



Understanding Over Loss

Megan Chan

This work focuses on the twist of what were to happen if the prey and predator parted ways with a mutual understanding that if they fight to the death they'll end up losing more than they bargained for.



SOCIAL SCIENCE

The Stained-Glass Ceiling: A Literature Review of Women's Roles in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Katy Halverson

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit <https://www.colorado.edu/honorsjournal/sites/default/files/attached-files/thestained-glassceiling.pdf>

There is an interesting paradox that exists for religious women. Despite religion's historical association with gender inequality, women demonstrate higher religious participation than men (Roberts & Yamane). However, women are still underrepresented in positions of religious authority—a phenomenon known as the “stained-glass ceiling” (Roberts & Yamane).¹ The “feminization of religion” refers to the process by which feminine traits, such as tenderness, love, and self-sacrifice, are given more religious value. This process does not necessarily mean that women themselves have become more valued in religions. John Hawley's quote in *Religion in Sociological Perspective* describes the essence of this phenomenon: “Theological appreciation of the feminine does not necessarily lead to a positive evaluation of real women” (Roberts & Yamane, 277). In other words, while feminine qualities are appreciated in religion, religious institutions appear to favor men over women in prominent positions.

The question is then: why do so many women remain devout, even when they face

such inequalities? It may be that they are content with the teachings of the doctrine they subscribe to. Many women find that religion serves as a place where their feminine traits are expressly valued (Hoyt). They may stay because they find fulfillment through obedience to the teachings of their faith, or that traditional female roles themselves offer a source of empowerment. In her article on the victim/empowerment paradigm, Hoyt argues that women in traditionalist faiths do not see themselves as victims of the patriarchy, but as subjects of empowerment within their own gendered theological worldviews.² Some may experience cognitive dissonance from practicing a religion that does not align with their own views on women's roles. To combat this issue, women often engage in a process known as cognitive restructuring through which they reinterpret their religious environment to maintain a sense of self-worth without forsaking their beliefs (Beaman). In other words, they reframe their behaviors to be consistent with their beliefs, and vice versa.

This paper will focus on The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, referred to throughout as the LDS or Mormon church. The Mormon church is a recent Christian sect known for having traditional values and taking conservative positions on issues of sexuality and family matters.³ Mormons preach that men and women are given divine and separate gendered purposes by God. Therefore, women's roles as mothers are equally essential to salvation as men's roles as providers and priesthood holders (Sumerau & Cragun). Women are taught to be kind, pure, and subservient; they are told to support their husbands “in every needful thing,” and to obey him as he obeys the Lord (Sumerau & Cragun).⁴ However, the Latter-Day Saints are also one of few religions to believe in a male God as well as a Heavenly Mother.⁵ It would be reductive to say that the Latter-Day Saints are anti-woman, just as it would be to say they are completely gender-inclusive. As with some other traditionalist religions, there are aspects of the Mormon church that are empowering for women just as there are elements which subordinate them. This paper will present a brief overview of the Church's history to explore its complex relationship with gender and women's roles.

Early Mormon Women

Perhaps one of the more controversial aspects of early Mormonism was the practice

of polygyny, or the marriage of one husband to multiple wives.⁶ Joseph Smith taught that plural marriage was a divine commandment that would ensure one's salvation in the afterlife. Polygynous families maintained a Victorian-style household, with the husband at the center providing for his wives and children (Embry, *Effects of Polygamy*).⁷ Despite being a fundamentally patriarchal structure, polygyny offered some women freedom to run their own households independent of their husbands who were often gone for long periods of time (Iverson). While many lived in poverty due to the inherent strain on the husbands' resources, some were able to start at-home businesses, manage their own farmland, or even form joint households with other wives to support one another (Iverson, *Feminist Implications*). The first wife was also given the authority to allow her husband to marry again and in some

cases select his next wife for him (Embry, *Effects of Polygamy*). This exercise of power allowed women a sense of control over the emotional toll of plural marriages, and to be active participants in the enactment of religious principle (Embry, *Effects of Polygamy*). As the Church expanded in the West, it was forced to reckon with the United States government, which prohibited polygamy. As a result, early Mormon women

³ Formed in 1830 (Cornwall), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints began as a Christian new religious movement which now considers itself to be its own denomination. However, due to a general consensus by other Christian groups, the Mormons remain an entrenched sect that has branched too far off in its teachings to be considered a Christian denomination (Roberts and Yamane).

