals are only recognized and valued when they can no longer actively contribute to the workforce. Essentially, Willy is suddenly seeing the exploitative nature of American society that disregards the well-being of the working class. The emphasis on financial worth after death in the form of life insurance implies a societal structure that commodifies individuals, extracting their labor and dedication during their productive years but failing to provide sufficient recognition or support for their struggles. The irony lies in the

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[29] Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 100.
[30] Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 101.

materialistic system that demands such unwavering dedication but fails to reward and acknowledge the working class's contributions during their lifetimes. Willy Loman's perspective becomes a critique of a society that perpetuates the cycle of exploitation and marginalization of the working class. His words highlight the systemic flaws that make individuals like him feel trapped in a relentless pursuit of success, ultimately leaving them disillusioned and questioning the societal values prioritizing financial achievements over the well-being and dignity of the working class. As the gap between Willy's dreams and reality widens, it exposes the inherent flaws in a society that endorses pining for the American Dream by all means necessary while disregarding the systemic issues that hinder its realization for individuals in the working class, like Willy. In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman's character becomes a poignant reflection of the impact of societal expectations and the American Dream on individuals striving for success.

Psychoanalysis: Willy's Illusions of Success

Looking at Willy's contradictions through a psychoanalytical lens reveals the devastating consequences of clinging to the distorted ideals of the American Dream. For Willy, the unconscious desire to protect his self-esteem and maintain control over his perceived reality leads to the creation of elaborate illusions.[31] The image of Dave Singleman, a successful and well-liked salesman, becomes a powerful symbol representing Willy's idealized version of success.[32] This unconscious defense mechanism shields Willy from the painful realities of his failures, allowing him to construct a facade of success that aligns with American ideals of the family unit – with Willy being the breadwinner for his family.[33] The blurred lines between Willy's reality and fantasies reflect Freud's concept of repression. However, this defense mechanism does not shield him from the actual consequences of his illusions.[34] As his facade of illusions fades away, Willy is left defenseless and defeated, leading him to the brink of suicide numerous times and, eventually, his actual death in an intentional car wreck. Furthermore, long-term denial, considered a defensive pattern by Freud, is evident in Willy's persistent belief in his sons' potential for success despite contradictory evidence.[35] In conversation, his wife Linda says about Biff, "'He's too rough with the girls, Willy. All the mothers are afraid of him!' 'I'll whip him!'" Willy

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[31] Bargh, John A., and Ezequiel Morsella. "The Unconscious Mind." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3, no. 1 (2008): 73–79. JSTOR.
[32] Benziman, "Success, Law, and the Law of Success: Reevaluating 'Death of a Salesman's' Treatment of the American Dream."
[33] Beeley, "Freud and Psychoanalysis."
[34] Bargh and Morsella. "The Unconscious Mind."
[35] Beeley, "Freud and Psychoanalysis."

responds. "'All the mothers – '" Linda tries again. "'Shut up!'" Willy coldly replies.[36] Willy's reaction to Linda's concerns reflects his broader struggle with accepting reality. In dismissing Linda's attempts to address Biff's behavioral issues, Willy demonstrates his inclination to avoid confronting unpleasant truths. His repeated efforts to avoid real problems, like Biff's, echo his tendency to live in a world of illusions, where acknowledging imperfect circumstances becomes an unwelcome intrusion weighing him down.

The Parallel Dreams and Demises of Gatsby and Loman in the American Dream

A comparison of Jay Gatsby and Willy Loman reveals intriguing parallels and contrasts in their pursuit of the American Dream. Though Gatsby obtains material wealth that Willy Loman does not, they share common threads of deep insecurity and tragic consequences, with both characters meeting unfortunate endings – funerals in which no guests attend for deaths caused by their shared tragic ending, an inability to distinguish between reality and illusion. The illusion of control over their destinies is both a source of comfort and a tragic flaw, leading to their demise. However, the roots of their illusions and the consequences they face diverge, offering valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the American Dream. Gatsby's illusions stem from a desire to recreate the past and attain an idealized version of the American Dream in his pursuit of happiness. The green light, symbolic of his dreams, becomes a powerful representation of such aspirations. On the other hand, Willy's illusions, deeply rooted in his desire to be well-liked and successful, align with Freud's notion of the unconscious as a protective mechanism. The image of Dave Singleman becomes an idealization that protects Willy from the reality of his own failures. Willy Loman's contradictions and the faded eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg symbolize the moral compromises and internal conflicts inherent in the quest for success. The lives of Gatsby and Willy illustrate the nuanced challenges and inherent contradictions within the American Dream, portraying a compelling narrative of aspirations, illusions, and tragic consequences.

Conclusion

The portrayal of the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* and *Death of a Salesman* probes the complexities of illusion, reality, and the psychological toll of the relentless and empty pursuit of wealth and happiness. Both Willy and Gatsby employ the Freudian defense mechanisms of denial and repression to construct elaborate facades to

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[36] Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 42.

shield themselves from the truths of their lives and pasts, highlighting the disconnect between aspirations and harsh realities. The psychoanalytical lens, rooted in Freudian concepts of repression and denial, becomes a driving force in their narratives and provides valuable insights into the defense mechanisms employed by Gatsby and Loman to shield themselves from the harsh truths of their quests for happiness and fulfillment. Both Willy and Gatsby, driven by insecurity, seek validation through external markers of success, approval from others, and status symbols. The societies in which Gatsby and Loman exist contribute to the characters' outlook on success and the consequences of their beliefs. The American Dream serves as both an aspiration for success and a means to distract the working class from socioeconomic disparities. However, it also perpetuates a materialistic and competitive culture, as seen in Willy Loman's emphasis on being well-liked and Gatsby's pursuit of material wealth through illicit means. Despite their differences, Willy and Gatsby resonate as representative figures in the broader narrative of the American Dream. These works caution against the dangers of clinging to distorted ideals and emphasize the importance of acknowledging reality and rejecting American Dream ideals. Their stories prompt introspection into the societal expectations and values that drive individuals to construct elaborate illusions, often at the expense of authenticity and genuine fulfillment, and shed light upon the dangers of buying so entirely into the American Dream.

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Unmasking Misogyny:
Clytemnestra's Demise in Aeschylus' Oresteia

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Abstract

This paper examines the manifestation of misogyny in Aeschylus' version of the Orestes myth through Clytemnestra's change throughout the Oresteia. The Clytemnestra portrayal was deliberately demonized by Aeschylus in the tragedy "Choephori" compared to the preceding tragedy "Agamemnon". The portrayal of the vengeful mother was substituted for that of the adulterous wife, a manifestation of bias dictated by the need for demonstrative censure. Incorporating evidence from a literature review and close reading of the Oresteia, this study demonstrates that Aeschylus' bias against Clytemnestra was motivated by misogyny. It argues in favor of deliberately ignoring narrative elements that interfere with the censure of Clytemnestra's actions outside the patriarchal law of young Olympians. These concerns are particularly evident in the Oresteia belief system, within which the matriarchal goddesses are archaic and chthonic, and the patriarchal goddesses are young ruling goddesses. A close reading of the Oresteia has shown that the relation of the positions of the matriarchal and patriarchal gods in relation to each other is used by Aeschylus as a censure of gynecocracy. In an age of debates about the marginalization of women, the topic of the suppression of female authority can lead to discussions about how contemporary understandings of gender balance and power dynamics are shaped by historical depictions of women in roles of power and rebellion.

Introduction

The myth of Orestes is a story of family vendetta. Its main theme is revenge. However, in the Aeschylus version, as the action develops, it evolves into a conflict about women. The essence of this conflict is the dispute over a woman's right to power, revenge, and her children. The connecting link in this conflict is Clytemnestra, whose actions throughout the tragedies of "Oresteia" are put on trial. By putting her actions on trial, Aeschylus expresses a biased assessment of them. This bias, dictated by misogyny, is evidence that the portrayal of Clytemnestra was deliberately tailored to the patriarchal concept of negativity and destructiveness. This paper states that such an approach to the portrayal of Clytemnestra is explained by Aeschylus' endeavor to express the censure of female power and the rebellion of women against male authority. Understanding misogyny in this endeavor indicates how historical narratives have influenced public beliefs about women's social status and help to move closer to understanding how they continue to influence contemporary convictions. To illuminate the theme of misogyny in Aeschylus' adaptation of the myth of Orestes, this paper explores the misogyny manifested in Clytemnestra's changes through "Oresteia".

Scholarship of the Clytemnestra Study

Scholars have long studied Clytemnestra as an element of misogyny in the "Oresteia". As early as 1948 Winnington-Ingram[1] notes that Clytemnestra's motivation for killing Agamemnon is her envy of his male entitlement. She kills him not so much because she is avenging Iphigenia, but because she is avenging herself and her dignity. Clytemnestra is not satisfied with her femininity and seeks Agamemnon's masculinity. The carpet scene, in which Clytemnestra persuades Agamemnon to step on the carpet, is interpreted by Winnington-Ingram as Clytemnestra's attempt to humiliate Agamemnon, kill him, and take revenge on him. The assertion of the connection between female power and vindictiveness in "Agamemnon" is a censure of female power. This defines the fact of misogyny.

Notably, that Bierl[2] in his work, "Klytaimestra Tyrannos: Fear and Tyranny in Aeschylus's 'Oresteia'" identifies Clytemnestra's actions towards Agamemnon in the carpet scene as an attempt to induce him to

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[1] R. P. Winnington-Ingram, "Clytemnestra and the Vote of Athena," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 68 (November 1, 1948): 130–47, https://doi.org/10.2307/626303.
[2] Anton Bierl, "Klytaimestra Tyrannos: Fear and Tyranny in Aeschylus's 'Oresteia,'" *Comparative Drama* 51, no. 4 (2017): 528–63, http://www.jstor.org/stable/45176225.

return to the path of tyranny. Her requests to yield to her and walk the carpet are interpreted by Bierl as an unequivocal order to cede power to her. Bierl defines the dynamic between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra in the carpet scene as an act of political struggle. Clytemnestra's arguments based on the distribution of gender roles can then be seen as evidence that their political struggle is based on a movement of dominance from male to female.

The reverse process occurs in the "Eumenides" when Clytemnestra's tyranny is destroyed by Orestes' revenge. Through revenge, power is once again transferred from woman to man, and this time the transition is peremptory. According to Zeltin,[3] the establishment of a temporary matriarchy in The Oresteia is a dramatic demonstration of the social lesson that women's natural sexual unrestraint leads to the promotion of chaos and disempowerment. Thus, Zeltin argues for the manifestation of misogyny in the brief and demonstrative rule of women in The Oresteia.

The predetermined defeat of female authority over male authority was described by Bachofen[4] in his "Mutterrecht" (mother right). This predetermination lies in the pattern that historically, women's power has been replaced by men's power. According to Bachofen, the patriarchal family is an isolated organism, while the matriarchal family is built on a family of unshakable kinship. Further, this kinship binds the members of the family by ties until, with the development of the patriarchal principle, the unity is dissolved and superseded by the principle of hierarchy. According to Bachofen, the matriarchal world exists according to the laws of blood kinship and connection to the land, while the patriarchal world operates according to its own laws asserting male supremacy. This division is vividly seen in The Oresteia through the belief systems. In it, the Erinyes, who represent Clytemnestra's defense at Athena's trial, are archaic matriarchal goddesses. They assert the superiority of the blood bond of mother and child over non-blood marriage bonds. At the same time, the young Olympians, who patronize Agamemnon in war and defend Orestes before Athena, preach patriarchal law. The defense of Agamemnon and Orestes thus retroactively awards them victory because the patriarchal principle of hierarchy legitimately replaces the archaic ties of blood kinship.

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[3] Froma I. Zeitlin, "THE DYNAMICS OF MISOGYNY: MYTH AND MYTHMAKING IN THE ORESTEIA," *Arethusa* 11, no. 1/2 (n.d.): 149–84, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26308158.

[4] Johann Jakob Bachofen, Das Mutterrecht: Eine Untersuchung Über Die Gynaikokratie Der Alten Welt Nach Ihrer Religiösen Und Rechtlichen Natur, 1861, http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA0714270X.

Hence, the model of the patriarchal family contradicts that of the matriarchal family, and the latter passes into the former with the hierarchical order. According to Tor,[5] Clytemnestra is retroactively relegated to a subordinate member of the isolated family of the patriarchal order. In "The Oresteia and the Act of Revenge: of Desire and Jouissance", Tor, referring to Lacan's seminars, once again voices the argument of women's destructiveness as the cause of their disempowerment in the *Oresteia*. Jouissance, a woman's destructive sexual drive, becomes the cause of Clytemnestra's disobedience to the phallic law that Agamemnon preaches. This causes her to commit his murder and usurp his power. According to Tor, Clytemnestra's cruelty, which manifests itself in the murder of Agamemnon and ruthlessness towards her children, lies in natural female deviancy. Thus, Aeschylus again expresses misogyny through the figure of Clytemnestra, this time in the predestination of her defeat to justice.

However, all the discussion of the demonstrative transition of power from man to woman and from woman to man in The Oresteia misses the very moment of Clytemnestra's transformation. The transformation from a cunning ruler to a tyrant in the "Oresteia" is allowed only by the complete eradication in Clytemnestra of the love for her children, which from the very beginning determined her desire to kill Agamemnon. The unjustified change that took place behind the scenes of the "Oresteia" is yet another act of bias towards Clytemnestra. This bias becomes another tool of Aeschylus to show women a social lesson, which in turn was driven by misogyny. In this paper, the misogyny expressed through the figure of Clytemnestra is explored through the lens of her change between the tragedies "Agamemnon" and "Choephori". This change, consisting of the abrupt and unwarranted disappearance of her love for her children, will be argued through a selective reading of "Oresteia". It is argued that in "Choephori" Clytemnestra was stripped of her love for her children to make her portrayal in "Oresteia" more oppressive, and to justify the justice of Orestes' rise to power.

Clytemnestra's Changes Throughout the Oresteia

Clytemnestra in "Agamemnon"

The first instance of revenge in Oresteia begins with infanticide – the murder of Iphigenia. The first time Clytemnestra mentions her children is in "Agamemnon" 868, during her long monologue to

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[5] Dana Tor, "The Oresteia and the Act of Revenge: Of Desire and Jouissance," *PsyArt* 27 (2022): 58–73.

Agamemnon. While informing her husband of the suffering she has endured in his absence, Clytemnestra, noticing his confusion, mentions the child that "by all rights should be here."[6]

> By all rights our child should be here . . .
> Orestes. You seem startled.
> You needn't be. Our loyal brother-in-arms
> will take good care of him, Strophios the Phocian.
> …
> Men, it is their nature,
> trampling on the fighter once he's down.
> (Aeschylus 867-875)

The mention of a missing child in line 867 is not only an explanation for Orestes' absence but also Clytemnestra's accusation of Agamemnon with the murder of Iphigenia. Iphigenia is a child who should be "here", at home in Argos, as much as Orestes. If Agamemnon had not killed Iphigenia, she would still be "here". She had a right to be "here", but she is not "here", and Clytemnestra points this out.

The reason why Iphigenia is not here is also pointed out by Clytemnestra to Agamemnon – she does so in line 875. And here it can be noticed that Clytemnestra's tone is accusatory. When she says that it is in man's nature to "trampl[e]on the fighter once he's down," she means that it is natural for a man to strike at what is known to be vulnerable. It is this man's nature to strike at a known vulnerability that she attributes to the fact that their child is missing. In the case of Orestes, it means that the people might revolt against the bruised royal house to kill Orestes and overthrow Agamemnon's throne. Therefore, for security reasons, Orestes is not here because he was sent away by Clytemnestra from Argos to the house of Strophios the Phoenician. In the case of Iphigenia, the nature of men to strike at a known weak target means that she, powerless and uncomplaining, was ruthlessly sacrificed by a man – Agamemnon – for the sake of war and his glory. Iphigenia is not "here" because she was killed by Agamemnon. In pointing this out, Clytemnestra reminds Agamemnon how deeply she resents him for the murder of their daughter. She still remembers Iphigenia and the reason for her death. She also cares about Orestes' life, as she sends him away from Argos for his safety. Thus, it is seen that Clytemnestra's love for her children in "Agamemnon" is undeniable.

It is known because Clytemnestra killed her husband as revenge for her daughter. She openly reports this before the elders of Argos. In

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[6] Aesch. Agamemnon. 867, translated by Fagels.

this dialogue, Clytemnestra again points out Iphigenia's vulnerability to Agamemnon. In line 1440 she addresses the chorus of the elders of Argos when they accuse her of unjustly killing Agamemnon. She responds to them by pointing out that they ignore Agamemnon's unjust murder of Iphigenia. This is how Clytemnestra describes the ease with which Agamemnon killed their daughter: "He thought no more of it than killing a beast."[7] These words of hers not only indicate the insignificance of Iphigenia's sacrifice in Agamemnon's eyes but also how easy of a victim, a prey she is for him. Clytemnestra proves that it is the nature of man to "trampl[e]on the fighter once he's down," for Agamemnon sacrificed the defenseless Iphigenia. For this she kills Agamemnon – because he had killed her beloved daughter.

The murder of Agamemnon as a consequence of Iphigenia's murder is determined by Clytemnestra's vision of justice. She says, "By all rights our child should be here" because she is certain of Iphigenia's right to be "here." In Clytemnestra's understanding, the right to be "here", which Agamemnon took from Iphigenia, allows her to take the same right from Agamemnon. Thus, Clytemnestra is firmly convinced of her right to kill Agamemnon to avenge Iphigenia. This is proven by Clytemnestra's undeniable love for her children, as well as her vision of justice.

She asserts and explains this vision of justice very soon after she first mentions her children at the beginning of the carpet scene:

> "But now, dear head,
> bright imagined head of my dark blessing,
> step down from your height for me. Yet do not tread
> this gross earth with your Ilion-conquering foot.
> …
> Now may his paths all merge one crimson red
> as Justice brings him unexpected home.
> As for the rest, sharp thought that outwits sleep
> will work the fated justice the gods keep."
> (Aeschylus, 904-913)

This is the final stanza of Clytemnestra's monologue in which she welcomes Agamemnon back from war. In her monologue, she laments her long separation from him, which had tormented her with despair and fear. Now, happy with her husband's return, she is about to spread a crimson carpet before his feet as a sign of honor and tribute to him. The end of this monologue is the beginning of the carpet scene, in which

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[7] Aesch. Agamemnon. 1440, translated by Fagels.

Clytemnestra arranges a test of Agamemnon's piety. This test is aimed at dispelling her doubts about killing Agamemnon. If Agamemnon does not show piety, it means that he has not changed in the ten years of their separation, and still deserves to have his right to be "here" taken away from him.

The stanza begins with an antithesis in which Clytemnestra directly opposes herself to Agamemnon. Here he is the "bright imagined head" and she is the "dark blessing." This is not to be taken as an allocation of rightness or justice, but rather as a natural determination of the parties. The whole carpet scene, like the whole of the Eumenides, stands on the conflict of two divine perspectives, where Clytemnestra is on the side of the forgotten chthonic goddesses who swirl in the darkness of the underworld, and Agamemnon is patronized by the sun-honored Olympians. In discussing Clytemnestra's adherence to the chthonic goddesses, it is necessary to mention that the Erinyes who protected her interests are archaic goddesses of matriarchy and matriarchal law. Their law asserted the undeniable bond between a mother and her child, as well as the mother's right to her child. They became archaic with the arrival of the young Olympians and their patriarchal law, which asserted the right of men to their children. The low position of the matriarchal Erinyes relative to the young gods also demonstrates the predetermined defeat of feminine interests over masculine ones. Therefore, Clytemnestra is in subterranean darkness while Agamemnon is sanctified by light.

The confirmation of their opposing positions can be seen in the next line, where Clytemnestra urges Agamemnon to come down to her: "Step down from your height for me." She says this not only because she wants to identify him as belonging to the young ruling gods. Clytemnestra also wants to emphasize his superiority once again so that he forgets about the gods who protect him in the name of his vanity. It is worth noting that she does not encourage him to blaspheme, as she does not worship the same gods as he does. On the contrary, she inclines him to justice, to an act of reckoning. If he walks across the carpet, forgetting his respect for the young gods, he will come directly towards the reckoning for his old sins, thus contributing to the real divine will and, consequently, to justice.

What Clytemnestra says about paying for old sins can be understood even before the speech goes straight to justice. Line 910 reads, "Now may his paths all merge one crimson red." Here Clytemnestra is not only summarizing Agamemnon's life by realizing that if he walks the carpet, he will meet his death; she is also saying that

for every crime he has committed, one reckoning awaits him. It follows, of course, that when in line 911 Clytemnestra speaks of the justice that has brought Agamemnon home, she does not mean the righteousness of his victory at Troy over Paris, but the righteousness of his defeat at Argos before Clytemnestra. She is sure that he must be defeated and killed by her, for he has taken away the right to be here from Iphigenia, and now Clytemnestra must take that right away from Agamemnon.

Also, Clytemnestra has her reasons for believing that Agamemnon's defeat before her will be just. She trusts her vision, which she has had time to formulate in the ten years since the death of her daughter Iphigenia. She says, "sharp thought that outwits sleep," because she believes she is the "sharp thought." In doing so, Clytemnestra believes that she is in union with divine providence. She trusts in the chthonic goddesses who hold allegiance to blood matriarchal vengeance. And she believes that they support her, because "sharp thought" is supported by the gods: "As for the rest, sharp thought that outwits sleep/will work the fated justice the gods keep."

Thus, it becomes apparent that the sly monologue of the weeping wife culminates in a sincerity that sets the scene on the carpet in motion. Clytemnestra demonstrates her faith and trust in justice and divine providence and uses it to influence Agamemnon to bring him to justice. Her trust in the chthonic goddesses strengthens her belief in the rightness of her vision of justice, and so she is determined to kill Agamemnon.

It can be seen how Aeschylus uses the origins of this determination of Clytemnestra to kill Agamemnon to encourage and censure his heroes. In the hierarchical system that Aeschylus draws out in the carpet scene, he places Agamemnon above to encourage his behavior, and he places Clytemnestra below to express disapproval of her desire for revenge. In the midst of the carpet scene, as Clytemnestra puts the final touches to persuading Agamemnon to step onto the carpet, she speculates on the inexhaustibility of the purple reserves in the dark sea and the brightness of the color of Agamemnon's royal robes. By means of the oppositions in lines 958-966 of "Agamemnon", Aeschylus asserts the positions of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon within the hierarchical system of the Oresteia. This hierarchical system, just as Clytemnestra's certainty to kill Agamemnon, is inevitably linked to their affiliation with different gods:

There is the sea. What sun could burn it up?
From cold dark depths I'll fetch your bright red stain;

your life-warm dye will drench your kingly robes.
The price, my lord, is high; but with god's help
we gladly pay. Since when was your house poor?
How many treasure-vestments would I tread
if I was told to by some palace oracle,
if such acts would bring back that precious life?"
(Aeschylus 958-966)

Here Clytemnestra persuades Agamemnon to walk across the carpet, and he tries to refuse her – their dialogue is in itself a confrontation and opposition of beliefs. This is why the antitheses in Clytemnestra's words are so reminiscent of the verbal argument taking place between her and Agamemnon. For example, in lines 959-960 she contrasts "cold dark depths" with "bright red stain" and "life-warm dye."

Clytemnestra speaks of the "cold dark depths" not only as an inexhaustible source but also as herself. In lines 904-905 she has already defined herself as the low darkness associated with the chthonic goddess Erinyes, and now the darkness of the deep sea seems to be her legitimate metonymy. In contrast, her spouse, Agamemnon, is a "bright red stain," for he is a hero who deserves to wear bright purple. Moreover, Agamemnon obeys the patriarchal law of the young Olympian gods. His devotion to the Olympians elevates him compared to his wife, who is a devotee of the chthonic goddesses. There is an obvious gap between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon: she is at the bottom of the divine hierarchy, while he is at the top. The impact of the difference in their positions will play a role in Athena's trial in the "Eumenides", when Clytemnestra, patronized by the chthonic Erinyes, loses the trial to Orestes, patronized by the young Apollo. The hierarchical opposition demonstrated in Clytemnestra's speech is thus a warning of Clytemnestra's predestined defeat.

It was already determined that Clytemnestra's adherence to the Erinyes predetermines her defeat due to her low position in relation to Agamemnon's adherence to the Olympians. In Clytemnestra's understanding, however, the distance of positions between her and her husband is not hierarchically vertical, but hostilely horizontal. Even though Agamemnon is at the top, she does not consider him superior to her. However, she does consider him to be her equal enemy. By pointing out her position relative to Agamemnon's, Clytemnestra sets herself against him when she speaks of his return – for he has returned to Argos from the war. She sets herself against him because she emphasizes the difference between the life-warm dye and the cold dark depths. She

opposes him because she is as different from him as the dark cold sea is from the bright warm paint. For – again – Clytemnestra honors the chthonic goddesses who embody the darkness of the underworld, while Agamemnon obeys the law of the patriarchal Olympians. They differ in creed, and belonging to different gods determines their positions in the antithesis of Clytemnestra. She is "depths of the sea," and he is "life-warm dye." And when Clytemnestra speaks of pulling the dye from the depths, she alienates Agamemnon from herself.

In discussing Clytemnestra as the depths of the sea one can consider the sea as a mother giving birth to a "bright red stain." In this case, the "cold dark depths" stain the "royal garments" with their child – the blood of their child. "Bright red stain" in the form of Iphigenia is extracted from the "cold dark depths" of Clytemnestra to give color to Agamemnon's "royal robes."

From this perspective, the mother-child relationship is matriarchal, for from the very beginning until the forced separation, the child belongs to and is born of the mother. These symbols depicting the primacy of birth and fertility are defined by Clytemnestra's association with the chthonic Erinyes. Indeed, it is the Erinyes who determine Clytemnestra's attitude to revenge. Revenge must be blood, that is, life must be given for life. And in this, Clytemnestra spares no red cloth to "bring back that precious life." She kills Agamemnon for taking away Iphigenia's right to be "here", alive and at home.

In the end, it all comes back to the fact that Clytemnestra wants to avenge her daughter. Everything about Clytemnestra is reduced to love for her daughter and hatred for the one who killed her. However, in the tragedy of the Oresteia that follows, it seems as if everyone, including Clytemnestra herself, forgets this.

Clytemnestra in "Choephori"

Comparing "Agamemnon" and "Choephori", in the second tragedy Clytemnestra appears to the reader in a completely different light. She transforms from a vengeful, loving mother into an adulterous wife who enslaves her children and tyrannizes the people of Argos. Her daughter Electra, coming to her father's grave with libations, speaks and calls herself and Orestes sold by Clytemnestra: "We're beggars now, / as if our mother traded us away."[8] She also says she lives in slavery and Orestes is in exile.[9]

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[8] Aesch. Choephori. 132-133, translated by Fagels.
[9] Aesch. Choephori. 135-136, translated by Fagels.

It can be assumed that for some reason Clytemnestra singles out Electra, because in "Agamemnon" she does not mention her once, unlike Orestes and Iphigenia, whom she mentions many times. However, the fact that Orestes' stay at Phocis is called exile seems odd, considering that in "Agamemnon" Clytemnestra explained Orestes' absence with security concerns. In "Choephori", on the other hand, Orestes' stay in Phocis is referred to as a sale - this is said by Electra in line 133 and by Orestes in line 912 – in his dialogue with Clytemnestra when he is about to kill her: "You sold me in disgrace – a free man's so."[10] What was the reason for the "sale" and what the "price" was is not explained. Just as perplexed as the reader, Clytemnestra asks her son: "What's the price I charged for you?" Orestes very conveniently waves it off: "That's too shameful to declare in public."[11] He does not reveal to the audience the reason why he accuses his mother of "selling out" and neither "Choephori" nor the "Eumenides" offer any other reason for Orestes' absence from Argos than that Clytemnestra voiced in "Agamemnon". This points to the baselessness of Orestes' accusation of Clytemnestra's "selling" him, as well as the theatrical imagery of Clytemnestra's guilt to her children. Based on the events of "Agamemnon", Aeschylus has no reason to accuse Clytemnestra of betraying her children, so he artificially creates this reason in "Choephori". However, he does not reveal the essence of this reason, which leaves some questions unanswered. If Clytemnestra did not send her son to Phocis to protect him, what was the purpose of her sending him there? This question is not answered, just as "Choephori" and "Eumenides" ignore the reason why Clytemnestra shows cruel indifference to Electra, making her life in the house look like slavery. In both "Choephori" and "Eumenides," Aeschylus deliberately hides Clytemnestra's true intentions from the audience because they prevent him from making her image reprehensible.

Thus, Aeschylus destructively demonized Clytemnestra's image in "Choephori" compared to "Agamemnon" – her love for her children suddenly disappeared without explanation. In addition to the fact that all the characters in "Choephori" seem to forget the existence of Clytemnestra's love, which was the driving force behind her murder of Agamemnon, Orestes, and Electra are similarly oblivious to Agamemnon's sins. For example, during her meeting with Orestes at her father's grave, Electra says that she gives him her love for her father, mother, and sister. She loves him as a father, for the father is dead, she loves him as a mother, for the mother she hates, and she loves him as a sister, for the sister has been murdered. At this Electra mentions the

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[10] Aesch. Choephori. 912, translated by Fagels.
[11] Aesch. Choephori. 916, translated by Fagels.

murder of Iphigenia and calls it cruel: "Then there's the love I bore my sister, Iphigeneia, that cruel sacrifice."[12] She knows that Iphigenia was murdered, and she knows the circumstances under which it happened - for she calls Iphigenia a "cruel sacrifice." However, this does not prevent her from loving the father who made that sacrifice and loving the mother who avenged that sacrifice. Electra simply ignores Agamemnon's guilt over the death of her beloved sister and does not recognize the sins of her father.

Orestes also does not speak of Agamenon's sins and the reason for his murder by Clytemnestra. The only time anyone brings up Agamemnon's sin is in line 917 when Clytemnestra tries to dissuade Orestes from killing her. "Don't forget to name your father's failings, too," says Clytemnestra.[13] But Orestes again waves off his mother's words. "Don't charge him with anything" he says.[14] Agamemnon's guilt seems to be deliberately ignored in "Choephori", just as Clytemnestra's love for her children. Aeschylus destroys any justification for Clytemnestra by ignoring them or brushing them aside, and this shows bias towards her. This is because in "Choephori", Aeschylus only accepts a partial perspective of revenge in which Agamemnon's guilt is glossed over and Clytemnestra's guilt is exaggerated accordingly.

Rationale for Clytemnestra's Change

What might the bias be related to? Pontani suggests that for dramatic effect, Aeschylus excludes other characters from Clytemnestra and Orestes' relationship, while making Clytemnestra responsible for all the best and worst events in Orestes' life.[15] For this reason, Aeschylus, unlike Stesichorus, limits the influence of Orestes' nurse on the plot. According to Stesichorus, to whom the earlier version of the myth of Orestes belongs, Orestes' nurse saves his life by sacrificing her son. Aeschylus does not include this scene in "Oresteia", taking the maternal image of Orestes' nurse aside. This was to prevent outside interference in the relationship between Clytemnestra and Orestes. It can be suggested that for the same reason, Aeschylus may have removed from the lines of Orestes and Electra the mention of Iphigenie's murderer, as well as the reason for Clytemnestra's revenge on Agamemnon. By doing this, Aeschylus may have wanted to limit Agamemnon's interference in the conflict between Orestes and Clytemnestra. This limitation would

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[12] Aesch. Choephori. 242-243, translated by Fagles.
[13] Aesch. Choephori. 917, translated by Fagles.
[14] Aesch. Choephori. 918, translated by Fagles.
[15] Filippomaria Pontani, "Shocks, Lies, and Matricide: Thoughts on Aeschylus" Choephori" 653-718, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 103 (1965): 203–33.

emphasize Clytemnestra's influence on the disasters that happened to her children. The urge to limit Agamemnon's interference in the conflict between Orestes and Clytemnestra may explain the reason why Orestes in line 918 refuses to recall the murder of Iphigenia by Agamemnon. It may even explain the reason why Electra calls Orestes' stay at Phocis an exile and Orestes calls it a sale. However, the need for directness in the relationship between Clytemnestra and Orestes, to which Pontani attributes the downplaying of other characters' influence on Orestes' fate, cannot influence Electra. It still doesn't explain why El,ectra loves her father and hates her mother, and why Clytemnestra in Electra's own words has made her daughter's life "slavery". This establishes the fact that there is a bias against Clytemnestra and that this bias is connected to something deeper than the need for dramatic effect.

In order to determine the cause of this bias, one must first determine the need for it. In the Eumenides, after the murder of Clytemnestra, Athena is summoned to try Orestes. The defense of the plaintiff is represented by the Erinyes, the chthonic goddesses, and the defense of the defendant by Apollo, the young Olympian. Both the Erinyes and Apollo are partial. The Erinyes are archaic matriarchal goddesses who assert the superiority of the blood bond of mother and child over non-blood marriage bonds. Apollo is the representative of the new patriarchal gods who asserts the superiority of patriarchal law and the laws of patriarchal marriage. Athena is called upon to judge this judgment because she is androgynous – she is female like Erinyes but masculine like Apollo. Athena is not a direct representative of matriarchy or patriarchy, so her judgment must be impartial. However, the poise of her androgyny is at the same time an obstacle to her judgment because it prevents her from leaning to one side and passing judgment. Therefore, when the members of the Areopagus do not come to a unanimous agreement, she is forced to appeal to her origin as the reason for her partiality: "No mother gave me birth,"[16] and therefore "I cannot set more store by the woman's death."[17] Athena believes she belongs to men more than women, and on the basis, partiality justifies Orestes, thereby judging Clytemnestra wrong. Clytemnestra loses because she is a woman and Orestes wins because he is a man. And so, the conflict ends with the definition of a new bias related to gender.

This could have been foreseen. It was already asserted that the Erinyes were metrically inferior to the Olympian gods. They are in the underworld, while the Olympians are high above the earth. Women's interests are placed below men's because the female order became

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[16] Aesch. Eumenides. 936, translated by Fagles.
[17] Aesch. Eumenides. 939, translated by Fagles.

obsolete with the arrival of the new gods. Similarly, the matriarchal rule of Clytemnestra in Argos becomes obsolete. Zeltin notes that Clytemnestra, who began as a responsible woman, ends up a tyrant because she decided to make regency a permanent rule.[18] But it would be more correct to consider that Aeschylus gives Clytemnestra the imperiousness to condemn her and her insubordination to a man. In "Choephori", Aeschylus gives birth to a masculine desire for power in Clytemnestra which suppresses the feminine maternal love in her. Feminine interests become inferior to masculine interests in Clytemnestra herself as she approaches a patriarchal version of herself. In "Choephori", Aeschylus brings Clytemnestra closer to the patriarchal ideal so that she can be judged by patriarchal laws in the "Eumenides".

It is worth bearing in mind that Aeschylus' retelling of the Orestes myth was the first in which the murder of Agamemnon was committed directly by Clytemnestra and not by Aegisthus. Homer, Stesichorus, and Nostoi mentioned Aegisthus as the main instigator of Agamemnon's murder. Aegisthus is only Clytemnestra's subordinate, her consort. Aeschylus emphasizes Clytemnestra in The Oresteia – he relegates Agamemnon and his sins, Orestes' nurse and his salvation thanks to her, and Aegisthus and his reasons for revenge to the background. Aeschylus does not mention Agamemnon's sins from "Choephori" onwards, not simply to make the relationship between Orestes and Clytemnestra more straightforward, but to turn the conflict of family vendetta into a gynaecocratic problem.[19] Emphasizing Clytemnestra's culpability in the distress of her children helps Aeschylus to express censure of Clytemnestra's rebellion and the establishment of female power. Thus, instead of a chronicle of Atrean revenge, the myth of Orestes is transformed by Aeschylus into a story permeated with gender conflicts. For this same reason, Aegisthus' revenge is relegated to the background – so that his revenge for his father does not overshadow the murder of his spouse, which in the Eumenides would have been able to be condemned and censured. And for this purpose, Clytemnestra is transformed from a vengeful mother into an adulterous wife, so that she can be condemned for adultery and disobedience.

Conclusion

The syntheses in the previous section have proved and indicated the reason for Aeschylus' need for bias towards Clytemnestra. Aeschylus

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[18] Zeitlin, "THE DYNAMICS OF MISOGYNY: MYTH AND MYTHMAKING IN THE ORESTEIA."
[19] Zeitlin, "THE DYNAMICS OF MISOGYNY: MYTH AND MYTHMAKING IN THE ORESTEIA."

stripped Clytemnestra of her love for her children in "Choephori" to make her portrayal more in line with the patriarchal image of a cruel adulterous wife. In "Cheophori" she seems to forget the reason she killed Agamemnon, lest the image of a vengeful mother prevent the censure of her rebellion against her husband and male authority. For the same reason, Aeschylus makes Orestes and Electra not mention or admit their father's guilt in the murder of Iphigenia. Broadly, Clytemnestra's change between the tragedies of "Agamemnon" and "Choephori" was driven by the need to censure female authority and the matriarchal vision of justice. In an age of debates about the marginalization of women, the topic of the suppression of female authority can lead to discussions about how contemporary understandings of gender balance and power dynamics are shaped by historical depictions of women in roles of power and rebellion. Studying female figures such as Clytemnestra forces us to confront dominant narratives that often portray women in positions of power as negative or destructive. This paper has presented a valuable reconciliation of Aeschylus' bias towards the Clytemnestra, allowing us to challenge traditional notions of gender roles and power dynamics, paving the way for more nuanced and inclusive views.

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Rise of the US Dollar:
Where the Greenback Meets the Black Gold

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Abstract

This essay examines the rise of the US dollar as the world's primary reserve currency, from its origins in the Bretton Woods gold standard to the establishment of the petrodollar system. It challenges the neoliberal narrative of market-driven dominance by highlighting the US government's strategic maneuvers. Key to this shift were the Joint Mission, the Technical Cooperation Agreement, and a confidential add-on deal between 1974 and 1975, all crucial in steering Saudi Arabia toward exclusive dollar pricing for oil. The analysis supports that the Joint Commission's economic tactics effectively influenced OPEC's adoption of the dollar, reinforced by the US military's strategic support and pressure. Declassified documents uncover a recycling mechanism that allowed Saudi Arabia to reinvest oil revenues in US bonds, circumventing standard market practices and concealing its debt profile, a practice that persisted for decades. The financialization of oil yielded profound political and economic consequences, such as elevated Saudi geopolitical power, impacts on US manufacturing, and a rise in national debt. The US government's decision to maintain the petrodollar system in the late 1970s affirmed the dollar's critical status as the primary global reserve currency, solidifying American hegemonic power in subsequent years. Analyzing the historical context is essential for understanding the influence of the US dollar on the global economy and the ongoing efforts of the Federal Reserve to combat inflation.

Introduction

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Federal Reserve launched an unprecedented "open-ended" Quantitative Easing (QE) program in March 2020, which aimed to shore up the US economy amid widespread global economic turmoil.[1] This initiative doubled the Federal Reserve's balance sheet from March 2020 to December 2021, marking a historic monetary intervention.[2] Yet Jerome Powell, Chair of the Federal Reserve, asserted throughout 2020 and much of 2021 that inflation was under control.[3] Historically, this assertion held: for over 40 years, the Federal Reserve had been able to print money without incurring substantial inflation rates and employed financial means to uphold a strong dollar.[4] This is largely due to the privilege of the US dollar as the world's primary reserve currency for international transactions. Examining the history of how the US dollar attained this global role can enhance our understanding of the new international economic order and the battle against inflation.

The US dollar has held this privilege since the end of World War II. While neoliberal scholars attribute the establishment of "dollar hegemony" to the natural workings of free markets, this essay emphasizes the substantial roles played by the US government.[5] Through economic incentives, military engagements, and covert diplomatic maneuvers, the US significantly shaped the trajectory of the dollar's dominance in the global financial system. Numerous debates regarding dollar supremacy have occurred throughout history and continue to

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[1] Alessandro Rebucci, Jonathan S. Hartley, and Daniel Jiménez, "An event study of COVID-19 central bank quantitative easing in advanced and emerging economies," In *Essays in honor of M. Hashem Pesaran: Prediction and Macro Modeling,* vol. 43 (2022): 291-292, https://doi.org/10.1108/S0731-90532021000043A014.

[2] Congressional Research Service, "Federal Reserve: Tapering of Asset Purchases," January 27, 2022, accessed December 20, 2023, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11792. The Federal Reserve's balance sheet has expanded significantly since the introduction of QE measures, increasing from $4.31 trillion in March 2020 to $8.76 trillion by December 2021.

[3] Phillips Smialek J, "The Fed chair strikes a wary tone on inflation, but says this isn't the time to raise interest rates," *The New York Times*, Oct. 22, 2021, https://www.proquest.com/blogs-podcasts-websites/fed-chair-strikes-wary-tone-on-inflation-says/docview/2584324534/se-2.

[4] Daniel Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 299-300.

[5] For the theory of "free markets," see Robert Aliber, *The International Monetary Game* (New York: Basic Books, 1987). The neoliberal views are echoed in the works of various scholars, as demonstrated in Paul Volcker and Toyoo Gyohten, *Changing Fortunes: The World's Money and the Threat to American Leadership* (New York: Times Books, 1992).

inform the discourse and policies of the United States into the 21st century.

Background: Bretton Woods and the Early 1970s Challenges

The Bretton Woods Agreement, signed in July 1944 at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, marked the inception of the US dollar's dominant role in the global financial system. Crafted during the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, the agreement was the result of intricate negotiations among representatives from 44 countries.[6]

Often understated is Harry Dexter White's instrumental role in the establishment of the Bretton Woods system.[7] As the American Chief International Economist and Director of Monetary Research, White masterminded the plan to position the US dollar as the *sole* reserve currency in the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).[8] The "dollar for gold" standard marked a notable departure from John Maynard Keynes's concept of a new artificial international currency, the "bancor."[9] Keynes, acclaimed in the field of economics, also functioned as an unpaid adviser to the UK Treasury at the time.[10] During the multilateral negotiations at the conference, the United States' economic status as the primary creditor nation during World War II proved instrumental in propelling White's plan.[11] Ultimately, the Bretton Woods system culminated in a fixed exchange rate of $35 per ounce of gold, with other currencies pegged to the US dollar.[12] This arrangement heralded the inception of the "dollar-gold" system, officially establishing the US dollar's position in the international economy.

For over 15 years, the Bretton Woods system underpinned the US dollar's dominance in the global financial order.[13] In 1960, however, economist Robert Triffin illuminated its impending downfall by

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[6] United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, *Articles of Agreement: International Monetary Fund and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development* (Bretton Woods, NH, 1944), 96-97, accessed December 20, 2023, https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/historical/martin/17_07_19440701.pdf.

[7] Benn Steil, *The Battle of Bretton Woods: John Maynard Keynes, Harry Dexter White, and the Making of a New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 3-7.

[8] Ibid., 214-216.

[9] Richard Gardner, *Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy in Current Perspective: The Origins and the Prospects of Our International Economic Order* (New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 1969), 71-100.

[10] Steil, *The Battle of Bretton Woods*, 142.

[11] Ibid., 151-154.

[12] United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, *Articles of Agreement*, 4.