⁴ For more on LDS doctrine on gender expectations see Sumerau & Cragun “The Hallmarks of Righteous Women: Gendered Background Expectations in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.”

⁵ While Mormons believe in the existence of a Heavenly Mother, they do not worship her or pray to her. Many scholars have theorized that her symbolic role serves to reinforce the divinity of heterosexual marriage, while others view her as a role model for LDS women, evidence of their valuation within church doctrine (Heeran).

⁶ The term “polygamy” is a broad term for having more than one spouse, whereas “polygyny” specifically refers to a marriage with multiple wives. Most scholars use the terms interchangeably when referring to Mormonism.

⁷ For more on polygamous households, see Embry, “Effects of Polygamy on Mormon Women” and Iverson, “Feminist Implications of Mormon Polygyny.”

¹ According to Roberts and Yamane, Mormon women make up 56 percent of total members. Overall, women make up 52 percent of all religious groups, yet are still excluded from leadership positions in many religions. For more on gender in religion, see *Religion in Sociological Perspective* Chapter 11, “Religion, Gender, and Sexuality.”

² Hoyt offers the following examples of doctrinal sources of empowerment for LDS women: the existence of a Mother in Heaven, the divine role of mothers in the church, and the doctrine of exaltation (the belief that all people on Earth will become like unto God in the afterlife).

initiated a suffragist movement to defend the practice of plural marriage (Iverson, *The Mormon Question*). Eventually the practice was abandoned; however, it resulted in one of the first feminist movements within the Church and in the restoration of women's suffrage in Utah (Iverson, *The Mormon Question*). In 1842 Joseph Smith, first prophet and founder of the LDS church, established the first Relief Society as a completely women-run organization (Arrington). Its responsibilities were to attend to the sick and provide for the poor, manufacture silk and other goods, and implement food storage, among other purposes (Arrington). The Relief Societies served an important economic purpose which would lay the foundation for the future pilgrimage and settlement of the Great Basin in the 1860s (Arrington). The organization gave women space for autonomy and an important place of leadership in the Church hierarchy. Some women may have even been ordained to the highest authority offered by the Church: the priesthood. The "priesthood" refers to the power of God bestowed upon worthy men which grants them the ability to heal, to perform blessings, and other religious rites. Upon the formation of the first Relief Society, Joseph Smith is alleged to have ordained a few women with the authority to lead as well as the capability to bless and heal other women (Newell).⁸ However, the historical record is not settled on this topic, and this account is disputed by church historians to this day. After Smith's death, this power was rescinded by his

successor, Brigham Young, who declared that only men could hold the priesthood (Newell). Once women's ordination was withdrawn, the Relief Society itself became a subjugated auxiliary within the Church, as it was now being overseen by priesthood leaders rather than operating as its own organization (Cornwall). As a result of the growth and institutionalization of the Church, women's positions were increasingly devalued. The Church was focused on professional bureaucratization, creating new administrations to manage ever-growing wards and stakes.⁹ Greater emphasis was placed on the role of the patriarchal priesthood, and, because women were no longer being ordained, they had no institutional role other than to support their priesthood-holding leaders (Cornwall). Mormonism underwent a period of feminization during which there were more active female members than males, making the priesthood a scarcer commodity and increasing Mormon women's dependence on their male counterparts (Cornwall). This dilemma of administrative order contributed to the inflated prioritization of men's roles, leaving women with little institutional influence in church matters.¹⁰ Relief Societies have remained the central sphere for women's religious participation, even in modern-day LDS congregations.

Latter-Day Saint Women

The LDS church is just as vocal about its expectations for men and women now as it was in the beginning. In 1995, then-prophet

Gordon B. Hinckley read a statement to the General Relief Society entitled "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," which details the Church's beliefs in the ordinance of marriage between man and woman, as well as the responsibilities of mothers and fathers over their offspring. In it, the prophet emphasized traditional gender roles; fathers were to be providers and protectors; mothers were to care for and nurture their children. In 2004, Hinckley reiterated this official separation of spheres in his talk titled "The Women in Our Lives," which praises the different-but-equal spiritual characteristics of men and women. Amid modern-day discussions about gender and equal rights, the Church has adopted a culture of benevolent sexism, or the idealization of women as spiritually superior beings in need of protection (Toscano). Women are seen as being naturally pure and Christlike, necessary for men's salvation but lacking the moral agency to be independent actors on their own.