[13] Barry Eichengreen, *Exorbitant Privilege: The Rise and Fall of the Dollar and the Future of the International Monetary System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 57.

introducing the "Triffin Dilemma."[14] He posited that a surplus of US dollars was necessary to facilitate global trade and economic expansion; however, this would eventually diminish confidence in the dollar's value, thus threatening the system's sustainability. By the early 1970s, this predicament materialized, with the United States facing a depletion of gold reserves to support the dollar's global role.[15] Escalating costs of social programs and military engagements, particularly the Vietnam War, further exacerbated the issue.[16]

Amid these challenges, starting in 1965, key European nations such as France, Britain, and Germany began exchanging substantial amounts of dollars for gold, further straining the Bretton Woods system.[17] In response, the IMF introduced Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) in 1969, echoing Keynes' original proposal.[18] However, the reform was too late and fell short of expectations: over the next decade, SDRs accounted for less than 9 percent of global reserves, a marginal figure compared to the overwhelming 77 percent held in US dollar reserves.[19]

In 1971, President Richard Nixon unilaterally decided to "close the gold window," preventing foreign governments from exchanging their dollars for gold.[20] This action, aligned with Keynesian economic principles, signaled the end of the Bretton Woods system. The "Nixon shock" ushered in the era of the US dollar functioning as a "fiat currency," no longer tied to gold.[21]

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[14] Robert Triffin, *Gold and the Dollar Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 175-207.

[15] Beth Yarbrough and Robert Yarbrough. *The World Economy: Trade and Finance* (London: Dryden, 1994), 641. By the beginning of 1971, the United States had accumulated over $70 billion in dollar liabilities, far exceeding the gold reserves held at $12 billion.

[16] John Williamson, *The Failure of World Monetary Reform, 1971-74* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 31-32.

[17] Michael Hudson, *Global Fracture: The New International Economic Order* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 9-31.

[18] Williamson, *The Failure of World Monetary Reform*, 24-25.

[19] Akinari Horii, "The Evolution of Reserve Currency Diversification," *BIS Economics Paper* no. 18 (Basle: Bank for International Settlements, December 1986): 7, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.bis.org/publ/econ18.pdf.

[20] Transcript of a video of the televised speech, "The Challenge of Peace: President Nixon's New Economic Policy," delivered August 15, 1971, available at *The American Presidency Project*, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-outlining-new-economic-policy-the-challenge-peace, accessed December 20, 2023.

[21] Thomas Costigan, Drew Cottle and Angela Keys, "The US Dollar as the Global Reserve Currency: Implications for US Hegemony," *World Review of Political Economy* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 104-122.

Moreover, following US support for Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) enacted an oil embargo against the US, leading to a significant devaluation of the dollar.[22] The oil price surged fourfold between October 1973 and January 1974, triggering an economic crisis due to America's high dependency on oil imports, which averaged approximately 6.26 billion barrels daily.[23] This situation emphasized the crucial relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia, as the desert kingdom provided the majority (52 percent) of oil imports from Middle Eastern suppliers.[24]

Birth of the Petrodollar System: Economic Incentives and Military Tactics

Neoliberal economists argue that the establishment of a new "oil-dollar" standard was driven by "free markets."[25] The argument proceeds as follows. First, despite the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system, the US dollar maintained its primacy in international transactions, commanding a significant share of global trade and finance.[26] Then, in January 1974, the Nixon administration took a significant step by abolishing all capital controls, to facilitate capital flows and promote financial globalization.[27] This deregulation, emblematic of the US government's neoliberal shift, was credited with significantly bolstering "the United States as an international financial center."[28] Consequently, the petrodollar arrangement emerged as a widely accepted norm internationally. It is essential, however, not to disregard the *proactive* role played by the US government in influencing the final decisions of OPEC countries, particularly Saudi Arabia.

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[22] Alan Blinder, *Economic Policy and the Great Stagflation* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 103. The inflation rate exceeded 10 percent in the period from the 1973 oil embargo until the end of 1974.

[23] See data in Volcker and Gyohten, *Changing Fortunes*, chap. 7. The import average can be calculated by US Energy Information Administration, "Annual Energy Review 2011" (Sep. 2012): Table 1.1, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/annual/pdf/aer.pdf.

[24] Ulrich R. Kohli and Edward R. Morey, "The US Demand for Foreign Crude Oil: A Translog Approach," *The Journal of Energy and Development* 12, no. 1 (1986): 116 (Table 1), https://www.jstor.org/stable/24807797.

[25] Volcker and Gyohten, *Changing Fortunes*, 136-162.

[26] Horii, "The Evolution of Reserve Currency Diversification," 42-43. The US dollar remained the dominant currency in international financial markets, comprising approximately 70 percent of total international banking liabilities.

[27] John M. Lee, "Impact of New Capital Outflow," *The New York Times*, Feb. 3, 1974, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/impact-new-capital-outflow/docview/119956957/se-2.

[28] Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed*, 130.

Beginning in 1974, President Nixon, along with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Secretary of the Treasury William Simon, initiated a series of diplomatic actions to mend relations with Saudi Arabia.[29] Numerous meetings took place in 1974, culminating in a significant turning point on June 8, when Kissinger and Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister Fahd signed a far-reaching *Joint Statement*. Before the cameras, both parties declared that the agreement "heralded an era of increasingly close cooperation," marking a pivotal moment in the two countries' relationship.[30] David Holden and Richard Johns, in their book *The House of Saud*, described it as "the most far-reaching agreement of its kind ever concluded by the US with a developing country. It had the potential to entrench the US deeply in the Kingdom, fortifying the concept of mutual interdependence."[31] Subsequently, the formal signing of the *Technical Cooperation Agreement* (TCA) by the US and Saudi governments on February 13, 1974, marked yet another crucial step in implementing the objectives outlined in the Joint Statement during the initial five-year period.[32]

What, then, was the primary aim of the US government in redefining its bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia? Simply put, it sought to mandate that all forthcoming oil sales by Saudi Arabia be valued exclusively in US dollars. This resulted in the establishment of the "Dollars for Oil" system, replacing the obsolete "Dollars for Gold" system.[33] Despite the US dollar no longer being backed by gold, the petrodollar system bolstered its global economic position. Consequently, the US dollar became the world's first fiat currency to assume the global reserve role.[34]

To elucidate the connection between the greenback and black gold, it is essential to recognize that oil, an indispensable commodity for

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[29] David E. Spiro, *The Hidden Hand of American Hegemony: Petrodollar Recycling and International Markets* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1999), 107-110.
[30] Bernard Gwertzman, "'Milestone' Pact Is Signed by US And Saudi Arabia," *The New York Times*, June 9, 1974, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/milestone-pact-is-signed-us-saudi-arabia/docview/119904759/se-2.
[31] David Holden and Richard Johns, *The House of Saud: The Rise and Rule of the Most Powerful Dynasty in the Arab World* (New York: Holt, 1981), 357.
[32] Government Accountability Office, *The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1979), 11, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.gao.gov/products/id-79-7.
[33] Duccio Basosi, "Oil, Dollars, and US Power in the 1970s: Re-viewing the Connections." *Journal of Energy History/ Revue d'Histoire de l'Énergie*, # 3 (June 2020): 2, https://energyhistory.eu/en/node/192.
[34] Costigan, Cottle, and Keys, "The US Dollar as the Global Reserve Currency," 104-122.

global economic growth, played a pivotal role in international trade.[35] With the inception of the petrodollar system, most nations found themselves in need of US dollars to secure their oil supply. However, exchanging their domestic currencies for US dollars came with substantial transaction costs. A more cost-effective and sustainable practice was for "[o]ther nations, which could not print dollars, … to sell their goods and services to the United States in exchange for dollars."[36] The US thus benefited from an advantageous *double-loan* scenario: it not only printed dollars to acquire oil from oil producers but also generated money to purchase European goods and services.[37] This led the greenback to assume a pivotal role in global commodity trading. Moreover, the artificial demand for petrodollars ensured that, even with continued money printing in America, the value of the US dollar would *not* undergo a drastic depreciation – a principle that continues to hold today. This transformation marked the evolution of the US into an "empire of consumption."[38]

The pivotal question arises: what prompted Saudi Arabia to make the definitive choice of pricing all oil sales *exclusively* in dollars? Traditionally, Saudi Arabia invoiced oil sales in a diverse basket of currencies, including approximately 25 percent in British pounds sterling.[39] However, Saudi Arabia opted to completely abandon the British currency in favor of the US greenback. As disclosed in a recently declassified telegram, Saudi's unexpected move even surprised US Ambassador James Atkins.[40] The lack of Saudi archival materials poses challenges for reaching a conclusive interpretation. However, the deployment of economic incentives and military strategies by prominent figures within the US administration, including Kissinger, Simon, and their contemporaries, appeared to have facilitated the establishment of the petrodollar system.

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[35] David Hammes and Douglas Wills, "Black Gold: The End of Bretton Woods and the Oil Price Shocks of the 1970s," *The Independent Review* IX, no. 4 (Spring 2005): 501–511.

[36] Spiro, *The Hidden Hand*, 132-133, 161.

[37] Ibid., 121.

[38] Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 238-284.

[39] Terry Robards, "Saudis Reassure Britain on Pound," *The New York Times*, Dec. 14, 1974, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/saudis-reassure-britain-on-pound/docview/120156924/se-2.

[40] Telegram from Ambassador Akins at Jidda to Secretary of State Kissinger, "SAMA Agrees to Purchase Treasury Issues", Dec. 12, 1974, accessed December 20, 2023, https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=270129&dt=2474&dl=1345, Access to Archival Databases (AAD).

First, a cornerstone organization, largely conceived by Kissinger, materialized following the Joint Statement in June 1974.[41] This entity, the *United States-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation* (hereinafter referred to as the *Joint Commission*), was created to foster economic cooperation in tandem with oil trade.[42] It was one of only two commissions directly affiliated with the Department of the Treasury, rather than the Department of State or the Department of Commerce, owing to its unique financial and commercial role.[43] In a digest from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the high-level critical goals of the Joint Commission were outlined as follows:

> The United States-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation, established on the heels of the Arab oil embargo and price increases, (i) fosters closer political ties between the two countries through economic cooperation; (ii) assists Saudi industrialization and development while recycling petrodollars; and (iii) facilitates the flow to Saudi Arabia of American goods, services, and technology.[44]

The specific functions of this somewhat opaque entity remain elusive. Yet, insights into the commission's activities, particularly toward the conclusion of the TCA's initial five-year term, can be indirectly gleaned. The US government directed special attention to the Joint Commission, prioritizing projects that would yield "highly visible, tangible results" in Saudi Arabia.[45] According to a GAO report, by September 1978, 16 projects, amounting to approximately $800 million, were in progress under the Joint Commission. These projects spanned various sectors, including manpower training, agriculture, electronic services, highway transportation, and other critical elements of Saudi infrastructure development.[46] The scale of the economic aid and collaboration was

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[41] Henry Kissinger, "Joint Statement on Saudi Arabian-United States Cooperation. Washington, D. C. June 8, 1974," *Middle East Journal* 28, no. 3 (1974): 306.

[42] Government Accountability Office, *The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation*, 5.

[43] Spiro, *The Hidden Hand*, 89, 123. The other exception was the Iranian Commission, which was also assigned to the Department of the Treasury.

[44] Government Accountability Office, *The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation*, 5.

[45] US Congress. House, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer, and Monetary Affairs, *Federal Response to OPEC Country Investments in the United States (Part I: Overview)* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1981), 1107.

[46] Government Accountability Office, *The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation*, 25 (Table 4).

reflected in the dramatic rise in US exports to Saudi Arabia, which surged from $400 million in 1973 to $4.9 billion by 1979.[47]

The effectiveness of the economic measures worked wonders. Throughout much of 1974, OPEC considered adopting a basket of currencies for oil pricing, including IMF's SDRs.[48] However, Saudi Arabia leveraged its status as the leading producer in OPEC to sway the group toward pricing and selling oil in US dollars.[49] By 1975, US dollars had become the standard currency for oil trade among all OPEC countries.[50]

US military influence appears to have been another contributing factor in shaping Saudi Arabia's decision. Following the Joint Statement, the US bolstered military cooperation with Saudi Arabia, pledging to protect against Israel through various military means, including arms sales, information sharing, and military training, among other strategies.[51] A specialized joint military commission was established to ensure the kingdom's security.[52] By the conclusion of the first 5-year term of TCA, it was estimated that this commission had approved arms sales totaling $3.5 billion to Saudi Arabia, encompassing advanced weapons and equipment.[53]

Meanwhile, the US had maintained a stance of pressure toward Saudi Arabia before the signing of the TCA. For example, US Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger declared that there was a "risk" of employing military power against the Arabs.[54] In January 1975, Henry Kissinger, during an interview, stated that the US "could not rule out

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[47] William G. Miller, *William Miller's Subject Files*, 88, accessed December 20, 2023, https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/archival/6012/item/584036, Jimmy Carter Library.

[48] Occasionally, OPEC brought up proposals of switching to a basket of currencies; see, for example, the discussion in "OPEC Might Switch to S.D.R.'s If Dollar Plummets, Official Says," *The New York Times*, Aug. 4, 1977, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/opec-might-switch-s-d-r-if-dollar-plummets/docview/123400751/se-2.

[49] Costigan, Cottle, and Keys, "The US Dollar as the Global Reserve Currency," 110.

[50] Jahangir Amuzegar, "OPEC and the Dollar Dilemma," *Foreign Affairs* 56, no. 4 (1978): 740-750, https://doi.org/10.2307/20039989.

[51] Government Accountability Office, *Perspectives on Military Sales to Saudi Arabia*, 19-21, Oct 26, 1977, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.gao.gov/products/id-77-19a.

[52] Gwertzman, "'Milestone' Pact."

[53] Toby Craig Jones, "America, Oil, and War in the Middle East,*" Journal of American History*, no. 1 (2012): 212.

[54] Drew Middleton, "A Word to the Arabs---'Risk'---Is Kicking Up a Storm," *The New York Times*, Jan. 12, 1974, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/word-arabs-risk-is-kicking-up-storm/docview/119986758/se-2.

completely the use of military force against oil-producing nations" in the event "where there is some actual strangulation of the industrialized world."[55] Indeed, the beginning of 1975 witnessed a surge in articles across various US newspapers and magazines, advocating for armed intervention to seize oil fields in the Middle East.[56] According to US Ambassador James Akins, Kissinger was the orchestrator behind these publications. Whether these threats were bluffs or not, they instilled a sense of unease and fear in the Middle East, as noted by Akins, and seemed to achieve their intended effect.[57] In mid-February 1975, the Saudi government formalized the TCA, laying the groundwork for the implementation of the Joint Commission's goals.[58]

Remarkably, recently declassified documents reveal that Saudi's decision was also significantly influenced by an "add-on" deal between the United States and Saudi Arabia, a 41-year-old secret that remained undisclosed until 2016.[59]

Enhancing Petrodollar Recycling: Unveiling the Secret "Add-on" Arrangement

Under the new "dollar-for-oil" system, oil-producing nations amassed significant petrodollar surpluses, yet their "low capacity" made it difficult to absorb these funds solely through imports.[60] Anwar Ali, the head of Saudi Arabia's central bank in 1973, remarked, "We are sinking under a sea of billions of dollars."[61] Therefore, there was a need to reinvest the surpluses back into oil-importing countries, a process known as *petrodollar recycling*.[62] The US, Japan, Britain, and other Western

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[55] Bernard Gwertzman, "Kissinger Speaks of Force as Last Step 'In the Gravest Emergency' Over Oil," *The New York Times*, Jan. 3, 1975, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/kissinger-speaks-force-as-last-step-gravest/docview/120615103/se-2.

[56] Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed*, 154.

[57] US Department of State, "Airgram from the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (Akins) to the Department of State," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXXVII: Energy Crisis, 1974-1980* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2001), accessed December 20, 2023, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v37/d52.

[58] Government Accountability Office, *The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation*, 11.

[59] Andrea Wong, "The Untold Story Behind Saudi Arabia's 41-Year US Debt Secret," *Bloomberg*, May 30, 2016, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2016-05-30/the-untold-story-behind-saudi-arabia-s-41-year-u-s-debt-secret.

[60] Committee on Government Operations, *Federal Response*, 333 (Appendix 2A).

[61] Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed*, 139.

[62] Committee on Government Operations, *Federal Response*, 235.

industrialized countries all engaged in this fierce "battle for the petrodollar [deposits]."[63]

A prevailing neoliberal interpretation of petrodollar recycling posits the 1970s as a time when OPEC's financial resources were deposited into Western commercial banks, which then lent money to oil-consuming nations.[64] Throughout this process, the appeal of dollar-denominated assets was attributed to the forces of "free market" dynamics.[65]

However, in 1999, David Spiro's research revealed the US government's unilateral maneuver to guide petrodollar recycling by *directly* transacting its government bonds with Saudi Arabia.[66] His findings indicated a covert "add-on" deal between the United States and Saudi Arabia to funnel Saudi oil revenues into the US bond market, an agreement whose details and execution had long been shrouded in mystery.[67] It was not until 2020 that political scientist Duccio Basosi shed new light on the matter, by unveiling a declassified telegram from Ambassador Atkins to Kissinger, dated December 12, 1974. This document offered definite proof of the special arrangement's existence and formalization date:

> The Saudi governor accepted the proposal to have a new confidential relationship through the Federal Reserve with the treasury borrowing operation. When announcement of an issue is made, SAMA will be queried as to its interest in purchasing additional amounts of the same issue at the average price of the auction. Certificates for these additional amounts will be issued and probably deposited in one of the banks on deposit for SAMA. In the event that SAMA wishes to dispose of these issues ahead of their date of maturity for any reason, notification will be given Treasury at least two days ahead so that market forces can be evaluated and an offer made to SAMA if judged necessary to prevent disruption of the ordinary market in such issues.[68]

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[63] Spiro, *The Hidden Hand*, 94-95.

[64] Bessma Momani, "Gulf Cooperation Council Oil Exporters and the Future of the Dollar," *New Political Economy* 13, no. 3 (2008): 301.

[65] Basosi, "Oil, Dollars, and US Power in the 1970s," 3-4.

[66] Spiro, *The Hidden Hand*, 37.

[67] Ibid., 105-116.

[68] Telegram from Ambassador Akins at Jidda to Secretary of State Kissinger, "SAMA Agrees to Purchase Treasury Issues." Reproduced in Basosi, "Oil, Dollars, and US Power," 8.

The operation brought significant benefits to the United States. Recycling petrodollars into the US Treasury provided a reliable flow of funds without exerting undue price pressure. This influx of capital could be redistributed to correct economic imbalances, finance development projects, and alleviate America's deficits.[69] In this manner, it promoted steady growth of the US economy with minimal inflationary impact, at least until the implementation of "open-ended" QE during the pandemic.[70] Ironically, while the oil crisis and the rise of OPEC facilitated "the largest nonviolent transfer of wealth in human history" from industrialized states to developing nations, petrodollar recycling led to roughly 70 percent of Saudi surplus assets ending up in the US Treasury.[71]

Given the unavailability of the add-on agreement's specific details to the public, this essay turns to indirect sources, such as Congressional hearings and reports from governments and organizations, to provide substantial evidence of at least *two* significant commitments made by the US in December 1974.

Throughout the negotiations, the Saudi government placed significant emphasis on "the necessity of confidentiality" regarding its investments.[72] In response, the US Treasury orchestrated a discreet and sophisticated system for the acquisition of US debt. Fragments of this arrangement can be discerned through a 1979 Congressional investigation, prompted by concerns surrounding the notable expansion of OPEC's investments in US financial institutions:

> The specific arrangement with Saudi Arabia assuring confidentiality of OPEC assets … included a system, through the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, where Saudi purchases of US Treasury securities could be

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[69] Momani, "Gulf Cooperation Council Oil Exporters and the Future of the Dollar," 301-302.
[70] Rebucci, Hartley, and Jiménez, "An event study of COVID-19 central bank quantitative easing in advanced and emerging economies," 2-14.
[71] See Steven A. Schneider, *The Oil Price Revolution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 1 ("the largest nonviolent transfer"). For the estimate, see Nathaniel Sher, "The 1973 Oil Embargo and US-Saudi Relations: An Episode in New Imperialism" (Thesis, Oberlin College, 2017), 54, accessed December 20, 2023, https://digitalcommons.oberlin.edu/honors/192.
[72] Telegram from Ambassador Akins at Jidda to Secretary of State Kissinger, "SAMA Agrees to Purchase Treasury Issues."

handled outside the regular market, but at prices determined by the regular auction.[73]

The mechanism can be delineated into three fundamental components. Firstly, the "add-on" arrangements enabled the Saudi Arabian government to *bypass* the conventional bidding process and acquire bonds discreetly, enabling substantial purchases of securities outside standard markets.[74] Secondly, Secretary Simon's assertion that "[a]t no time was Saudi Arabia given securities at preferential rates"[75] was factually incorrect. In typical bond markets, increased demand leads to higher prices and lower interest rates.[76] In contrast, the Saudis were offered fixed "add-on" deals without bidding, at rates surpassing market rates.[77] Lastly, the aforementioned Joint Commission serves as the principal conduit, operating as "an important channel for recycling petrodollars and promoting US business."[78] Within the commission, an Interagency Action Group was established, with a pronounced focus on facilitating petrodollar recycling.[79]

With these three components of the add-on in place and the signing of the TCA, Saudi's initial purchase of $2.5 billion in Treasury securities commenced through the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in February 1975.[80] Later, the "add-on" facilities were extended to include other OPEC nations, providing them unique advantages in US investment markets.[81]

Furthermore, the add-on agreement seemingly included a "nondisclosure policy" that persisted for more than forty years. The US Treasury intentionally concealed the financial transactions between Saudi Arabia and the US Government, hampering efforts to track petrodollar investments. For instance, during a press conference in May 1979, when

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[73] US Congress. House, Committee on Government Operations, *The Adequacy of the Federal Response to Foreign Investment in the United States* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1980), 120-121.