However, LDS women have made some strides in recent years. In October of 2012, the official age requirement for women missionaries was lowered to 19 years old from 21, while men's age was lowered to 18 instead of 19. Unlike men, women are not required to serve missions and are instead encouraged to prioritize marriage and starting a family (Embry, *Oral History*). While modern-day Mormon women enjoy more of the same privileges as Mormon men, including serving missions,¹¹ wearing pants to church, and giving talks at General Conference,¹² the Church has remained firm in its teachings on traditional

roles for women. Women are expected to prioritize childcare and domestic work over a career. Their primary role is to be a mother and a wife, and work and education are secondary. However, many families cannot afford to have one parent stay home, so some women will work; others may enjoy having a work life and pursue a career out of enjoyment. Certain traditions within Mormonism have adapted to changing social trends, which some LDS women deal with through a process of gender negotiation, where women perform acts of agency and accommodation to manage gender inequality in their religious group (Leamaster & Einwohner). They draw on gender schemas from their religion as well as the more progressive broader society to form a gendered identity that is most fulfilling to them (Leamaster & Einwohner). This negotiation is similar to cognitive restructuring in that both processes allow religious women to adapt their beliefs in order to occupy a more empowered position in society.

Mormon feminist movements have also been on the rise, though they are not new to the Church's history. Since the days of the early Mormon suffragists,

Mormon feminism has taken on new forms as challenges arise. Many of these movements have been met with strong pushback from church leaders, who referred to Mormon feminists as "one of the three greatest dangers to the Church" (Finnigan & Ross).¹³ One characteristic of religious sects is a resistance to "compromises" of doctrine, particularly in response to secular society, which is especially true for the Mormon

⁸ Emma Smith, Sarah M. Cleveland, and Elizabeth Whitney made up the first presidency of the Relief Society in 1842, and may have been ordained by the prophet Joseph Smith with the authority to preside over the organization and the spiritual power to heal the sick (Newell).

⁹ For Latter-Day Saints, "wards" refer to local congregations, while "stakes" are conglomerates of several wards in a particular region.

¹⁰ O'Dea's dilemma of administrative order suggests that as an organization grows and bureaucratizes, its rigid structure may alienate individuals who are impeded by the hierarchy (Roberts & Yamane). Policy can create a sort of red tape, preventing religious individuals from seeking the guidance they desire from those higher up in church authority.

¹¹ See Embry, "Oral History and Mormon Women Missionaries" for more on women's missionary experiences.

¹² More on Wear Pants to Church Day and the Let Women Pray campaign in Finnigan & Ross, "I'm a Mormon Feminist."

¹³ In some cases, church leaders went so far as excommunicating women like Sonia Johnson, who spoke out against the church's opposition to the 1970 Equal Rights Amendment (Finnigan & Ross).

church's response to social norms about gender and sexuality (Roberts & Yamane). The Church maintains a fundamentalistic theology, believing in a literal reading of the Bible and Book of Mormon and the notion that prophets are conduits for the word of God.¹⁴ Thus, they often cite the eternity of God's word to explain this resistance to change.
[...]

Conclusion

Through its history, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has held strong traditionalist beliefs about gender and women's divine roles as wives and mothers. Despite being structurally undervalued, Mormon women have always found avenues for self-empowerment, be it within Relief Societies or in modern feminist movements. Many cope with conflicting messages about femininity through cognitive restructuring, a process of gender negotiation in which women in traditionalist faiths reshape their worldview to accommodate broader social ideals without sacrificing their faith. Time will tell if the Church's stance on women's roles will result in its detriment, or if it will remain an entrenched Christian sect. Being such a new religion, it is necessary to consider how they will evolve with the 21st century, specifically how LDS traditionalism will navigate an ever-progressing society, and how LDS women find new ways to negotiate their roles amid such contradictory messages.

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¹⁴ Sects often reject "compromises" to doctrine, believing in the original revelation as the only "authentic expression of the faith" (Roberts & Yamane, 171). For more on the church-sect typology, see *Religion in Sociological Perspective* Chapter 7, "Organized Religion."

Deconstructing White “American” Perceptions on Immigrants of Latinx Heritage

Caroline Heinze

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/41687h90d

ABSTRACT

This study documents the construction of opinions white “Americans” make about Latinx immigrants in the current political climate. Even though participants had variant political opinions and resided in two different cities, the central part of this project focuses on the general factors that influence white “American” opinions. This research builds upon the framework of Leo Chavez’s work, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*. His research provided a basis for understanding US immigration history, the prevalence of anti-immigrant rhetoric against Latinx migrants, the social construction of “illegality,” the pervasiveness of media, and the creation of a national identity. This thesis used a phenomenological research design for analysis, to bridge the gap between the literature and the experiences and perceptions white “Americans” currently have about Latinx immigration. Semi-structured interviews provided a basis for understanding the dynamics of immigration opinions and the construction of a national identity. The findings state that the social construction of “illegality,” politicized media consumption, and the nativist protection of the “American” identity all

contribute to white “American” perceptions on immigrants of Latinx heritage. [...]