[74] Ibid., 121.

[75] Committee on Government Operations, *Federal Response*, 117.

[76] Spiro, *The Hidden Hand*, 109.

[77] Committee on Government Operations, *The Adequacy*, 120.

[78] Miller, *William Miller's Subject Files*, 59.

[79] Government Accountability Office, *The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation*, 18.

[80] US Congress. House, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer, and Monetary Affairs, *The Operations of Federal Agencies in Monitoring, Reporting on, and Analyzing Foreign Investments in the United States (Part 2: OPEC Investments in the United States)* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1979), 77. Further details are available in the Memorandum to the Secretary of State.

[81] Spiro, *The Hidden Hand,* 125.

queried about the lack of transparency regarding the Saudi Arabia Trust Account, the Treasury responded, "[t]he holdings of the Saudi Arabian Trust Account with Treasury are excluded … because the investments represent *prepayments* … through the US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission and not financial investments."[82]

In particular, the US Treasury aggregated Saudi Arabia's assets with those of other oil exporters and then obscured the data by categorizing transactions based on *regions*, avoiding the disclosure of specific country-by-country holdings.[83] This evidence can be found in a study by the Committee on Government Operations referenced below:

> [a]n extensive review of documents … reveal[s] beyond question that there is an agreement with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to keep their US assets secret by publishing OPEC country investments in general regional categories, such as 'Other Asia' and 'Other Africa.' This policy of nondisclosure has been applied so that Federal agencies or groups needing information about these countries' assets are regularly denied it.[84]

The official reason for this confidentiality, according to Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Fred Bergsten, was that holdings by official foreign institutions from the primary oil-producing nations in the Middle East constituted 90 percent or more of the total assets for each of these countries. Consequently, disclosing data on a country-by-country basis would essentially reveal the assets of these official institutions within each respective nation.[85] William Simon assumed a pivotal role in negotiating the add-on arrangement from July to December 1974.[86] In a conversation with an auditor, the former Secretary of the Treasury stressed that that "this regional reporting was the *only* way in which Saudi Arabia would agree to the deal for add-ons."[87]

Remarkably, a series of GAO inquiries spanning from the late 1970s to the early 1980s did *not* result in any disclosure of statistics regarding Saudi investment.[88] Throughout the years, the Treasury consistently cited the International Investment and Trade in Services

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[82] Miller, *William Miller's Subject Files*, 68. Emphasis added.
[83] Basosi, "Oil, Dollars, and US Power in the 1970s," 8.
[84] Committee on Government Operations, *The Adequacy*, 119-120.
[85] Government Accountability Office, *The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation*, 36.
[86] Spiro, *The Hidden Hand*, 88-91.
[87] Committee on Government Operations, *The Operations*, 80. Emphasis added.
[88] Basosi, "Oil, Dollars, and US Power," 8.

Survey Act of 1976 and Executive Order 12065 of 1978 to maintain that neither the State Department nor the Central Intelligence Agency required data on OPEC finances to fulfill their respective duties.[89] In March 2016, the US Treasury released Saudi Arabia's $117 billion of US Treasuries for the first time since 1974, though some speculate that Saudi Arabia may have held even more US debt.[90] This belief is well-founded, as in April 2016, Saudi Arabia cautioned the US that it could potentially divest up to $750 billion in US Treasuries if Congress passed a bill that might hold the kingdom accountable for the September 11 attacks.[91]

Before concluding this section, it is worth noting that amidst the negotiations with the US Treasury, Saudi Arabia also engaged in discussions with the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Denis Healey.[92] However, it was during Healey's three-day visit from December 9 to 12, 1974, that the add-on deal was struck, resulting in the complete switch to the US dollar from the British pound. Although the precise details of the petrodollar recycling battle are not fully transparent, our analysis suggests that US commitments such as exclusive pre-auction purchasing, preferential rates, and assurances of confidentiality may have significantly influenced Saudi Arabia's decision.

The confidential add-on agreement and the Joint Commission facilitated the petrodollar recycling system, bolstering the prominence of the greenback in the international monetary landscape. However, these developments also raised concerns and triggered debates.

Debates and Maturation of the Petrodollar System

The discussions surrounding "dollar hegemony" have a rich historical lineage. Interestingly, in the 1970s, notably more politicians and economists resisted the petrodollar system, recognizing the

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[89] See Wong, "The Untold Story," and Tad Szulc, "Recycling Petrodollars: The $100 Billion Understanding: OEC," *The New York Times*, Sept. 20, 1981, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/recycling-petrodollars-100-billion-understanding/docview/121679742/se-2.

[90] Wong, "The Untold Story."

[91] Mark Mazzetti, "Saudi Arabia Warns of Economic Fallout if Congress Passes 9/11 Bill," *The New York Times*, Apr. 15, 2016, https://www.proquest.com/blogs-podcasts-websites/saudi-arabia-warns-economic-fallout-if-congress/docview/1781288478/se-2.

[92] UK Parliament, "Saudi Arabia (Chancellor's Visit)", HC Deb 13 December 1974, vol 883 cc982-8, accessed December 20, 2023, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1974/dec/13/saudi-arabia-chancellors-visit.

considerable costs of establishing a new international monetary order, a stance that contrasts with today's prevailing views.

From a political perspective, escalating concerns were voiced by members of Congress and federal officials over secretive foreign investments perceived as threats to the American national interest.[93] Senator Abraham Ribicoff, in a congressional hearing, emphasized that "[t]he recycling of petrodollars as a solution to exorbitant oil prices is a myth. It is also a vicious cycle."[94] He expressed concern that "the feudal monarchies of Arabia [would] buy up the basic industries of the United States while pauperizing the rest of the Western World."[95] Despite lacking immediate evidence of dangers from foreign investments, a June 1978 CIA memorandum expressed concerns about Saudi Arabia using its wealth as a "political weapon," potentially compromising US economic stability.[96] A GAO study captured the prevailing sentiment: "We question the ability of the executive branch to detect such a threat in a timely manner, should it occur."[97]

Economically, the petrodollar system, while strengthening the US dollar and enhancing financial market liquidity, primarily benefited financial institutions that served as the principal channels and recipients of capital inflows.[98] Hence, it was unsurprising that in 1979, when Congress sought disclosures of Gulf Cooperation Council assets in the US, Paul Volcker, then Chairman of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, was among the few to express his dissent: "It is hard to see what interest, including that of disclosure, would be served in that event but there would be obvious drawbacks from the standpoint of US financial markets and institutions, and perhaps repercussions on the dollar itself."[99]

American manufacturers and workers, on the other hand, largely bore the costs.[100] Economic adviser Robert Hormats communicated to

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[93] Szulc, "Recycling Petrodollars."

[94] US Congress. Senate, Committee on Government Operations. Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation, *Recycling of petrodollars* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1974), 7.

[95] Ibid., 9.

[96] Committee on Government Operations, *Federal Response*, 980.

[97] Government Accountability Office, *Changes Needed to Improve Government's Knowledge of OPEC Financial Influence in the United States* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1979): v, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.gao.gov/assets/emd-80-23.pdf.

[98] Eichengreen, *Exorbitant Privilege*, 173.

[99] Government Accountability Office, *The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation*, 48

[100] Tilford, Simon, and Kundnani, "It Is Time to Abandon Dollar Hegemony," *Foreign Affairs*, July 28, 2020, accessed December 20, 2023,

Kissinger the negative consequences of an overvalued dollar, noting, "[a]n overvalued dollar has meant that US exports have fallen far below imports, which has had serious effects on US employment and has caused an increase in US investment abroad – also having a serious effect on jobs in this country."[101] The petrodollar's impact on the physical industries mirrored historical struggles during the Bretton-Woods era, especially in raising the prices of domestic goods in international markets.[102] Simultaneously, this system led to a surge of cheaper imports, which in turn contributed to job losses in manufacturing and an increase in debt in the United States.[103] By contrast, countries like Germany capitalized on this transition. Trade surpluses in these nations enabled them to buy energy at more affordable rates by leveraging significant dollar reserves. This, combined with lower labor costs, reduced their production expenses and strengthened their competitiveness across manufacturing and other industries.[104]

During the Carter Administration, the adverse effects of the petrodollar system became increasingly evident within the US government. Specifically, Secretary of the Treasury Michael Blumenthal and President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski recognized that the US dollar's role as a global reserve currency had led to significant economic disadvantages for the United States. In a memorandum to President Carter, Brzezinski highlighted that:

> the United States was bearing a large and unfair burden as a consequence of the fact that oil is priced in dollars... [Germany and Japan] are becoming 'cheap energy' countries which gives them a strong competitive edge in other areas of industry and international trade, aggravating

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https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/americas/2020-07-28/it-time-abandon-dollarhegemony.

[101] US Department of State, "Memorandum from Robert Hormats of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume III: Foreign Economic Policy; International Monetary Policy, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2001), 965, accessed December 20, 2023, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v03/d174.

[102] Edwin L. Jr. Dale, "Investing Abroad Receives Backing: Senate Inquiry Is Told Such Deals Do Not Eliminate US Workers' Jobs," *The New York Times*, Apr. 27, 1960, https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/investing-abroad-receives-backing/docview/114996337/se-2.

[103] Eichengreen, *Exorbitant Privilege*, 180-181.

[104] Amuzegar, "OPEC and the Dollar Dilemma," 747.

the problem of trade balances and putting further pressure
on the dollar.[105]

Following this, Brzezinski commissioned an analysis to investigate the
possibility of shifting from the US dollar to a basket of currencies,
including SDRs, for oil pricing. Despite his conviction that pricing oil in
dollars was not a wise action, the final decision, made in June 1979, was
to uphold the existing system. However, it is essential to recognize that
this decision was reluctant, as adopting an alternative approach would
have put the US at a disadvantage, as elaborated in the text below:

> [Secretary of] State, [Secretary of] Treasury, CEA [Council
> of Economic Advisers] and Henry Owen believe that
> dollar pricing should be maintained for two reasons: (i) An
> announcement that dollars were no longer being used as
> the unit of account in paying for oil would trigger selling
> of dollars on the foreign exchange markets. So we would
> suffer. (ii) It is hard to see any offsetting gain, since OPEC
> would probably raise prices in SDR terms, as necessary to
> recover revenue losses, if the SDR appreciated relative to
> the dollar.[106]

Brzezinski's reasons underlined the crucial factor in the decision-making
– the dollar's central position in exchange markets and its role as a global
reserve currency.

Based on available sources before Reagan's presidency, this
seemed to be the last official attempt to abolish the petrodollar system.
As the dollar-oil standard stabilized and operated smoothly, the dollar's
status as the primary world reserve currency and the primary
international currency persisted, reaching about 65 percent of reserves in

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[105] US Department of State, "Memorandum from the President's Assistant for
National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter, NSC Weekly Report #95,
Washington, May 3, 1979," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980, Volume III:
Foreign Economic Policy* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2013), 653, accessed December 20,
2023, https://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1977-80v03/pdf/frus1977-80v03.pdf.
[106] US Department of State, "Memorandum from the President's Assistant for
National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter, NSC Weekly Report #100,
Washington, June 8, 1979," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980, Volume III:
Foreign Economic Policy* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2013), 661, accessed December 20,
2023, https://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1977-80v03/pdf/frus1977-80v03.pdf.

1979.[107] Since 1979, the dollar's share of reserves has never fallen below 50 percent.[108]

As the 21st century unfolded, historians have consistently argued that the US dollar's reserve status is the *foremost* driver in American hegemonic power, not merely an auxiliary factor.[109] Political economists contended that the strategic role of the US dollar significantly benefited the United States, particularly in addressing national debt, budget deficits, and the maintenance of military bases.[110] Additionally, due to the US dollar's prominent role as a world reserve currency, the United States has continued to hold a central position in the global trading system.[111]

Conclusion

The Bretton Woods agreement initially established the US dollar's preeminence in global finance by tying it to gold, but its sustainability was compromised by inherent structural flaws known as Triffin's dilemma, culminating in its collapse after the 1971 "Nixon Shock."

The analysis conducted in previous sections challenges the neoliberal assertion that market forces dictated the emergence of the oil-dollar standard, pointing instead to significant US governmental influence. Central to this were the formation of the Joint Mission, the signing of the Technical Cooperation Agreement, and a clandestine supplementary deal, pivotal in steering Saudi Arabia to price oil exclusively in dollars.

Although a more complete picture requires additional sources from Saudi Arabia, it is evident that the Nixon-Ford administration's strategy – a blend of economic incentives, military support, and secret diplomacy – was instrumental in crafting the petrodollar system and guiding its recycling process. The Joint Commission's economic measures were pivotal in convincing Saudi Arabia and other OPEC

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[107] US Department of the Treasury, "Appendix 1: An Historical Perspective on the Reserve Currency Status of the US Dollar," 2, Oct 1, 2009, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.hsdl.org/c/view?docid=748157.

[108] Ibid., 1.

[109] Michael Hudson, *Global Fracture*, 9-31. Also see Susan Strange, "The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony," *International Organization* 41, no. 4 (1987): 555. Hudson emphasizes the US dollar's reserve status as central to American hegemony. Conversely, earlier research like Strange's 1987 work assigns it a more modest role among factors of US dominance.

[110] Costigan, Cottle, and Keys, "The US Dollar as the Global Reserve Currency," 116.

[111] National Intelligence Council, "Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World," 49, March 2021, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends_2040.pd.

members to embrace dollar-based oil pricing. Meanwhile, US military efforts offered both security and strategic leverage, essential for the finalization of these agreements.

Moreover, declassified documents reveal a secret "add-on" agreement between Saudi Arabia and the United States to funnel petrodollars directly back into the US bond market, a strategic move that fostered sustainable growth and curbs inflation. This deal granted Saudi Arabia special advantages in circumventing normal competitive bidding processes and obscured its US debt holdings, practices that continued for decades.

The transformation of crude oil from its fundamental role as a fossil fuel to a "financial instrument" consolidated the US dollar's position as the global reserve currency.[112] This financialization brought political concerns, particularly fears of Saudi Arabia exploiting black gold as a political weapon. Additionally, it had mixed economic repercussions. While beneficial to financial institutions and large businesses, the petrodollar system strained US manufacturing, leading to job losses, increased imports, and higher national debt and deficits. Despite these challenges, the US chose not to shift to a basket of currencies for oil pricing in the late 1970s, a decision that paved the way for the stabilization and smooth operation of the petrodollar system. The continuation of dollar hegemony remains pivotal for US economic prosperity, foreign relations, and national security. Understanding this transition from the gold-dollar standard to the petrodollar system sheds light on the US dollar's enduring influence in international finance, as well as the Federal Reserve's ongoing efforts to maintain a strong, inflation-resistant currency.

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[112] Daniel Yergin, *The Quest: Energy, Security and the Remaking of the Modern World* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 323.

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Reclaiming Sociocultural Agency: The Resurrection of India and Africa in Postcolonial Cinema

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Abstract

Popular studies of postcolonial cinema have often grouped "Third World" countries together concerning their economic conditions, thus failing to take into consideration the impact that sociocultural factors can have on their cinemas. Third Cinema has often been equated with postcolonial cinema, and the generalizations presented in their context have led to a limited understanding of individual Third Cinemas relative to other cinemas from "Third World" countries. This includes the Hindi film industry, which despite being seen as a medium of resistance to the first cinema of the West, is much more commercialized and popular. This paper examines four films: *Pyaasa* and *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India* from the Hindi film industry of India and *Mortu Nega* and *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman* from Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau to compare and contrast how India and Africa have regained sociocultural agency through their postcolonial cinema. The findings of this investigation posit that while third-world cinemas – including an extension of the term that includes Hindi cinema for a structured analysis – explore common themes such as poverty, national identity, revolution, class/caste, colonialism, and postcolonial governmental failures, they are differentiated by their perspectives in terms of individualism versus collectivism, as well as by the extent of the colonial legacy's impact on their respective narrative and cinematographic styles.

Introduction

How have India and Africa regained sociocultural agency through their postcolonial cinema?[1] Grouping the postcolonial cinematic identities of "Third World"[2] countries is a complex issue that has historically been examined through the economic definition of the term. For instance, film scholar Roy Armes categorizes Third Cinema as emerging from nations that contribute less than 12 percent to the global GDP despite encompassing a majority of the global population.[3] However, this economic categorization tends to overlook the unique sociocultural nuances of the individual contexts of such developing nations. This is evidenced in American film scholar Teshome Gabriel's "Third Cinema in the Third World." While his arguments outline the common themes of postcolonial Third Cinema and the importance of considering historical development, societal perspectives, and cinematic styles influenced by colonial legacies while assessing the medium, they are not delineated by the individual identities of third-world countries.

The impact of colonialism on African and Indian cinema (the latter cannot be classified as Third Cinema as despite its opposition towards neocolonialism, it is a commercialized, popular medium), as exemplified by the case studies discussed later in this paper, cannot be uniformly assessed despite the exploitation and cultural devastation that both the regions suffered during their respective colonial periods. The legacy of colonialism has influenced not just narrative styles but also societal perspectives and values in distinct ways. Third Cinemas across countries seek to decolonize cinema as a response to neocolonialism and the reclamation of sociocultural agency is crucial, as individual sociocultural identities have been equally as integral as the economic context of a country in shaping its cinematic identity.

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[1] While this paper aims to investigate the similarities and differences in how India and Africa have regained sociocultural agency through their postcolonial cinema, it is important to note that Africa is a continent and therefore has several film industries among its 54 countries. Similarly, India houses 28 states and 9 union territories, most of them with their own film industries. This paper considers four case studies and while they belong to the aforementioned regions, they are not fully representative of them. The two case studies from India are from Bollywood, the Hindi film industry which is India's most popular, whereas the African case studies include films from Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria.

[2] While "Third World" is an outdated and derogatory term used to define economically developing nations, in this context it has been used in relation to the production of Third Cinema so as to generalize the thematic similarities of the medium.

[3] Roy Armes, *Third World Film Making and the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) p. 10.

This investigation aims to assess the sociocultural context of both India and the chosen African case studies, while simultaneously presenting the arguments put forth concerning the loss of sociocultural agency and the aesthetics of liberation. These arguments are then evaluated by examining four films spread across a production period of 65 years; this evaluation is structured as per the characteristic themes of Third Cinema, including but not limited to poverty, national identity, revolution, class/caste, colonialism, and postcolonial governmental failures.

Sociocultural Context and the Loss of Agency in India and Africa

A direct influence of colonialism has been the loss of sociocultural agency among the regions that were once colonized by European powers. Local traditions and subcultures were often sacrificed at the altar of more Westernized practices, which the elite groups of society were conditioned to see with a reverential gaze.[4] Western Cinema from the first half of the 20th century has played an integral role in stripping the colonial regions of such agency, largely owing to the portrayal of the colonial "subjects", which was superciliously skewed towards the imperialist powers.

The White Gaze: A Condescending Lens Towards Africa

This argument has been evidenced primarily within the African context, where "the dominant image of Africa seen on Western screens was that of condescension and paternalism."[5] Several films that were shot and/or set in Africa exoticized its landscape but stripped it of its cultural integrity. This cinematographic invasion in terms of Africa's on-screen portrayal in the West used the landscape of the continent to a great extent, but the Africans were nowhere to be seen.

Such films shrouded the region with a synthetic sheen of mystery that erased the cultural values that form the basis of any society. This gaze of exoticization is best described by Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike in his book, *Black African Cinema*, where he writes that "the norm… [was] to use the selectively photographed or fictionally created exotica of Africa to create sensation"[6] to portray an image of untamed wilderness and savagery, furthering the stereotypes that were associated with the region by the Western populace.

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[4] Ibid., p. 18.

[5] Frank N Ukadike, *Black African Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) p. 35.

[6] Ibid., p. 36.

This exoticized portrayal also shifted the perspective through which Africa was seen by the Western populace, in that through the dehumanization and erasure of the African people, an interest was cultivated for films that were set amidst the rich wildlife of the continent rather than among its people. This reduced Africa to a mere landscape that films such as *Tarzan and the Apes* (1918) exploited, furthering the perception of the locals as "wild natives".[7]

Conversely, the African characters who were portrayed cinematically were often victims of a perverse and often voyeuristic gaze. The people of Africa were largely depicted as caricatures; as "savages or docile primitives doing funny things in the jungles to amuse white thrill seekers."[8] The exoticization also lent itself to a portrayal of the African people that was inspired by the colonial outlook towards slavery. This perpetuated the notion of what American film theorist Robert Stam describes as the "dark continent" idea[9] – cinematic representation that manipulated the global outlook towards a continent that had already suffered in terms of population stagnation and cultural decline as a result of colonialism.

Additionally, such films were culturally unrepresentative as most of them were not even shot in the continent itself, thereby losing out on any sense of cultural authenticity. Furthermore, the creation of the Colonial Film Unit – which made instructional films that were meant to didactically educate "unrefined" colonial subjects[10] – furthered this problem, as the films addressed subjects whose expressions were never even considered.

Colonial Legacy and Narrative Continuity in India

The sociocultural impact on the Indian cinematic sphere, meanwhile, was vastly different in that India was relatively free from the perils of the exoticized outlook that dehumanized the people of Africa. In fact, unlike Africa, where the local media was not equipped with the level of transportability that European media had, India's film industry(s) began to develop concurrently with those in the West, namely with the production of *Raja Harishchandra* (1913). This put Indians in a relative position of power; in contrast to Africans, they could dispel the

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[7] Ibid., p. 40.

[8] Ibid., p. 36.

[9] Okaka O. Dokotum, *Hollywood and Africa* (South Africa: AHP Publications, 2020) p. 200.

[10] Tom Rice, *Films for the Colonies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019) p. 4.

ideologies that were being perpetuated against their culture through their own art.