CONCLUSION

Summary

After conducting 17 semi-structured interviews, it was clear that there are a variety of factors white “Americans” use to understand and justify their perception of Latinx immigrants in the United States. Based off my respondents, it was clear that the social construction of “illegality” is contingent on demarcating attributes of Latinx immigrants as “good” and “bad” to justify whether or not immigrants deserve to reside in the United States —regardless of their documentation status. It was also clear that these designations are perpetrated by media sources and disseminated to the public. In terms of media consumption, there was a strong correlation between participants’ political affiliation and the belief of particular sources. Dissenting views were often seen as exaggerative or sensationalized because they directly opposed the emotional establishment people had to certain truths. Overall, I found that my participants constructed an

“American” identity by both embracing an ancestral, immigrant past and distancing from current Latinx immigration through racist nativism and nationalism.

In terms of Latinx immigration, it is clear that notions of “illegality” are contingent on the beliefs people hold. Racialized US history, personally-held experiences, and different sources of media consumption each contribute to the salience of underlying assumptions that are made about this population. For instance, the brand of “illegality” may seem valid to those in favor of strict immigration reform and who seek out information that corroborates this belief, but is portrayed as harsh to those in agreement with the benefits of Latinx immigration the US. These justifications of support or dismay towards Latinx immigration demonstrate how “illegality” is socially constructed based on the beliefs of the dominant group, which assigns labels. My participants qualified different stereotypes and characteristics that are typically associated with Latinx immigrants to designate them “good” and “bad.” For instance, a “good” immigrant is constructed from qualities like being a hard worker or providing a source of labor to people in the United States. A “bad” immigrant is socially constructed from narratives that Latinx immigrants’ tax the US economy, use social welfare programs, and import crime. For many of my participants, these qualifications were based off of personally-held stereotypes or generalized experiences.

I argue that narratives used to socially construct Latinx “illegality” are connected to emotional politics and media consumption. Many of my participants demonstrated a reliance on their own individual sentiments rather than empirical facts and depended

on these ideological convictions to draw conclusions about social or political issues, such as Latinx immigration. Oftentimes, these individual sentiments were developed from a repertoire of information from media sources. Although these media sources varied, participants discussed how they trusted sources that aligned with their opinions and therefore their emotions.

Since my participants relied heavily on their own emotional investments to draw conclusions about Latinx immigration, their lack of cognitive receptibility to dissenting opinions demonstrated deep ideological divisions. Many participants discussed their reliance on news sources that mostly corroborated their own opinions, even if they acknowledged fear-mongering or sensationalism in media. Overall, conversations about media revealed the relationship between media consumption and emotion-work as cyclical; world-views are shaped by particular sources of mass media, which force people to ideologically align with emotionally-charged messages that generate emotions tied to specific world-views. Also, despite my participants’ reliance on media and news to gather information, they also explained their mistrust in news, as fabricated and sensationalized for political gain. This recognition highlighted the pervasiveness of media in constructing narratives, both positive and negative about Latinx immigration. Finally, the “American” identity was extremely important to many of my participants. Despite their reservations about Latinx immigration to the United States today, they saw themselves as a part of a “nation of immigrants” and strongly tied to ancestral, European immigration. They invoked this rhetoric to construct themselves as immigrants, while

¹ “American” is quoted because the term is often used to designate the national identity of those residing in the United States, but not those who reside in other parts of North and South America. Oftentimes, the term “American” is employed to stake US nationalistic ownership over the territory, with little regard for the same “American” identity other countries have.