The progress of storytelling, meanwhile, was hampered because most of the narratives were mythological and screenings often featured live commentary. Spectators knew the plot, and this hindered the development of more complex narratives. In his book, Roy Armes argues that "the lack of concern with the kind of tight narrative continuity in silent cinema that was evolving in Hollywood helped ease the way for the universal adoption of the distinctive form of the Indian musical after the coming of sound."[11]

One could argue that the stagnation of narrative development in the early 20th century resulted in the song-and-dance structure of Hindi cinema – a characteristic associated with India's sociocultural fabric even today. It also allowed the country to formulate a style that was original to its own context. While a heightened focus on narrative continuity did come about with auteurs of the 50s such as Guru Dutt and Bimal Roy, the previously held notion allowed early Hindi cinema to be more languidly paced and less compositionally motivated than classical Hollywood cinema, especially as "culture-specific inscriptions permeate[d] narration in Hindi films."[12]

However, several academic investigations into the similarities between early Hindi cinema and the Hollywood studio model fail to consider the impact of the latter on the former's sense of characterisation. Unlike the Third Cinema that emerged from African regions such as Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria, Hindi cinema was significantly more individualistic in the portrayal of a character's motivations. This style impacted not just the general worldview of the film's (usually singular) protagonist, but also permeated into its cinematographic style – which was largely dissimilar to other 'third-world' countries' cinema (this argument is explored later in this paper).

Regaining Agency and the Aesthetics of Liberation

While a fundamental shortcoming in the worldview explained by Roy Armes is that it limits cinematic perspectives to economic terms alone, it is effective while considering the aesthetics of liberation as proposed by American film scholar Teshome Gabriel in his book, *Third Cinema in the Third World*. He writes that "the aim of Third Cinema is not to re-aestheticize traditional cinematic codes but to politicize cinema to

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[11] Roy Armes, *Third World Film Making and the West* (1987) p. 109.
[12] Mahoro Semege, 'Cultural Specificity and Cinematic Narration' (2021) 19 FI 17-40.

such an extent that a new cinematic code appropriate to its needs is established,"[13] thus furthering the country's (usually postcolonial) cinematic identity.

In Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's manifesto "Towards a Third Cinema", they define the dual intentions of the Third Cinema. It is a rejection of the propositions and concepts of traditional cinema, namely, those of Hollywood; and the need to use film to serve an ideological and revolutionary end.[14] This extract is also used to emphasize the intent of such cinema in Gabriel's work. He argues that the aesthetics of liberation are primarily anti-colonial and that the aesthetics only serve as a medium to bring out this anti-oppression messaging. He writes that "third-world filmmakers have realized the importance of incorporating traditional art forms to retain the distinctive flavor of popular mass culture."[15] In this context, the popular mass culture is seen as a component of society that is in direct collision with the cultural values of the elite, which are often formed as a result of colonialism. Gabriel conveys that the class differences in third-world societies necessitate the demarcation of who is the oppressor and who is the oppressed, for these divides can be intraracial too.

Gabriel also delves into the use of song-and-dance to convey joy and despair, and how this serves as an aesthetic of regaining sociocultural agency in Third Cinema as seen in the Senegalese film *The Other Francisco*. However, this example also highlights the broad generalizations that his arguments make, in that due to the purely economic definition of what constitutes a third-world country, his arguments view some of the poorest countries in the world with a uniform lens, thus leaving no space for delving into more specific ways of regaining sociocultural agency.

Furthermore, the author addresses the struggle for the emancipation of women as a recurring theme in Third Cinema: "The issue of the role of women in bringing about social change is one of the most essential themes and is integral to the practices of Third Cinema," he writes.[16] While this is not an "aesthetic" of its own, this thematic exploration is key to the anti-oppression politics that Gabriel advocates for and expresses that Third Cinema is essentially designed to counter. Gabriel also mentions the thematic recurrence of anti-imperialist armed

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[13] Teshome H. Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982) p. xi.

[14] Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, 'Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World' (2021) 13 IUP 378.

[15] Teshome H. Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World* (1982) p. 16.

[16] Ibid., p. 18.

struggles, which are explored later in this paper through the analysis of Flora Gomes' *Mortu Nega.*

The next section uses the themes outlined by Gabriel to assess the similarities and differences between the postcolonial cinemas of India and Africa; it uses four case studies, *Pyaasa,*[17] *Mortu Nega,*[18] *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India,*[19] and *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman,*[20] to do so.

Reclaiming Sociocultural Agency in Diverse Postcolonial Cinematic Contexts: 1957-2022

Pyaasa

Poetry and Narrative as a Medium for Dissent

Set in Calcutta, *Pyaasa* (India, 1957) follows Vijay, a cynical Urdu Poet (Guru Dutt), whose poetry is undermined and mocked by publications for tackling social issues instead of romantic ones. The film also explores his relationship with the prostitute Gulabo (Waheeda Rehman) and his former partner, Meena (Mala Sinha), who is now married to Mr. Ghosh (Rehman[21]), a reputed publisher for whom Vijay eventually works as a domestic help.

Pyaasa's postcolonial anger towards the "system" is evident in its poetry; primarily in *Jinhe Naaz Hai Hind Par* (1:29:10 - 1:34:50), or "Those Who Are Proud of India", and scholars Gaurav Gadgil and Sudha Tiwari accredit this sense of rage towards the displacement that artists were feeling in a post-independence India, where, after a decade of promise, a sense of hopelessness had set in among those who struggled to find how their contributions mattered in terms of the Nehruvian national-building process.[22]

Poetry as a Revolutionary Medium

Pyaasa's eventual sociocultural legacy is developed not only through its thematic tropes but also through its narrative arcs; Vijay

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[17] Guru Dutt (dir.), *Pyaasa* (Guru Dutt Films Pvt. Ltd., 1957).

[18] Flora Gomes (dir.), *Mortu Nega* (Instituto Nacional de Cinema da Guiné-Bissau, 1988).

[19] Ashutosh Gowariker (dir.), *Lagaan* (SET Pictures, 2001).

[20] Biyi Bandele (dir.), *Elesin Oba, The King's Horseman* (EbonylifeTV and Netflix, 2022).

[21] Not to be confused with Waheeda Rehman, another actor in the film.

[22] Sudha Tiwari and Gaurav Gadgil, 'Poetics of *Pyaasa* and Narratives of National Disillusionment' (2013) 74 IHC 939.

(Dutt), the film's protagonist, himself acknowledges art – and poetry especially – to be a revolutionary, change-making medium. He is instantly dismissive of the notion that acceptable poetry consists of romanticization alone, and is intent on producing works that are politically charged.[23] His poetry is also more accessible than those of his elite counterparts, thereby reaching out to the masses who strongly take to his work after its eventual publication towards the end of the film. The film's inherent sense of rage is also channelised into the protagonist questioning if the art form is only the prerogative of the rich, which conveys two thematic dilemmas that advocate the film's attempt at regaining sociocultural agency: the disparity between the educated and the prosperous and the collision between the film's individualistic perspective and anti-materialist ideology. Revolution, an inherent theme of Third Cinema, is used to further convey two other thematic dilemmas specific to the cinema type: poverty and colonialism.

Poverty and the Chasm Between Education and Prosperity

In terms of the sense of disparity, agency is not regained as much as it is created to show the chasm between those who are educated and those who are wealthy. Vijay, despite being backed up with college-level education, is unable to find employment and make ends meet, thus conveying a changing colonial context that evidenced disproportionality between the "economic (income, consumption) and the social (health, education) characteristics of poverty," which other scholarly works, such as one by scholar Pramit Chaudhari, have frequently associated with one another.[24] This disparity, which reflected the anger directed towards the government's failures, also challenged the colonial notion that was conveyed through cinema in that the 'educated' white man was often pitted against the 'savage' person of color,[25] thus, portraying formal education as the sole foundation for creating 'civil', and thereby, successful individuals. Vijay's lack of financial stability countered this argument that had been historically used to spread colonial propaganda, especially because a scene in the film depicts Vijay's education as conventional in a Westernized sense.

Individualism as a Byproduct of Colonialism

Pyaasa is individualistic in that unlike Third Cinema which emerged from Africa, it is staunchly focused on the motivations of a

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[23] Ibid., p. 940.
[24] Pramit Chaudhuri, 'Changing Perceptions to Poverty in India: State and Poverty' (1993) 55 Sankhya: Indian J. Stat. 316.
[25] Frank N. Ukadike, *Black African Cinema* (1994) p. 36.

single individual, based on whose experiences the broader themes of the film are conveyed. Unlike Gabriel's argument, which posits that Third Cinema generally manipulates space over time,[26] *Pyaasa*'s narrative involves several timeline jumps that are more aligned with more Western forms of cinema that are compositionally motivated in nature. The cinematography is also reflective of such individualism, and largely consists of close-ups of Vijay's face, as is evidenced in the poem *Jaane Woh Kaise Log The* (1:03:09 - 1:07:10).

This sense of individualism, which holds leverage in comparison to the collectivist perspective often "derogated… [by Western] structural binarism" in African cinema,[27] can be contextualized by acknowledging that since Indian cinema had developed much more substantially during the colonial period than African cinema had, early postcolonial films in India had many more Western influences. However, this trend has evolved throughout Hindi cinema's history, and *Lagaan* (which is discussed later in this paper) is evidence of the same.

This individualistic gaze, which is a legacy of colonialism, is in direct collision with the film's socialist perspective, as the messages of anti-materialism and equity that are propagated until the film's denouement are juxtaposed with the heightened focus on a single protagonist. From a contemporary perspective, these parallel ideas also serve as reflections of a more moderate approach, allowing the film to recede from the frequently radical ideas that it disseminates.

The Intersection Between Female Emancipation and Anti-Materialism

The anti-materialism of *Pyaasa* is reflected in Meena's predicament, in that she is shown to have chosen a life of privilege over love; the film views this decision through a critical lens. Dutt subverts the notion of an "ideal" Hindu woman – one of a "chaste, virtuous and self-sacrificing wife,"[28] as Meena's character is depicted to be largely spineless. This is frequently juxtaposed, through the use of cross-cutting, with Gulabo's pure-heartedness, or rather what is now described as the Hollywood cinematic trope: the "hooker with a heart of gold." This enables Vijay's male savior syndrome in that, through the use of this trope, women are often saved by a heroic male figure who lets them lead

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[26] Teshome H Gabriel, 'Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films' (2011) 5 Informa 196.

[27] Stephen A Zacks, 'The Theoretical Construction of African Cinema' (1995) 26 RAL 7.

[28] Sneha Singh, 'The Ideal Indian Woman: Defined by Hindu Nationalism and Culture' (2021) 4 IJSSHR 2369-2377.

a "respectable" life instead.[29] While on the surface the use of this trope may appear as a byproduct of the colonial legacy, the almost-deification of a prostitute is a starkly feminist reclamation of agency, especially because the notions of ideal womanhood and "respectability" in Indian societies during the colonial era were frequently prescribed by the colonizers themselves.

Mortu Nega

Revealing National Identity Through Cinematic Techniques

Set between 1973 and 1977, *Mortu Nega (*1988, Guinea-Bissau), which follows the life of Diminga in the aftermath of the 1973 war in Guinea-Bissau, portrays her challenges as she navigates post-war life, endures drought, copes with her husband's illness, and faces conflicts over limited resources. Directed by filmmaker Flora Gomes, this ethno-fictional portrayal of the country's struggle for independence was also the nation's first independent feature.

Collectivist Perspective as a Medium to Convey Sociocultural Identity

The film uses a collectivist cinematographic style to reveal its sociocultural identity. The protagonist, Diminga (Bia Gomes), is not as much of a catalyst to the events around her as she is a bystander to them; she is only a medium to tell the parable of a nation. The collectivism here is characteristic of Guinea-Bissau's societal structure itself, and it is revisionist in that it reverses the lens through which the world had been conditioned to look at Africa.

The condescending gaze, as explained by Ukadike, did not just strip the people of the continent of their cultural integrity and individual national identities,[30] but also looked at them through the individualistic perspectives that defined British and American cinema. Even though Guinea-Bissau was essentially a Portuguese colony, the uniform depiction of the African people impacted the perception of the continent as a whole. Portuguese colonial cinema, on the other hand, skimmed over the implications of colonial rule and "diverted [its] attention towards matters of form and cinematic language – spectacle and entertainment" instead.[31] By using a collectivist perspective to portray its

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[29] Marissa H Luning, 'Prostitution: Protected in Paradise' (2007) 30 Houst. Law Rev. 193.

[30] Frank N. Ukadike, *Black African Cinema* (1994) p. 37.

[31] Sally Faulkner and Mariana Linz, 'Portuguese film: Colony, postcolony, memory' (2016) 16 JRS 2.

people, the government-funded *Mortu Nega* was able to exercise its role in shaping the global perception of its country.

Recurring wide shots from an aerial perspective are also indicative of the fact that the film's stillness is intentional; unlike classical Hollywood cinema, it is not burdened by the need to be plot-heavy and "motivated compositionally,"[32] and therefore the emphasis on the scenery does not just align with the defining trait of Third Cinema – regaining sociocultural identity – but also serves as a showcase for the country's natural aesthetic value. Yet, despite serving as a showreel of the country's landscape, *Mortu Nega* has a sense of hopelessness that permeates until the very end of it, except in the denouement, which includes a celebration of the advent of rain.

Metaphors to Convey Postcolonial Government Failure

Mortu Nega is similar to *Pyaasa* in that it recognises the postcolonial government's failure by depicting its consequences. Much like the 1957 film, *Mortu Nega* also expresses a sense of disappointment towards the institutions of power. However, while this is channelized as righteous anger in *Pyaasa*, over here it is reflected in the narrator's tone as a whole. Much like the subsequently discussed *Lagaan*, *Mortu Nega* also uses the natural phenomenon of drought to mirror the resounding legacy of colonialism. The advent of rain is a common thematic thread that runs through both films, and the juxtaposition between a natural crisis and a man-made one (poverty as a consequence of colonialism) only accentuates the focus on the disparity that emerges from imperialistic societies.

Class, Gender, and Cinematic Techniques

Class and gender are two societal constructs that reinforce each other within the context of this film, and this characteristic of Third Cinema (as defined by Gabriel) is evident in *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman* as well, a film discussed later in this paper. While *Mortu Nega* never aggressively highlights Diminga's economic status, its mise-en-scene and the spatio-temporal relationships she shares with her guerilla fighter-husband convey the same. This disparity is also explained relative to the class privileges of the colonizers, for in the combat scenes, they are often positioned in helicopters – and therefore above – in comparison to the locals, who are fighting from the ground. Diminga, who accompanies her husband during this initial segment of the film, is a

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[32] David Bordwell and others, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1988) p. 19.

bystander to an event that is fully fought by men, and this displacement is conveyed similarly: through the manipulation of spatial relationships as attributed to Third Cinema.

The lack of continuity techniques at play also maintains a consistent sense of realism that scholar Birger Langkjær has termed a "Third Cinema practice."[33] This can be best understood through arguments put forth by French film critic Andre Bazin, who argued that while the montage – a series of moving films that are edited together to create a continuous sequence – has played a vital role in establishing cinema as an art form, its excessive use now poses a hindrance, detracting from the true essence of cinematic realism. He suggests that montages are structured to offer audiences only the selected shots that filmmakers want to convey, thereby restricting viewers from forming their interpretations and experiencing the film on a deeper level.[34] While Bazin's theory was posited concerning the state of Western cinema in the 1960s, the use of the montage is also a legacy of colonialism that Third Cinemas have inherited; *Mortu Nega*'s attempts at manipulating space over time maintain the ethos of decolonizing such cinema while also maintaining the viewer's engagement with the film.

Lagaan

Caste, Class, Collectivism, and Cultural Identity

It is the advent of rain, and the suffering caused by its scarcity, that is key in defining the motifs of *Lagaan* (India, 2001). Similar to *Mortu Nega*, drought is used as a medium to convey the damage caused by imperialism and the postcolonial government's failure. Set in the 1890s, *Lagaan* depicts a group of villagers led by Bhuvan (Khan) who confront the oppressive British regime by challenging them to a cricket match in an attempt to relieve themselves of an exorbitant land tax after consecutive years of drought.

Caste: Subaltern Hierarchies

An inherent sense of inclusivity, albeit the trappings of star power that accompany it, is seen in the film's portrayal of caste; this is evidenced in the character of Kachra, whose name directly translates to "garbage". By astutely portraying the horrors of the caste system by expressing it in the form of Kachra's disability and the attitudes of those

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[33] Birger Langkjær, 'Realism as a third film practice' (2011) 51 JMCR 40-54.
[34] André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) pp. 25-40.

in the team towards him, the film "shows how an apparently subaltern community can develop a hierarchy within itself and create structures of discriminations."[35] This depiction conveys the individuality of each social system, as it highlights the disparities that are characteristic to each of them. While Bhuvan's attempt at inclusivity initially reads as an upper-caste savior complex that has been attributed to postcolonial cinema,[36] the film subverts this trope in the climactic match, when Kachra becomes the team's sole sense of hope, thus inverting the very complex.

Collectivism as a Medium-to-Class Dynamics

Along with caste, the film also addresses class. The class disparity is conveyed through the obvious paradox that forms when the British come to odds with the Indians; this is reflected not only in their exploitative taxation policies but also in the mise-en-scene – such as the sports gear of the latter, which is made out of wood. Class is also depicted within the Indian community itself, largely through the depiction of the disparity between the king and his peoples, emphasizing a similar point about hierarchical structures within subaltern communities. However, since the former is seen as an ally of the latter, the disparities are not fully highlighted.

Instead, the relationship between the *maharaja*[37] and his subjects is used to convey a sense of collectivism in that it shows a united effort that transcends the boundaries of religion, class, caste, and even race. Several long takes are framed as pan-shots and are repeatedly used to emphasize this sense of collectivism; "*Lagaan* privileges the communitarian dimension of the colonial struggle over individual psychology, and this is expressed in [the] strategic cinematography."[38] In parallel, Gabriel's theory posits that while Western films use close-ups to convey psychological interiority, Third Cinema uses them for informational purposes. The cinematographic principles used in Lagaan fall in the middle of this spectrum, thus suggesting that the film cannot be purely sorted into either of these categories.

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[35] Md. Nabil, *Does Lagaan Speak for the Subaltern(s)?*, diss., Stockholm, Stockholm University, 2013, pp. 2-3.

[36] Pardeep Attri, "Article 15': Dalits Don't Need 'Upper Caste' Saviours' (*HuffPost*, 26 June 2019) <https://www.huffpost.com/archive/in/entry/article-15-dalits-upper-caste-saviours> accessed 1st January 2024.

[37] The Hindi translation for "king".

[38] Antonio D. Sison, *World Cinema, Theology and the Human* (London: Routledge, 2012) pp. 67-88.

Cultural Identity Through Music and Cinematography

Unlike *Pyaasa*, the film's discography is not driven as much by ideas of resistance and protest as much as it is by a reflection of its characters' cultural syntax. Songs such as *Radha Kaise Na Jale* (1:31:16 - 1:37:00), set against festive backdrops with religious significance attached to them, generally inspire a sense of unison and hope instead of dissent. The only exception is the song *O Rey Chhori* (1:54:48 - 2:00:40), which manipulates the montage, a Western cinematographic technique developed by Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein to a significant extent while simultaneously differing from Gabriel's definition of the use of montages in Third Cinema. Gabriel argues that conventional cinema has reduced crosscutting – alternating (one sequence) with another when editing a film – to a method that is used solely to show a collision between characters; conveying the conflict in an obvious manner. However, crosscutting shows not just a build-up of conflict but also the simultaneity of events, as it does not merely juxtapose two parallel motifs but also shows the reasons for the characters' motivations. Therefore, Third Cinema has used it to convey more "explicit ideological collisions."[39]

In the song *O Rey Chhori,* crosscutting – and sometimes, even manipulated spatial relationships – are used to convey the (narrative) collision between Elizabeth and Gauri's love for Bhuvan. However, the parallel motifs also convey that the two events are happening simultaneously, and not in isolation of each other. This ideological collision occurs as a result of the juxtaposition of the above-discussed themes in the film's context. This synergistic relationship, which creates meaning by combining the use of crosscutting in European and Third Cinema contexts, exhibits defiance towards the colonial method of using this technique to show conflict alone.

Elesin Oba

Decolonizing via Thematic Subversion and Paradox

Similar to *Lagaan*, *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman* (Nigeria, 2022) also uses a retrospective lens to address the loss of sociocultural agency that occurred as a consequence of British colonialism. Starring Odunlade Adekola and Shaffy Bello among others, this film set in 1943 follows its titular protagonist (Adekola), who struggles to commit ritualistic suicide to join his late monarch in the afterlife, after British officers deem his sacrifice unethical.

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[39] Teshome H Gabriel, 'Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films' (2011) 198.

Subverting Colonial Notions of Religion and Death

Dissimilar to *Lagaan*, which uses cricket – a unifying theme – to express its anticolonial angst, *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman* depicts religious rituals that are in direct collision with the primary colonial religion: Christianity. In the film, Elesin is seen as wanting to have sexual intercourse with an unnamed girl he finds attractive before the occurrence of his ritualistic suicide. Engaging in such casual sex was seen as sexually promiscuous in most Western societies, and these notions were a direct legacy of the colonizers' dominant faith; furthermore, many Christians linked "the moral degradation of our society" as a consequence of "excessive sexual promiscuity."[40] While this attitude is mirrored in that Elesin has to marry the unnamed bride before consummating with her, it is his lust that drives his marriage and not contrariwise. This, when set against a background of religious rituals, serves as a stark contrast to the views endorsed by more Western countries (which stemmed as a byproduct of their religious beliefs) during the colonial era.

The celebratory gaze in which death is addressed also sharply juxtaposes with the colonial notion of death; a moment marked by grief. In fact, the British characters in the film describe such ritualistic practices as "barbaric", and these sentiments are mirrored in the paternalistic attitude through which they describe the sociocultural elements of the Nigerian people: religiously symbolic attire is referred to as a "fancy dress" and a "Pagan outfit". This tone is not dissimilar from the condescending attitude that was evident in early British and American cinema towards the African continent, and yet, the difference lies in the fact that the film is directed by the Nigerian novelist and playwright Biyi Bandele. By reclaiming the control over a narrative that was once peddled by the oppressors of the region, Bandele's film serves not just as a critique of colonialism but also as a reflection of the times it is set in.

A Paradoxical Portrait of Womanhood and Class

Contrary to the agency that it is reclaimed in terms of representation, the portrayal of women in the film is paradoxical – veering from objectification to deification. One on hand, the opening scene shows a group of half-naked women who are caressing Elesin's body, which serves no purpose but to fulfill his sexual desires. This "implicitly re-enforces the myths of the woman viewed as [a] sex object,

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[40] Miguel A. De La Torre, *A Lily Among the Thorns: Imagining a New Christian Sexuality* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007) p. xi.

[a] wayward nymph and [for] masculine pride (a cheap trophy for the men)" in the larger Nigerian cinematic spectrum, which has seen an "increasing sexualisation" in the portrayal of women in recent years."[41]

On the other hand, women are shown to be integral to the ritual that forms the crux of the narrative, and this is evidenced in the film's collectivist perspective that is conveyed through several shots of hordes of women singing and chanting together, celebrating the advent of Elesin's death. The film's ethos also lies in the character of Iyaloja (a Yoruba word that translates to "leader of the market women"[42]), a matriarchal figure whose superiority is positioned by her class status. This is implied in a scene where she convinces the subservient parents of her son's to-be-wife to give their daughter away to Elesin, who wishes to consummate with her. The portrayal of this societal dynamic is conveyed subtly by the mise-en-scene, such as through their attire relative to Iyaloja, as well as their positioning – sitting on the floor while Iyaloja sits on a pedestal.

This nuance serves a dual purpose: it exhibits how the societal norms of gender and class reinforce each other; this aligns with Gabriel's argument in that he writes, "to differentiate among thematic lines is not characteristic of the Third Cinema. Instead, it addresses issues of class, culture, religion, sex, and national integrity simultaneously."[43] Furthermore, this positioning also conveys that hierarchies often exist within subaltern communities as well, consolidating the aforementioned argument about the existence of power structures within oppressed sections of society.

Conclusion

As the comparisons thus far have substantiated, India and Africa's reclamation of sociocultural agency is rife with both similarities and differences. However, it is undeniable that the sociocultural fabric of countries from which the case studies originate has played a role in shaping the individual identities of Third Cinemas from India and Africa. While the thematic tropes that are evident across the four case studies – such as class, anti-colonialism, and female agency – are commonalities among the cinemas of India and Africa, they are communicated very

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[41] Floribert Patrick C Endong, 'Pornography and Women's Objectification in Nollywood Films: A Study of Nigerian Actresses' Perception of Acting Sex and Nudity Scenes' (2022) 20 JIWS 58-59.
[42] Morooph Babaranti, 'Iyaloja of Lagos Champions Advocacy for Mothers and Newborns' (*Mamaye*, 16 Dec 2009) <https://mamaye.org/blog/iyaloja-lagos-champions-advocacy-mothers-and-newborns> accessed 2nd January 2024.
[43] Teshome H. Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World* (1982) p. 15.

differently in each of the case studies. These thematic tropes persist as an aftermath of colonialism, and the cinema uses such societal constructs to examine the extent to which imperialism has damaged the sociocultural fabric of former colonies and to decolonize the legacy of their future works.

The syntax through which these themes are conveyed, however, is largely different and always specific to their country of origin. For instance, the individualism that serves as a cinematic legacy of colonialism in Indian cinema is used to convey the feminist ideas of *Pyaasa* which subvert the notions of what it means to be a "virtuous Indian woman." However, similar themes of female agency are also conveyed in *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman*, almost always through a more collectivist gaze that mirrors the Nigerian society. The cultural values of third-world countries that were often looked at paternalistically by the West are also reclaimed in that their legacy is altered by filmmakers of Nigerian and Indian origin. This is visible in both *Elesin Oba*, where a ritualistic practice is put at odds with the ethical notions attached to colonialism, and *Lagaan*, where the British are depicted as villains through narrative arcs that frequently result in them mocking Indian customs and traditions.

The sociocultural agency is also reclaimed by reshaping the cinematic legacy of colonialism in that not just the narrative templates, but the cinematographic style is also severely modified; within the context of the Indian case studies, this is evidenced in the evolution from 1957's *Pyaasa* to 2001's *Lagaan*. The experimentation in the use of crosscutting so that it defies the Western convention is observed in the latter's style, while also mirroring a more collectivist gaze relative to that of *Pyaasa*. It is these intertextual relationships that amplify the stylistic and formal differences in the visual grammar and cultural syntax of various Third Cinemas, thus reinforcing that sociocultural agency is regained in ways that are specific to each region.

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Healthcare in the United States:
Why Socialized Medicine Could Cure Nation

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Abstract

The United States of America is the only industrialized country in the world that does not provide some form of universal health coverage. Criticism of socialized healthcare reform often echoes McCarthy-era fears of socialism. Developed nations across the globe have implemented many variations of socialized healthcare tailored to fit each nation's unique economic and cultural situations. These same developed countries are not considered socialist or communist by any stretch of the imagination, yet this remains a typical American argument for why universal healthcare would become detrimental to the social and political realms of the United States. To determine if and how the United States would benefit from universal healthcare, it is essential to evaluate how the current American healthcare system works and who is benefiting, understand the current stigmas rooted in America's history that Americans hold regarding universal healthcare, and finally to assess how other developed countries have fared under different forms of universal healthcare. Through this evaluation, it becomes clear that through some mix of the different types of universal healthcare, the US could significantly improve the healthcare system within a decade, reducing the inequity of care and accessibility to medicine that the country currently faces, in such a way that national fears of even the word "socialized" are properly cared for.

The American Healthcare System: The Current Situation

To address why or how the United States of America would benefit from universal healthcare, it is essential first to understand how the existing American healthcare system functions, who profits from the system, and who does not. The current American healthcare system is an amalgamation of private, federal, non-profit, and for-profit medical care institutions and insurers. Federal programs include a national Medicare program for citizens over 65 years old, a Medicaid program for low-income individuals and families, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and various programs for citizens with disabilities and veterans. A population report completed by the United States Census Bureau estimated that roughly 92 percent of the people in the country have some type of medical coverage.[1] Within this covered group, private insurers covered 55 percent of the nation through private insurance provided by their employers.[2] Medicaid covers an additional 17.9 percent of the population.[3] Medicare accounts for another 18.2 percent of the population.[4] In 2010, President Barack Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to expand access to insurance; furthermore, in 2014, the federal government introduced the following expansions: parental coverage was extended for young people until the age of 26, the expansion for Medicaid eligibility, and the requirement for most Americans to secure health coverage or face a penalty.[5] By 2018, the number of unprotected adults dropped by about eight percent, leaving 8.5 percent of the population uncovered, accounting for roughly 27.5 million Americans.[6]

Of these 27.5 million uninsured people, 5.7 percent are white, 17.7 percent are Hispanic or Latino, and 18.8 percent identified as Native American or Native Alaskan.[7] Additionally, an estimated 10.8

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[1] US Census Bureau et al., US Census Bureau (2019), https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2019/demo/p60-267.pdf.
[2] Roosa Tikkanen et al., "United States."
[3] Roosa Tikkanen et al., "United States."
[4] US Census Bureau et al., US Census Bureau.
[5] Sarah M. Lyon, Ivor S. Douglas, and Colin R. Cooke, "Medicaid Expansion under the Affordable Care Act. Implications for Insurance-Related Disparities in Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep," *Annals of the American Thoracic Society* 11, no. 4 (May 11, 2014): 661–67, https://doi.org/10.1513/annalsats.201402-072ps.
[6] US Census Bureau et al., US Census Bureau.
[7] "Census Bureau Releases New Report on Health Insurance by Race and Hispanic Origin," *United States Census Bureau* (Patricia Ramos, November 22, 2022), United States Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/health-insurance-by-

percent of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders living in the United States had no health coverage, and 10.9 percent of Black Americans had no coverage.[8] It is also reported that people of color who are insured receive worse care than most white Americans, often receiving care that is an estimated 35 percent worse than their white counterparts, judged by overall health outcomes.[9] The current American healthcare system results in many federal programs overlooking many minorities and low-income families. These significant disparities in nationwide coverage are why so many Americans argue that the American healthcare system is broken. If universal healthcare were implemented in the US, not only would access to care and insurance increase for low-income families, but universal healthcare would also standardize the basic level of care across racial and ethnic lines in a capacity that private insurers cannot. However, in many specific regions of the country, insurers hold prejudices against certain racial and ethnic groups that could cloud their judgment when choosing whether or not to insure a person for a reasonable price based on an applicant's economic status. When insurers only offer incredibly high prices that are out of an American's income level, based on subconscious prejudices, companies exclude many Americans. These subconscious prejudices go beyond the typical factors considered when creating prices for health care plans, including age, in what region of a state an individual resides in, whether or not the individual smokes, and the number of people in an individual's family.[10]

Furthermore, US healthcare costs are exceptionally high, especially compared to other similarly developed nations. In 2021, US health expenditures per capita were $12,914, compared to a global average of $6,125.[11] Despite the high costs of healthcare, Americans do not receive the highest possible quality care.[12] The US scores

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race.html#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20uninsured%20rate%20in,in%20the%20nation%20at%2017.7%25.

[8] Tikkanen et al., "United States."

[9] Tikkanen et al., "United States."

[10] Tikkanen et al., "United States."

[11] Matthew McGough et al., "How Does Health Spending in the US Compare to Other Countries?," Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker, February 15, 2023, https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/health-spending-u-s-compare-countries/#GDP%20per%20capita%20and%20health%20consumption%20spending%20per%20capita,%202021%20(U.S.%20dollars,%20PPP%20adjusted).

[12] Roosa Tikkanen and Melinda K Abrams, "US Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2019: Higher Spending, Worse Outcomes?," US Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2019 | Commonwealth Fund, January 30, 2020, https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2020/jan/us-health-care-global-perspective-2019?gclid=Cj0KCQjw7pKFBhDUARIsAFUoMDbVZBN2PrzOlYBZvEe8qGs1PvCiAAxHemHZb_FjjCnAbSdQ0LSPChYaAmLYEALw_wcB.

significantly lower than other industrialized countries on many critical health issues, including increased maternal mortality, suicide rates, avoidable hospital visits, and life expectancy.[13] These other developed countries have been able to standardize the level of care across their respective nations to ensure that what citizens give up financially for a universal healthcare system is made up for with high-quality treatment.

The combination of high percentages of uninsured people and increased healthcare costs can leave many citizens on the brink of bankruptcy if they or a family member develops a severe illness. Even Americans with health insurance often have to pay high out-of-pocket fees after their insurance plan is applied to the costs of a medical procedure or service. In Oregon, the price of a tonsillectomy, a simple and common surgery in the US, is $7,467 without insurance at an outpatient center.[14] For a low-income individual or family, the cost of this surgery is far too great. Even with insurance, a tonsillectomy would cost, on an average insurance plan, $3,585.[15] Still, with the price cut, that monetary commitment can be a significant financial decision for Americans.

Beyond the differences in treatment for minority groups in the US, the federal government also fails to contain healthcare expenditures at reasonable prices that would follow similar procedural expenses in other countries. One of the attempts made by the US government was signed into law in March 2010 by President Obama. Colloquially known as Obamacare, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), according to the US Department of Health and Human Services, has three primary goals. The first of these goals is to grant access to affordable health insurance to more significant numbers of people. In states where the Medicare expansions have been implemented, the ACA allows consumers to take advantage of subsidies that lower insurance costs for household incomes between 100 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).[16,17] The

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[13] Rakesh Khurna, "The Drive for Women's Health Equity," *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health* (blog), March 22, 2023, https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/deans-office/2023/03/22/the-drive-for-womens-health-equity/.

[14] "Cost of Tonsil and Adenoid Removal by State | Sidecar Health," Sidecar Health, 2022, https://cost.sidecarhealth.com/ts/tonsil-and-adenoid-removal-cost-by-state.

[15] "How Much Does a Tonsillectomy Cost? – Amino," Amino, 2019, https://help.amino.com/hc/en-us/articles/360009877533-How-much-does-a-tonsillectomy-cost-.

[16] Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and William Russo, US Department of Health and Human Services § (2022), https://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/about-the-aca/index.html.

[17] In the 48 continental states the 2023 FPL for a single person is an income of 14,580 USD. For an average family of four the FPL income is 30,000 USD. Each additional person is worth 5,140 USD. If a household's income falls between 100 and 400

second intention of the ACA was to grow the Medicaid program to cover all adults beneath 138 percent of the FPL.[18] Since it was left up to the government of each state to determine whether or not these expansions would be implemented, as of 2023, ten states have refused to adopt Medicaid expansions, and two states have adopted the expansions but have yet to implement them. As a result of failing to implement these expansions, millions of citizens have fallen into the coverage gap. An estimated 1.9 million individuals fall into the coverage gap in the ten states yet to adopt the expansions. Adults within the coverage gap have incomes that fall above their state's eligibility for Medicaid but below the FPL.[19] When the ACA was first enacted, it was not anticipated that individual states could opt out of any future Medicaid expansions; therefore, no subsidies are available for people with incomes below the FPL. The final goal of the ACA was to "support innovative medical care delivery methods designed to lower the costs of healthcare generally."[20]

Despite the intentions of the ACA, as stated by the HHS, in 2018, eight years after the ACA was signed into law, health expenditures in the US were $11,172; however, costs increased annually between 4.2 percent and 5.8 percent over the past five years.[21] Despite the measures taken to reduce expenditures, in 2021, the United States' health consumption expenditures per capita rose to $12,914.[22] Further, the ACA required all adults in the US to obtain health insurance or pay a hefty tax fine.[23] This mandate isolated low-income families and individuals in many ways. First, low-income citizens would suffer either way in this system because if an uninsured individual or any family member has a chronic illness, an insurance agency could refuse to offer them coverage. Second, low-income families who can obtain a health coverage plan often struggle to raise the necessary funds. If for-profit insurance agencies repeatedly turn down low-income citizens, there will be no way for them to obtain health insurance, leaving them with a hefty

percent of the FPL that household would qualify for Medicaid. (https://www.healthinsurance.org/glossary/federal-poverty-level/)
[18] Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and William Russo, US Department of Health and Human Services
[19] Tikkanen et al., "United States."
[20] Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and William Russo, US Department of Health and Human Services § (2022), https://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/about-the-aca/index.html.
[21] M. Hartman et al., "National Health Care Spending in 2018: Growth Driven by Accelerations in Medicare and Private Insurance Spending," *Health Affairs* 39, no.1 (Jan. 2020): 8–17.
[22] Matthew McGough et al., "Health Spending in the US"
[23] Matthew Fiedler, "The ACA's Individual Mandate in Retrospect: What Did It Do, and Where Do We Go from Here?," *Health Affairs* 39, no. 3 (March 1, 2020): 429–35, https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.01433.

fine for which they will also be unable to obtain the money. In 2017, Congress eliminated the ACA insurance mandate, deeming it unconstitutional; however, at the end of the mandate, in a healthcare system managed only by for-profit insurance agencies, there are too many risks for low-income Americans when the government imposes such strict mandates.

Rooted in the Past: Americans' Current Fears of a Socialized Healthcare System

While most Americans are eager for a new healthcare system, a segment of the population fears what universal coverage would entail in the US. These fears include new and sudden heavy costs, system inefficiency, and potentially excessive government control. Americans developed these fears by looking to existing sources of universal healthcare that are already in practice around the globe. American critics of universal healthcare say that introducing a universal coverage system is impractical for the country.[24] Furthermore, Americans already hold certain stigmas about the efficiency and capability of the existing bureaucracy. Currently, government agencies are associated with low-ambition employees putting in minimum effort to help clients. Translate this ideology to healthcare, and Americans fear these disgruntled employees will manage the healthcare system. Moreover, Americans tend to pursue their medical choices through a series of emotional responses; this is why the US alone spends more money on life-prolonging technology than most industrialized countries worldwide.[25] These same emotional responses drive up the predicted costs of universal health coverage.

In the past, proposals for universal healthcare in the US have called for increased taxes to implement a new system. One of these proposals included a 7.5 percent payroll tax increase and a 4 percent income tax increase on all Americans; however, higher-income Americans would be faced with higher taxes.[26] It was determined that if the US were to implement entirely universal health coverage, the costs

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[24] Gabriel Zieff et al., "Universal Healthcare in the United States of America: A Healthy Debate," *Medicina* 56, no. 11 (November 30, 2020): 580, https://doi.org/10.3390/medicina56110580.

[25] Neumann, Peter J., and Milton C. Weinsten. "The Diffusion of New Technology: Costs and Benefits to Health Care." US National Library of Medicine, January 1, 1991. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK234309/.

[26] Zieff et al., "A Healthy Debate."

would range from $1.1 to $2.1 trillion a year over the next ten years.[27] With these projections, however, the US would still not be able to cover the cost of an entirely socialized healthcare system even with the money obtained through increased taxes.

Furthermore, Americans fear that a completely universal coverage system would significantly increase hospital and emergency room wait times.[28] These arguments stem from US perceptions of Canada, where in 2013, patients waited 14-40 weeks to receive an operation or consultation.[29] If the US were to implement universal health care, wait times would likely increase in the short term as there is predicted to be a steep increase in primary care visits once the economic barrier is removed.[30] This fear is most likely rooted in the reality behind the current government-run agencies in America. For example, American post offices and DMVs are traditionally characterized by long wait times and impersonal care. To replace private and personalized healthcare with a model designed to function strictly under government control leaves Americans with the impression that receiving medical care would become the same as waiting a long period just to be greeted at the post office by a disgruntled government employee.

Despite the cost projections, implementing universal healthcare can potentially lower the predicted wait times. In the US, 55 percent of emergency room visits are made by the uninsured diabetic population, accounting for significantly more care time and emergency room visits than their insured counterparts.[31] Furthermore, similar to diabetes, patients diagnosed with hypertension spend $2,000 more than the average American without hypertension.[32] The final most common chronic disease in the US is obesity. In 2022, experts estimated that the costs of loss of productivity are $66 billion annually.[33] Each uninsured sector of the population affected by diabetes, hypertension, and obesity

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[27] Office of the Actuary, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services § (2022), https://www.cms.gov/files/document/national-health-expenditure-projections-2021-30-growth-moderate-covid-19-impacts-wane.pdf.

[28] Donald W. Light, "Universal Health Care: Lessons from the British Experience," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 25–30, https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.93.1.25.

[29] Bacchus Barua and Nadeem Esmail, "Waiting Your Turn: Wait Times for Health Care in Canada, 2013 Report," *Social Science Research Network* (2013), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2346373.

[30] Zieff et al., "A Healthy Debate."

[31] Zieff et al., "A Healthy Debate."

[32] Zieff et al., "A Healthy Debate."

[33] Ross Hammond and Ruth Levine, "The Economic Impact of Obesity in the United States," *Diabetes, Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity: Targets and Therapy*, 2010, 285–95, https://doi.org/10.2147/dmsott.s7384

almost entirely consists of people from a low socio-economic status without access to quality healthcare, which ultimately lowers life expectancy and other health outcomes.[34,35] Universal health coverage in the US would enable prevention methods with capabilities to lower the risks associated with these chronic diseases, increasing the overall public health and economic productivity of the US. Furthermore, preventive measures provided to the general public would limit the costs associated with an unhealthy, uninsured population.[36] One recent study conducted under the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey shows that if an estimated 18 percent more of the population of elementary school children in the US were to participate in just 75 minutes of exercise per week, these children will be able to save over $21.9 billion in medical costs and productivity over their lifetimes.[37] Another possible preventive measure would include investing just $10 per person annually into community-based educational programs to combat poor nutrition, the side effects and consequences of smoking, and physical inactivity in the US is estimated to save more than $16 billion annually within the first five years, returning $5.60 for every dollar spent.[38] If the US were to implement an entirely universal healthcare system, it was estimated that the costs would equal about $1.1 to $2.1 trillion.[39] Additionally, if the US were to enact the projected educational programs above, these estimated costs would drop from the trillions of dollars to the billions.

Hypothetically, a few years after universal healthcare is implemented, Americans could reap significant economic benefits. One of these benefits is increased profitability among hospitals that pay for the treatment of the uninsured. In America's current healthcare system, all hospitals are required to provide emergency care to uninsured patients and others who cannot pay the fees; because of this, hospitals must increase the prices of smaller operations or lower other expenditures. In a universal healthcare system, hospitals would no longer have to raise prices if all emergency patients could afford the operations they

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[34] Bing Leng et al., "Socioeconomic Status and Hypertension," *Journal of Hypertension* 33, no. 2 (February 2015): 221–29, https://doi.org/10.1097/hjh.0000000000000428.
[35] Fred C. Pampel, Patrick M. Krueger, and Justin T. Denney, "Socioeconomic Disparities in Health Behaviors," *Annual Review of Sociology* 36, no. 1 (April 1, 2010): 349–70, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102529.
[36] Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC § (2022), https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/programs-impact/pop/diabetes.htm.
[37] Bruce Y. Lee et al., "Modeling the Economic and Health Impact of Increasing Children's Physical Activity in the United States," *Health Affairs* 36, no. 5 (May 1, 2017): 902–8, https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2016.1315.
[38] Lee et al., "Increasing Physical Activity in the United States," 902–8
[39] Lee et al., "Increasing Physical Activity in the United States," 902–8

receive.[40] Universal healthcare also has the potential to increase the profitability of small businesses by eliminating what companies must spend on health coverage for employees.

Finally, Americans have always opposed the interference of some higher power of control, whether a monarchy or some other clerical power. These are the ideals on which the country was founded; as said in the Declaration of Independence, "To secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."[41] Therefore, Americans naturally fear government interference with healthcare and coverage, which has ultimately led to an absence of the traditional class system. Therefore, because of the absence of an aristocracy and its resulting social hierarchies in America, there is no self-identified working class. If Americans were to form a laboring class, it would function similarly to labor unions. These unions have the potential to hold immense political influence over the country for a few specific reasons. The first is that labor unions are composed of vast numbers of members with high levels of functionality and organization; because of this, unions can and do force externalities on the public, for example, through strikes, pickets, and protests. In the past, strikes, pickets, and protests organized by labor unions have forced employers to meet their demands: higher wages, safer working conditions, and especially universal health coverage.[42] Suppose a working-class party could be formed with the same significant quantity of members and high levels of organization. In that case, this party could direct its power in the political realm to equally represent its members' well-being, including increased wages, safe working conditions, and even universal health coverage.

Without any laboring class to identify their political party, America has fallen into a two-party system, focused almost entirely on the self-identified middle class, which consists of the low socio-economic Americans that make up a typical labor class. Because of the excess of free land at the nation's founding, many low-income Americans own their land; the number of low-income Americans who

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[40] Research Department and Donald Hirasuna, Universal Health Coverage: An Economist's perspective § (2007).
[41] Thomas Jefferson et al., "The Declaration of Independence," *National Archives* (2023), https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript#:~:text=We%20hold%20these%20truths%20to,their%20just%20powers%20from%20the
[42] Horacio A Larreguy, Pablo Querubin, and Cesar E Montiel Olea, "The Role of Labor Unions as Political Machines: Evidence from the Case of the Mexican Teachers' Union," *Harvard* (2014), https://www.iq.harvard.edu/files/iqss/files/updated_march_6_paper.pdf.

own their land is substantially greater than that in most industrialized nations worldwide.[43] Another possible explanation for the absence of a working class in America lies in the nation's deep-rooted history of racial segregation. The country's inability to bring Black and Hispanic laborers together with their white counterparts has left the laboring portion of the population divided and unable to gain the political enthusiasm necessary to form a political party. These low-income, blue-collar Black, white, and Hispanic Americans make up an estimated 34.3 percent of the uninsured population of 27.5 million US citizens.[44,45] It is also reported that people of color who are insured receive worse care than most white Americans, often receiving care that is an estimated 35 percent worse than their white counterparts.[46] Forming a working-class party would allow this historically underrepresented segment of the population to advocate in the world of politics for what they need to ensure that they can stay healthy: universal health coverage.

Healthcare Systems around the Globe: The Three Models of Universal Healthcare

Skeptics in the United States argue that the country is too large with too many distinct cultural identities to implement a universal healthcare system; however, many developed countries, which also have diverse populations, have been able to implement healthcare systems that encompass each unique culture represented in their own country. Understanding how these diverse nations have each been able to put variations of socialized healthcare into practice is crucial. Great Britain, Germany, and Canada are all home to an array of ethnic groups benefiting from their countries' different health coverage systems.

Great Britain, Spain, and New Zealand utilize the Beveridge Model of health coverage, which was founded and initially implemented in Great Britain.[47] The Beveridge Model, named after Sir William Beveridge, is a system in which the government finances and provides healthcare through tax payments, similar to local American police forces

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[43] Zieff et al., "A Healthy Debate."

[44] "Census Bureau Releases New Report on Health Insurance by Race and Hispanic Origin."

[45] Tikkanen et al., "United States."

[46] Tikkanen et al., "United States."

[47] Mimi Chung, "Health Care Reform: Learning from Other Major Health Care Systems – Princeton Public Health Review," Princeton University, December 2, 2017, https://pphr.princeton.edu/2017/12/02/unhealthy-health-care-a-cursory-overview-of-major-health-care-systems/.

and libraries.[48] The government is the single-payer in the Beveridge system, eliminating competition between insurance companies and keeping costs relatively low. This system eliminates out-of-pocket fees, making services free at the point of service. Furthermore, this system guarantees that everyone who is a citizen is given access to free, quality healthcare, as the Beveridge system prioritizes health as a human right.

In a system such as the Beveridge Model, Americans' fears are likely to become a reality. In Great Britain, the average wait time for hospital-based care is 46 days; however, some patients wait up to a year to receive a consultation.[49] Because every citizen is guaranteed access to healthcare, many citizens over-utilize the system, often receiving unnecessary operations and procedures at no cost.[50] If a single-payer system were to be implemented in the US, this problem would likely begin in the US, causing the demand for all operations, even unnecessary ones, to increase and also cause the price of healthcare to increase because patients would believe that at the point of service, the operation would be free when it would end up costing the country even more money. Another potential issue with the Beveridge Model is that if a war, natural disaster, or any change in priority were to occur in the country, the government could potentially divert funds from healthcare to aid in the event impacting the country.

In regions of Europe where the Beveridge Model has not spread, developed countries often choose to implement the Bismarck Model of healthcare. Near the end of the nineteenth century, this model was created by the Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Since the model's creation, it has been implemented in Germany, Belgium, Japan, and Switzerland.[51] The Bismarck model employs an insurance system funded jointly by employers and employees through compulsory payroll deductions, making this system multi-payer.[52] Citizens who are employed have access to "sickness funds" created by these payroll deductions. Additionally, private insurance companies must cover every employed

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[48] T. R. Reid, *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care*, *PBS* (Thorndike Press/Gale, Cengage Learning, 2010), https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/sickaroundtheworld/countries/models.html.

[49] Light, "Universal Health Care: Lessons from the British Experience."

[50] Chung, "Major Health Care Systems."

[51] Chung, "Major Health Care Systems."

[52] Compulsory payroll deductions are mandatory tax deductions taken out of an employee's paycheck. In the US, compulsory payroll deductions include federal income tax, state income tax, local tax, court-ordered child support payments, or the social security tax. (Mike Kappel, "What Are Payroll Deductions?: Mandatory & Voluntary Deductions," Patriot Software, December 16, 2022, https://www.patriotsoftware.com/blog/payroll/an-overview-of-payroll-deductions/.)

person, regardless of any pre-existing conditions. The government controls insurance prices, leaving insurance companies to make no profit. This allows governments to exercise a similar amount of control over costs as those in the Beveridge Model. However, the Bismarck Model was not founded to be a form of universal healthcare because it does not cover unemployed citizens who cannot contribute to the system, leaving a potentially large uninsured population vulnerable to high medical expenses on their own.[53,54]

If the Bismarck model were to be employed in the US, many Americans' fears would not accompany it; however, the system does raise several issues, as well as several possible benefits. One issue with the Bismarck Model is that the system would fail to cover 5.7 million unemployed US citizens.[55] While this is a significantly smaller number than the currently uninsured population, the Bismarck model would leave the poorest and most in need of the medical care sector of the population uncovered. However, an argument can be made that the employment of the Bismarck system would urge Americans to seek employment opportunities and potentially encourage business owners to seek out new ways to create these employment opportunities. If this were to become true, the unemployment rate would drop from its current rate of 3.7 percent.[56] Another potential issue raised with the Bismarck Model would be how to cover citizens who cannot work due to an existing medical condition or old age, as the Bismarck system would not cover these sectors of the population. If this system were to be implemented in the US, one possible solution would be to maintain disability coverage and the Medicaid aspects, which cover retired Americans.

Canada, Taiwan, and South Korea all employ a National Health Insurance Model, which is a mix of both the Beveridge and the Bismarck Models, taking the single-payer aspect from the Beveridge system and the private providers from the Bismarck Model. Universal insurance, like in the Bismarck model, collects no profit and cannot deny a citizen based on an existing health condition. Countries with a National Health Insurance model can negotiate and severely decrease the shelf prices of pharmaceuticals. Countries with this model also lower costs by limiting the specific medical services they will provide, allowing space for a

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[53] Chung, "Major Health Care Systems."

[54] Reid, *The Healing of America.*

[55] "The Employment Situation – April 2023," *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, May 5, 2023, US Department of Labor, https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf.

[56] "The Employment Situation – April 2023," *Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

private sector within the country.[57] The inclusion of a private sector within the US is essential to not only eradicate Americans' fears of long wait times but also allow for an additional economic boost within the country.

Furthermore, within the National Health Insurance Model, many Americans' fears of system inefficiency, high costs, and excessive government control are all addressed and resolved. Whereas in a Beveridge system, patients may wait up to a year for care, the National Health Insurance Model would allow those who can afford private health services to do so, freeing up wait times for those who cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket prices at private institutions. While the government would pay some significant upfront costs, the impact of these prices would be cushioned by an increase in taxes that would go towards funding a private insurance mechanism. With a National Health Insurance Model applying both private and public health institutions, Americans would have the choice of whether or not to receive care from the government, thus eliminating the fear of too much government control by letting each taxpayer choose what type of care they want to receive.

In a 2010 study, the Commonwealth Fund found that nations that implemented these three systems of healthcare, outrank the US tenfold.[58] In comparison to six countries – Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, and Great Britain – the US consistently underperforms in general health outcomes. The research was based on access to care, quality of care, efficiency, equity, and the quality of the lives of citizens. Because of the high costs of healthcare in the US, many citizens will go without care far more frequently than in the other six countries. Americans with health issues were the most likely to report that their lack of access to care was due to high costs, however, in other countries, such as Great Britain which employs the Beveridge Model, citizens are faced with no financial burden but instead faced with long wait-times to receive care.[59] However, in a Bismarck country such as Germany, these wait times are limited and are simultaneous with little to no out-of-pocket fees. As for the quality of care, the US fares the best on provision. However, the country scores significantly low on chronic care management and coordinated, safe care pulling down the overall

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[57] Reid, *The Healing of America.*
[58] Karen David, Cathy Schoen, and Kristof Stremikis. "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: How the Performance of the US Health Care System Compares Internationally, 2010 Update." Commonwealth Fund, June 23, 2010. https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/fund-reports/2010/jun/mirror-mirror-wall-how-performance-us-health-care-system.
[59] Karen Davis, et al., "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall"

score for the US in this category. Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain can maintain a higher ranking than the US in quality of care because they have been able to utilize information technology for a longer period, enhancing physicians' care of patients.[60] In the efficiency category, the US ranks last overall because of the nation's poor performance on measures of national health expenditures, use of information technology, rehospitalization, administrative costs, and duplicative medical testing. In Germany and the Netherlands, survey respondents showed that citizens in each country are less likely to be admitted to emergency rooms for a condition that could have been treated by a regular physician.[61] As for equity, the US continues to maintain the lowest ranking. Beyond the apparent racial disparities in the American healthcare system, below-average income citizens in America are more likely than their foreign counterparts to not visit a physician when sick, not receive a recommended test, treatment, or follow-up care, not fill a prescription, or not see a dentist when needed all because of the costs in America.[62] The US again ranks last overall for the quality of life their citizens lead based on healthcare, boasting death rates 25 to 50 percent higher than the other six countries in 2010, yet similar rates continue into 2024.[63,64] American hospitals and healthcare centers are dedicated to improving care in the US as well as safety and quality, however, the US could learn from the innovations of universal healthcare in foreign developed nations.

The Beveridge, Bismarck, and National Health Insurance Models, if implemented in the US, would all provide improvements to the current healthcare system. The Beveridge and Bismarck Models would standardize healthcare nationwide, giving every citizen equal quality of care. The National Health Insurance Model would also standardize care across public and private institutions respectively. Most likely, the citizens willing to pay more at a private institution would receive higher quality care than citizens who opt to go to a public institution to receive care. Furthermore, each healthcare model can potentially provide economic benefits for America. The Beveridge Model would control the costs coming from the general population based on income bracket, standardizing what citizens would contribute. However, under this system, there is a vast opportunity for Americans to overutilize the

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[60] Karen Davis, et al., "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall"
[61] Karen Davis, et al., "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall."
[62] Karen Davis, et al., "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall."
[63] Karen Davis, et al., "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall."
[64] Bradley Sawyer and Daniel McDermott. "How Do Mortality Rates in the US Compare to Other Countries?" *Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker*, November 16, 2021. https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/mortality-rates-u-s-compare-countries/.

system, receiving unnecessary operations and causing taxes to increase. In the Bismarck Model, the government would standardize the federal payroll deductions to ensure every citizen pays a fair amount based on income level. Furthermore, the Beveridge Model, which employs private insurers, does not allow for unnecessary operations, as the Bismarck Model does. Therefore, payroll deduction under the Bismarck system would only increase due to natural inflation. The National Health Insurance Model would also provide economic benefits to both the American people and their government. An increase in taxes collected by the federal government would allow citizens to face zero costs at the point of service and also cushion the upfront costs the government would face. Further, these taxes would also provide for a national non-profit private insurance system for citizens who choose to go to a private institution. Beyond economic elements, each model would provide an increase in overall healthcare outcomes for Americans. Standardized access to healthcare would allow citizens previously unable to visit a physician to do so regularly while also allowing for government-funded education-based platforms to help the populace understand common chronic diseases and how to prevent/remedy them.

Conclusion

"Inequitable" and "non-inclusive" are the two best words that could be used to describe the current American healthcare system. Public and private policies have repeatedly excluded members of the low-income and minority populations in the US. Even with these disparities, which leave 27.5 million citizens uninsured, American citizens spend more on often low-quality healthcare than any other industrialized nation.[65] Because of the system's poor outcomes, Americans label it as broken and in need of change. Yet, most Americans still hold profound reservations about a universal healthcare system that has worked very well in every other developed nation around the globe. American skeptics claim that implementing a universal healthcare system would be expensive, inefficient, and allow the government to take too much control over people's lives. Americans have learned these fears by focusing only on the worst aspects of healthcare systems in other developed countries; however, many countries do not have these issues because there are several types of universal healthcare that each must be modified to fit a nation's economic standing and diverse population. The Beveridge Model, the Bismarck Model, and the National Health Insurance Model are all effective forms of universal healthcare. The National Health Insurance Model, a combination of both the Beveridge and Bismarck Models, answers all of America's fears about universal

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[65] US Census Bureau et al., US Census Bureau §

healthcare. If the National Health Insurance Model were to be enacted in the US, high up-front costs for the government would be softened by an increase in taxes; citizens could avoid and decrease wait times by opting to go to a private practice instead of a public, government-owned institution; and all citizens would be able to be covered by a private, non-profit insurance company in a single-payer manner. In conclusion, the US. could implement a universal healthcare system. To do so, however, the US government would need to put the matter to a national vote and slowly but surely implement a healthcare system that would provide equal care and opportunities for the entirety of the American population.

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Politics

Identity Politics and Campaign Strategy Re-Formation

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Abstract

Why do political candidates choose to engage in identity politics, and how does this decision impact the effectiveness of their campaigns? This paper examines the use of identity politics through political campaigns in India, Indonesia, and Malaysia to explore how candidates use the identity of their voters as a tool in campaigning. The paper argues that candidates in these case studies have two possible ways to gain voters' support: either through a campaign based on policy issues (e.g., economics) or one centered on identity politics (an exclusive political alliance formed by a social identifier). This paper asserts that candidates turn to identity politics when they need to try a new method to revitalize their campaign because their policy platform fails to capture the attention of a large enough voter group. The case studies that follow assess the use of religious rhetoric by the Bharatiya Janata Party in India (1980-2014), the competing Islamic and Christian candidates vying for gubernatorial and presidential power in Indonesia (2014-2019), and the rise of the Perikatan Nasional Party in Malaysia (2008-2020). By looking at the successful election outcomes of these case studies, this paper argues that identity politics can be an effective campaign strategy for candidates and parties struggling with their current approach.

Introduction

In 1992, Muslims and Hindus fought against each other in India when a riot broke out at the Babri Masjid, resulting in the deaths of 2000 Hindus and Muslims; however, this protest was not what it may have initially appeared to be.[1] Although the event seemed like a spontaneous act of inter-religious hatred, the rally was part of a strategic campaign strategy of one of India's political parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The party had been trying to find a way to gain majority control in parliament for over 20 years. In these protests, the BJP tried a new strategy of mobilizing the Hindu community by engaging in identity politics to form a bond with voters around an issue of religious debate: whether a historic mosque should be replaced with a Hindu temple.[2]

The 1992 conflict between Hindus and Muslims over the Babri Masjid mosque is one example of politicians strategically engaging in identity politics. The conflict was vital to the BJP's campaign platform because of its timing, the bond it created between the party and voters, and the successful election outcome of gaining more seats in office due to a stronger connection with the Hindu voter base. By exploring current research on identity politics and introducing new ideas about the timing and outcome of cultivated religious dissension, this paper explains why the BJP's actions at the Babri Masjid were effective and argues for the strategic benefits of undertaking this method of identity conflict in other scenarios.

This paper examines three case studies of religious conflict that a candidate created by using identity politics as part of their campaign strategy. Using religion as an example of how politicians engage in identity politics by creating religious conflict leading up to elections, the case studies illustrate how identity conflict is a powerful way to connect with voters. Research shows that religion is used not as justification for the candidate's policy but rather as a source of debate to create an "us vs. them" mentality and produce a strong feeling of affinity with the "us" group. This source of affinity explains why intentionally creating religious conflict is vital in gaining voters' support. Candidates use religious statements to create a solidified "political affinity group" with voters of the same identity. They use religious rhetoric to convert policy

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[1] The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/BJP_In_Power_final.pdf.
[2] Sircar, Neelanjan. "Religion-as-Ethnicity and the Emerging Hindu Vote in India." *Studies in Indian Politics* 10, no. 1 (2022): 79–92. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1177/23210230221082824.

voters to identity-based voters who change their political affiliation because of religious sentiment.

This paper introduces and highlights two important concepts: the timing and outcome of applying this strategy of identity politics. Research shows that candidates have two ways to gain voters' support: through policy or identity issues. Through the case studies, this paper asserts that candidates use identity politics when their policy-based campaign fails to gain enough voters' support and needs help revitalizing their campaign. Candidates risk losing their current voters by creating religious conflict using the above strategy, hoping to create a new bond with voters. This strategy is examined through three case studies: the rise of the BJP in India (1980-2014), the Christian-Muslim political conflict in Indonesia (2014-2019), and the rise of the Perikatan Nasional Party in Malaysia (2008-2020). By looking at the successful election outcomes of political candidates engaging in identity politics and religious conflict to form a connection with voters, I claim that identity politics is a successful strategy when applied at the right time.

Selection of Case Studies

After determining that religious polarization is a repeated form of identity politics and an effective way of mobilizing voters, a subset of countries with known religious conflicts was selected to examine the strategy in more detail. The research process included looking to see where religion was used in political campaigns and voter mobilization strategies. This part of the literature review looked at the following countries: the United States, Mexico, Canada, South Korea, the United Kingdom, India, Australia, Norway, Japan, Taiwan, Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Indonesia, India, and Malaysia are repeated examples of countries where a politician started a religious conflict, leading to an election victory. All three of these countries are countries where Islam is a prevalent religion. This paper is not attempting to be Islamophobic or discriminatory by selecting these countries. These countries are not chosen for the beliefs within them – they are selected because of the perceived use of identity politics and religious conflict in campaign strategy.

In the preliminary research review on religion and identity politics in India, Indonesia, and Malaysia, there is already a lot of material about a candidate's religious rhetoric impacting how a voter chooses to change their vote based on the religious beliefs they align with. Although

political historians like Leo Suryadinata, S.S Friedman, and James Chin have studied the overall political strategy of politicians creating religious conflict through religious rhetoric to sway voters to take a side in the conflict and vote for the corresponding party, there is little research about the election outcome of this strategy.[3] Additionally, there is little current research about the timing of when a candidate chooses to leave behind their policy-based campaign and transition to mobilizing voters through their religious affiliation and beliefs.

Literature Review

Over the last few decades, Mary Bernstein, a sociologist studying political movements and identity since 1997, has been trying to understand the best approach to defining identity politics.[4] In her 2005 article "Identity Politics," Bernstein states that the term is used widely throughout the humanities and social sciences to refer to the intersection between social identity (e.g. race, gender, religion, class) and political affiliation in a country's political system.[5] Bernstein highlights the evolution of the term's definition, which helps contextualize how this paper approaches understanding identity politics.[6] In 1979, Renee Anspach, a sociologist studying qualitative approaches to understanding foreign cultures, was the first to use the term identity politics to refer to a group of people's activism.[7] Over the next decade, Marc Ross, a political historian of identity politics, ethnicity, and gender, came up with a new definition of identity politics: ethnicity as a contemporary form of politics.[8] In the 1990s, Meznaric and Alund, historical sociologists studying conflict, identity, and politics, described identity politics as violent ethnic conflict and nationalism.[9]

Bernstein considers these historical perceptions when she defines the concept in a 2018 paper as "any mobilization related to politics,

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[3] Identity Politics in Indonesia: The Meliana Case - iseas–Yusof Ishak ... Accessed August 22, 2023.
https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2019_4.pdf.

[4] Bernstein, Mary. "Identity Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31, no. 1 (2005): 47–74. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100054.

[5] Bernstein, Mary. "Identity Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31, no. 1 (2005): 47–74. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100054.

[6] Bernstein, Mary. "Identity Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31, no. 1 (2005): 47–74. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100054.

[7] Bernstein, Mary. "Identity Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31, no. 1 (2005): 47–74. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100054.

[8] Bernstein, Mary. "Identity Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31, no. 1 (2005): 47–74. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100054.

[9] Bernstein, Mary. "Identity Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31, no. 1 (2005): 47–74. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100054.

culture, and identity."[10] This paper adopts Bernstein's overarching definition and slightly modifies it: identity politics is the interaction between identity and politics in political affairs where voters are mobilized because of their identities and sometimes forced into a situation of ethnic conflict.

In 2019, political economists Tim Besley and Torsten Persson developed a model of electoral competition and identity formation.[11] Although hypothetical, the model argues that there is a connection between social identity, the mobilization of voters based on identity, and a voter's preference for or against a candidate of a specific identity. The model illustrates the connection between the mobilization of voters in identity politics and how this impacts a voter's views. Political historians Vaara, Tienari, and Koveshnikov argue that a bond forms between voters and the candidates because of voter mobilization based on social identity in their study in 2019.[12] They determine that through identity politics, "us vs. them" situations develop where voters become so aligned with the candidate that aligns with their identity. Voters are willing to support the candidate of the same social identifier in an "identity conflict" against the other group.

However, understanding identity politics in theory differs from considering what it looks like in practice. Researchers have examined caste and how a class-based connection between candidates and voters impacts who voters vote for. For example, cultural anthropologist Steven Folmar examined identity politics in Nepal in a 2007 paper.[13] In 2021, historians Arefin and Ritu did the same and determined how intentionally creating religious dissension creates an "us vs. them" relationship where politicians bond with voters through religious rhetoric.[14]

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[10] Bernstein, Mary. "Identity Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31, no. 1 (2005): 47–74. Accessed August 22, 2023.
https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100054.
[11] The Rise of Identity Politics - Association of Swedish Development ... Accessed August 22, 2023.
http://perseus.iies.su.se/~tpers/courses/politec2019/BesleyPersson190330.pdf.
[12] From Cultural Differences to Identity Politics ... - Wiley Online Library. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/joms.12517.
[13] Identity Politics among Dalits in Nepal - Macalester College. Accessed August 22, 2023.
https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1728&context=himalaya.
[14] Arefin, Md. Nazmul, and Nousheen Sharmila Ritu. "Addressing the Political Dynamics of Radicalization Leading to Religious Extremism in Bangladesh." *Simulacra*. Accessed August 22, 2023.
https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/simulacra/article/view/10543/5729.

Religious dissension can also provoke religious extremism. Religious extremism – violent or radical actions justified by religious beliefs – is used in religion-based identity politics. Historians Dodego and Witro studied this concept within Indonesia in 2016 and determined that Indonesian politicians used religious extremism and rhetoric to create conflict.[15]

The historical representations of religious issues within countries are an important reason why religion is a repeated form of identity politics. Psychologists Liu and Hilton researched that socially shared representations of history are essential in determining a people's identity and how politicians connect with this identity. In a 2005 article, they determined that historical narratives help us understand how politicians engage in identity politics and form a bond with voters.[16] For example, a country like India, with a history of religious conflict or religion in social affairs like independence movements, is suitable for a politician to engage in identity politics because religion is an important social issue that is already polarized.

Case Study I: Rise of the BJP In India

The significant rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to control the Indian government highlights how identity politics is an effective strategy. To provide context on the BJP's rise to power and the religious strategy employed by Modi, it is first essential to examine the political party system leading up to the BJP's victory in 2014.

Overview of India's Political System

India uses a parliamentary system with a president and prime minister. The prime minister of India is the leader of the party or political alliance with a majority in their government. Therefore, the prime minister represents the "winning" party and party ideology. India has six political parties, and some of them were founded on religious principles. There is the National People's Party, the Indian National Congress Party, the Communist Party of India, The Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, and the Aam Aadmi Party. According to recent census data by the Pew Research Center, 79 percent of Indians

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[15] View of the Islamic Moderation and the Prevention of Radicalism and Religious Extremism in Indonesia. Accessed September 3, 2023. https://jurnaldialog.kemenag.go.id/index.php/dialog/article/view/375/212.

[16] Liu, James H., and Denis J. Hilton. "How the Past Weighs on the Present: Social Representations of History and Their Role in Identity Politics." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 44, no. 4 (2005): 537–56. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1348/014466605x27162.

are Hindus, and 15 percent are Muslims.[17] The BJP's central belief is Hindutva, an ideology of spreading Hindu dominance. This belief aligns with the majority of the Hindu population in India. It was not until recently, in 2014, that the religious extremism and dissension of the BJP paid off in an election.

When the BJP was first founded in 1980, it controlled almost no seats in the Lok Sabha, the governing body of India. Although the founding ideology of the BJP was Hindutva or Hindu Nationalism – the expression of political and social thought based on religious values – the party did not actively use this Hindu religious ideology in its campaign to form a connection with voters until 1984. Additionally, it was not until 2014 that this strategy paid off in terms of positive election results. Before 2014, Hinduism was a founding ideology for the party's policy and unification but not their election platform strategy of reaching voters and gaining more parliamentary seats.[18]

Origins of the BJP's Success

In 1980, the Indian National Congress was the controlling political body. The party dates back to imperial times and was the principal group involved in Indian independence. Because of the historical ties of the ideas of Indian civilization and liberty to the Indian National Congress and Indian independence, it was challenging for the BJP to unseat the Indian National Congress from political control. However, over the next 30 years, the BJP was able to do so by employing religious sentiment to increase the religious divide between Muslims and Hindus, create a bond with the Hindu majority, and gain their support in vital political races and moments.[19]

In 1984, the BJP only acquired two seats in the Lok Sabha. At this time, the BJP considered whether it should adopt a more secular stance of "Gandhian socialism" or go the other direction and use its founding value of Hinduism as a source of mobilization to form a religious bond with voters. The BJP considered which campaign strategy it should adopt for ten years and changed it in 1992. The BJP ultimately chose the latter option and launched a campaign to build a Ram Hindu

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[17] Mitchell, Travis. "1. Population Growth and Religious Composition." Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, October 27, 2022. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/09/21/population-growth-and-religious-composition/.

[18] The BJP in power: Indian democracy and Religious Nationalism. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/BJP_In_Power_final.pdf.

[19] The BJP in power: Indian democracy and Religious Nationalism. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/BJP_In_Power_final.pdf.

temple at the Babri masjid mosque site. This Muslim Mosque was a historic tourist attraction and one of India's most well-known Islamic landmarks. The new Hindu temple would be constructed at the birthplace of the Hindu deity Ram, which was the exact location of this Muslim site. By making this idea part of their platform, the BJP intentionally created a religious divide to appeal to Hindu voters and see if this could help them gain more seats in government. They chose to do this when their policy strategy focusing on economic reform failed to please enough voters.[20]

By making this decision, the BJP made the "identity choice" and left behind their prior campaign ideas focused on economic reform and state welfare programs. By using religious sentiment to create conflict between Hindus and Muslims, the BJP formed a strong affinity with the Hindu majority. While doing this, the BJP risked not getting any votes from the Muslim population. They angered the Muslim population with this new method by planning to destroy their historic worship site. The BJP was okay with taking this risk because they could solidify and grow their Hindu voter base and win the election without the 15 percent of Muslim voters if enough Hindus voted for them. This strategy led to protests and violence across India when Hindus attacked Muslim people around the mosque and destroyed the mosque. Some Hindus were so dedicated to the BJP supporting the expansion of the Hindu religion and the demise of an Islamic site that they used violence to show their dedication to the party's ideas. The riot was an attack of religious extremism inspired by the BJP's idea to repurpose the mosque site and support the religious beliefs of the majority Hindu group.[21]

Results of the BJP's Strategy

Not only can one see the dedication of some of the BJP's followers to religious extremism, but one can also see it in the election outcome. Using identity politics during this election, the BJP formed a connection with new Hindus, encouraging them to vote for their party and leading the BJP to increase power from two seats to 81 in the Lok Sabha. This first step in the rise of the BJP highlights the success of identity politics in creating a public debate that leads to a strong bond with a group of voters and steadfast supporters.

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[20] The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/BJP_In_Power_final.pdf.
[21] The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/BJP_In_Power_final.pdf.

Over the next 20 years, the BJP did not gain or lose many seats, and the party was stagnant. It was time for the party's leaders to consider revitalizing their election strategy to grow the party. The second phase of the BJP's rise to power occurred during Narendra Modi's 2014 election for Prime Minister. The BJP secured the majority (272) of the seats in the Lok Sabha in 2014. The catalyst of the rise of the BJP was Modi's affiliation with Hindus in rooting out Islamic nationalism from the country. In 2002, Modi had an alleged role in the 2002 Gujarat riots, where 1000 Muslim people were killed. His strong stance on Hindutva and rooting out Muslim nationalism from the country characterized him as an "unapologetic Hindu nationalist." Modi's followers came to call him "the ruler of Hindu hearts." By participating in protests against Muslims and positioning himself as a dedicated Hindu, Modi extended the divide between Hindus and Muslims and aligned with the majority group of Hindus in "us vs. them" dynamics. This choice of strategic religious dissent and the bond with voters he formed by positioning himself this way led him to gain the support of the public. Over the next ten years, Modi ran for higher-level positions in government. In 2014, he ran for Prime Minister.[22]

2014 Election and Strategy Results

In the 2014 election, Modi won the race for Prime Minister, and the BJP came to control the government. His success in bringing the BJP to majority control follows the same theme as the initial rise of the BJP because he intentionally created religious conflict and polarized issues toward alignment with the Hindus' opinions in his successful campaign strategy. Political historians have coined the term "the emerging Hindu vote" to describe the role of religious rhetoric and appeal as the BJP's primary cause of campaign success. The rise of the BJP from no seats to control of the government from 1980 to 2014 highlights the success of engaging in identity politics, creating religious dissension, and forming a bond with voters when a policy platform fails to captivate the attention of enough voters. Modi and the BJP's successful outcome of using identity politics was primarily because they turned to this strategy when their other economic reform policies failed to gain public support.

Case Study II: 2014, 2017, and 2019 Indonesian Elections

Indonesia's 2014 and 2017 elections illustrate how candidates engage in identity politics when their policy platform fails. Although the

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[22] The BJP in Power: Indian Democracy and Religious Nationalism. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/BJP_In_Power_final.pdf.

candidates that used religion in their campaigns were not initially successful, this strategy helped them win elections in later years. This case study of Indonesia highlights how religious conflict between two elections is vital to improving the chances of winning an election.

Overview of Indonesia's Political System

As a religiously diverse country, 86.7 percent of Indonesian voters are Muslim, and 10.7 percent are Christian.[23] Indonesia is also home to a variety of political parties. Some of the parties are more populist and slightly more secular, like the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle and the Party of Functional Groups. However, in the last two decades, new political parties like the Great Indonesia Movement Party have risen to power because of religious extremism in their platforms. In Indonesia, the primary debate between parties is about the role of Islam in public affairs. Because of this central dispute in Indonesian politics, many candidates have experimented with positioning their campaigns around siding or not siding with traditional Muslim values.

2014 Election

In 2014, a candidate named Prabowo Subianto ran for President with an election platform that integrated Islamic rhetoric as a campaign instrument. Prabowo strategized that he would need to use religious rhetoric and his identity as a dedicated Muslim to compete against his competitor, Joko Widodo (Jokowi), who did not use religious sentiment as a campaign strategy. They both competed against Ahok, a Christian-Chinese Indonesian. Jokowi won the election with his secular movement. However, marginal analysis revealed that Subianto outperformed polling predictions by using identity politics to gain the support of militant Islamist groups. Similarly, Ahok's Christian appeals captivated most of the country's Chinese population. In this first election, candidates experimented with religious rhetoric and inspired future candidates to try the same.[24]

2017 Election

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[23] "Indonesia's Election Exposes Growing Religious Divide." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/indonesias-election-exposes-growing-religious-divide.
[24] "Democracy and Religion in Indonesian Diversity." Global Ministries, December 16, 2020. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.globalministries.org/southernasiainitiative/democracy_and_religion_in_indonesian_diversity/.

In the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial election, Baswedan used the strategy of identity politics in his campaign, which proved effective. Ahok, from the 2014 presidential election, was the incumbent of this governor seat. Ahok faced a big obstacle of keeping his seat, as Chinese people and Christians are minority populations in Indonesia. As Ahok led in the early polls, his competitors, including Anies Baswedan, started to draw up campaign strategies. Baswedan, a conservative Muslim, did not face as much opposition as Ahok, as he was a Muslim in a Muslim-majority district. Baswedan started his campaign by focusing on issues like public transportation, education, and environmental concerns. However, his strategy was not capturing enough attention in the polls, and he was losing despite representing the majority social group.

Baswedan's analysts determined he was losing because he was not using his identity in his campaign. They decided he would need to "play the religion card" and use his identity as a Muslim in an Islamic area to win the election.[25] Luckily, Baswedan had the perfect opportunity to do this when a religious conflict emerged. In a speech, Ahok made comments that were considered anti-Muslim by quoting a verse from the Qur'an, which is regarded as an offensive act for a non-Muslim in the country. This led to a heated civil debate called the Al-Maida case against Ahok for breaking religious laws and quoting the holy text of Islam.[26]

Baswedan capitalized on this scandal by trying to gain support and used religious sentiment to attract people hurt by Ahok's comments. He tried to create religious discord around Ahok's statements. He rallied all the Muslims to vote for him, choose the Muslim "we group," and stand against offensive comments about the Islamic religion. He encouraged Muslims to vote for him if they cared about their religion.[27] Baswedan positioned his campaign around rooting out non-Muslims from office so the integrity of the faith could be protected. To do this, he went out to mosques and gave speeches. By positioning himself as a part of the majority Muslim group, Baswedan created a bond with Muslim voters. In this way, Baswedan swooped in with a landslide victory. By engaging in identity politics, Baswedan formed a strong bond

[25] "Democracy and Religion in Indonesian Diversity." Global Ministries, December 16, 2020. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.globalministries.org/southernasiainitiative/democracy_and_religion_in_indonesian_diversity/.
[26] "Indonesia's Election Exposes Growing Religious Divide." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/indonesias-election-exposes-growing-religious-divide.
[27] "Indonesia's Election Exposes Growing Religious Divide." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/indonesias-election-exposes-growing-religious-divide.

with Muslim voters and created a religious persona that appealed to people with varying levels of religious devotion.

2019 Election

      In the 2019 presidential election, Prabowo decided to run again for President against Joko Widodo, whom he faced before in 2014. Prabowo chose not to focus on his ideas around affordable housing in his speeches but on Islamic prayers. Prabowo connected himself to important Islamic political figures like Amien Rais or Rizieq Shihab and had these figures endorse his campaign.[28] By doing this, he appealed to the Muslim majority, who choose not to care about a candidate's political policies but whether they share the same religious beliefs and affiliation. He mobilized many new voters and made the election much closer than in 2014. This threatened Jokowi and made him make more decisive moves to secure the Islamic community by creating new religious schools.

Strategy and Political Outcome

      Jokowi decided to make his campaign more religious in other ways as well. The primary way he made his campaign more Islamic was with his choice for vice-president, Ma'aruf Amin. Amin is a Muslim cleric and one of Indonesia's strongest leaders in Islamic movements.[29] By making a VP choice that would appeal to both Muslim moderates and conservative Muslims, Jokowi could keep his incumbent seat. Before this move, he was predicted to lose his seat to Prabowo. Jokowi's decision to engage in identity politics with Prabowo was vital because it helped him compete with the religious campaign of Prabowo. If he did not turn to identity politics, Jokowi would not have won the election. In this election, identity politics helped a candidate make the race closer and then helped the other candidate win. Candidates received their best respective outcomes by choosing to use religion in their platforms to form a connection with voters after policy ideas failed to reach their goals.

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[28] Simandjuntak, Deasy. "Identity Politics Looms over Indonesia's Presidential Election." East Asia Forum, August 10, 2023. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/11/10/identity-politics-looms-over-indonesias-presidential-election/.
[29] Simandjuntak, Deasy. "Identity Politics Looms over Indonesia's Presidential Election." East Asia Forum, August 10, 2023. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/11/10/identity-politics-looms-over-indonesias-presidential-election/.

The growing importance of religious views in political strategy in the 2014, 2017, and 2019 Indonesian elections highlights the efficacy of identity-based mobilization of voters. In the latter two elections, candidates capitalized on religious conflict and their identities to engage in identity politics and form a bond with voters, leading to a steadfast group of campaign supporters. Both candidates won their races, illustrating the efficacy of using identity politics at the right time when policy ideas fail to please voters.

Case Study III: Rise of Perikatan Nasional in Malaysia

The final case study comes from Malaysia and follows the formation of the Perikatan Nasional Party through identity politics. As in India and Indonesia, religion-backed political parties exist in Malaysia, with the main differences between parties lying in religious values. Newly formed parties have solid Islamic ties, whereas Perikatan Harapan and Barisan Nasional are more secular. In the last twenty years, a pivotal reform movement against the United Malays National Organization formed after Malaysian independence in 1957.[30]

Overview of Malaysia's Political System

Between 2008 and 2015, new parties were formed in response to poor governance, corruption, and persecution occurring in the newly formed independent Malaysian state. Although the country remains race and religion divided, with 61 percent of the population being Muslim, 20 percent being Buddhist, 10 percent being Christian, and 40 percent not being Indigenous Malays, many parties looked to close this divide and unite the different social groups.[31] New parties emerged, like the Peoples Justice Party and the Islamist national group. The United Malays National Organization, formed at Malaysian independence, started to fall in 2018 as these new parties emerged.

2018 Election

In the 2018 election, the opposition group Pakatan Harapan took control. Pakatan Harapan, or Alliance of Hope in English, won the 2018 election. This political group intended to be more secular and avoid the religious and racial divides that had existed in the nation for many

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[30] Malaysia's Political Polarization: Race, Religion, and Reform. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/08/18/malaysia-s-political-polarization-race-religion-and-reform-pub-82436.

[31] "Topic: Demographics of Malaysia." Statista. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://www.statista.com/topics/8993/demographics-of-malaysia/#editorsPicks.

years.[32] The group focused on environmental sustainability, increasing investment in healthcare, and protecting human rights. However, the ideas and support of the party lasted only a short time, as it collapsed in February 2020 due to internal issues. The Prime Minister of the time, Mahathir Mohamad, was unwilling to remain secular because he associated secularism with the party's failure. The Prime Minister then created religious divisions within the party, causing the party to split in half based on whether the members wanted to use religion in governance or not.

Rise of Perikatan Nasional

The United Malays National Organization sought a comeback after the party fell in 2018. As their policy of increasing technology and governmental communication did not please the Malaysian population, the party considered whether it could use its founding religious values from independence to gain public support. To do this, they joined the Islamist stronghold group that split from Pakatan Harapan to re-create the country's religious divide to regain political control under a new party.[33] The two groups formed Perikatan Nasional or the National Alliance in English, and this group worked from 2018 to 2020 to develop a campaign for control. Muhyiddin Yassin, the leader of this group, became Prime Minister. The group created a campaign image of being Malay-dominant, pro-Islamist, and approachable for devoted Muslims of all social classes. Perikatan Nasional engaged in identity politics because they thought that Pakatan Harapan had collapsed from removing religion from politics.

Strategy Outcome

By targeting the accessible voters, they could secure by creating a sense of religious solidarity, Perikatan Nasional capitalized on the slight majority of conservative Muslims in the country, which helped the group take control of the electorate. With a tiny majority in parliament, Perikatan Nasional knew that they had to gain the votes of the majority of the population, and they recognized that religious debate and anti-secularism were the way to gain the support of this group. The party engaged in identity politics through political rallies that sparked debate

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[32] Malaysia's Political Polarization: Race, Religion, and Reform. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/08/18/malaysia-s-political-polarization-race-religion-and-reform-pub-82436.

[33] Malaysia's Political Polarization: Race, Religion, and Reform. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/08/18/malaysia-s-political-polarization-race-religion-and-reform-pub-82436.

on whether religion and the state should be connected by quoting religious texts.[34] These rallies helped the party form a common bond with voters believing religion should be a central dictator of livelihood. These voters wanted to join Perikatan Nasional to fight "the common enemy" of those who supported the infusion of Islamic ideas in governance.

Perikatan Nasional engaged in identity politics to gain government control after seeing how moving from religion to economic and social issues led to an unstable party. It was this choice to revitalize their strategy by creating public debate around whether religion should return as the central value of politics that characterized the party's success. As Perikatan Nasional split from its failing predecessor, Malaysian politics illustrate how identity politics is an essential strategy for parties looking to revise the unsuccessful political approaches of the past. Like in India and Indonesia, identity politics proved to be a rewarding choice of strategy to engage in and led to successful election outcomes.

Conclusion

The three case studies from India, Indonesia, and Malaysia illustrate the application of identity politics to a campaign strategy of religious conflict. This promotion of religious conflict leads candidates to form "political affinity groups" with groups of the population that feel a bond to the candidate's religious affiliation. Modi, Prabowo, Subianto, and Perikatan Nasional all chose to engage in this strategy when their policy campaigns were not capturing voters' support. Each candidate or party struggled and was either maintaining their minority share of government or losing in a race. At this time, each candidate turned to identity politics, intentionally created religious conflict, and, as a result, formed a bond with voters through the thing they hold most strongly: their identities. By revitalizing their campaign strategy to turn policy-based voters into identity-based voters, parties and candidates in these case studies were successful in their campaigns. Identity politics helped the candidates get successful election outcomes, illustrating the efficacy of the strategy.

As the United States looks ahead to the 2024 US presidential election, it will be necessary for candidates to consider whether they will apply identity politics in their campaign strategy. Identity is an

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[34] Malaysia's Political Polarization: Race, Religion, and Reform. Accessed August 22, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/08/18/malaysia-s-political-polarization-race-religion-and-reform-pub-82436.

increasingly polarized issue in the United States. With identity as an increasingly important campaign topic, will candidates choose to engage in identity politics? If they do, candidates should be aware of how to properly time the use of this strategy to get optimal results. If candidates use the strategy of identity politics, voters must also be mindful of the strategy as they seek to understand the candidates' views and determine who to vote for. Voters should understand the mobilization tactics and determine if they feel comfortable voting for someone based on their and the politician's identity. Just as candidates have an important choice of whether to engage in identity politics, so do voters.

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