² Latinx is a gender-neutral alternative term for Latino or Latina. Many scholars use Latinx to be gender inclusive.

simultaneously distancing themselves from Latinx immigrants today. I attribute this rhetorical manipulation to assimilation theories and racist nativism. Theories around assimilation are used to demonstrate the “Americanness” of early European immigrants and their ability to culturally align with hegemonic ideals of the United States. This justification is used to show that European immigrants “properly” contribute to society. Alternatively, my participants’ ties to ancestral immigration are used to differentiate and demonize the experiences of Latinx immigrants in the United States. They contrast the experiences to maintain the superiority of Anglo culture and oppress anything seen as “other.” The hierarchy between immigration groups maintains racist, nativist ideals because it defends the power imbalance between white or Anglo natives against Latinx people. Consequently, these characteristics led my participants to call for protecting the national identity of the United States against immigrant invaders. They argued that the United States needed to be protected from the dangers of sanctuary cities or birthright citizenship. For many people, sanctuary cities and the Fourteenth Amendment directly oppose US nationalism because they are seen as loopholes that support immigrants. These responses demonstrated how the “American” identity is constructed by “cherry-picking” immigrant characteristics, both historically and today, that support Anglo-dominant culture and uphold imbalanced systems of power for white “Americans.” Latinx immigrants, even when they are seen as positively contributing to society, are demonized against white “Americans” because they are viewed as racially and culturally different and therefore dangerous.

For some, the implementation of strict immigration laws over the past few decades have proven to be an appropriate response to protect the United States. Despite the penalization and stigmatization that Latinx immigrants face, those in favor of immigrant restrictions cling to the opportunity to maintain the current power structure in the United States. This has serious implications for future generations, as they are apt to face similar situations and discourses.

Key Takeaways

Overall, my participants demonstrated that language has powerful effects on the social mobility of Latinx immigrants, as they are portrayed socially, through media, and against the white “American” identity. Many of my participants were not always aware of the implicit biases they presented, and this was informative of the idea that the United States is a “nation of immigrants” despite an overall rejection of Latinx immigrants in policy and in US integration.

Notions of “illegality” serve to degrade Latinx immigrants by demeaning their human existence to one composed only by status. This is often reciprocated in the media and can impact more widespread views of Latinx immigrants. Immigrant integration into US society is diluted by a lack “belonging” they are given. Conversations with my participants revealed how crucial structural changes are. Participants revealed the pervasiveness of false narratives, a general lack of awareness about the history of immigration and its impacts today, and how dominant hegemonies are protected and maintained.

Policy Implications

My research has revealed how much needs to be done in the United States to

make people aware of the vital impact Latinx immigrants, and immigrants in general, have on the country. After interviews, it became clear that the implicit biases my participants hold about Latinx immigration are pervasive and contribute to broader conversations about immigration. For the most part, a lack of understanding past policy precedent and contributing to false narratives about Latinx immigrants have led people to permit the passage of formal policies introduced by this administration.

Given that participants reciprocated opinions about Latinx “illegality” and shared sentiments about the threats of Latinx immigrants, political action and rhetoric need to directly oppose and call out these narratives. To start to correct the widespread false narratives about Latinx immigration, there needs to be active neutralization of the threat narratives and antiracist work against nativist sentiments by members of the media, the government and academia. Also, the rhetoric of “illegality” needs to be eliminated because it has proven to discount the economic and social contributions Latinx immigrants have made to the welfare of the United States. Additionally, policies need to be implemented that directly address labor market needs in order to stop the negative labeling of Latinx immigrants as manipulative of job opportunity (Chavez 2013).

Interviews also revealed participants’ dependence on particular media sources and opposition to dissenting sources. These sources were used to corroborate previously-established, emotionally-invested opinions. Media needs to be held more accountable in terms of employing particular frames. Oftentimes particular frames reduce the complexity of issues, such as immigration, and

makes some points more salient, while leaving out other aspects. Additionally, the repetition of false narratives needs to be stopped and called out in order to stop compelling an audience to promote their own interests by fusing messages with their preferred media sources.

Theoretical Implications

While analyses of public opinions have identified the characteristics associated with restrictionist immigration attitudes, there is very little research about how white “Americans” frame or explain their views on immigrants or Latinx immigrants, more specifically. This paper fills the gap through a qualitative analysis of 17 semi-structured interviews with white “Americans.” Participants revealed the complexities of the factors that contribute to the overall perception of Latinx immigrants. Most participants relayed conflicting narratives about the influences on their opinions, which demonstrated that particular attitudes are constructed over time and according to current rhetoric, personal experiences and identity creation.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study breaks ground in examining current white “American” attitudes towards Latinx immigrants and the factors that contribute to these attitudes, the findings of this study are not generalizable to all white “Americans.” Further research would benefit from pools of randomly-selected participants from all over the nation. Given that all interviewees lived in relatively middle-to-upper-class, urban and suburban areas, the emotions and behaviors of people in rural places or in areas with lower economic status may look significantly different. Additionally, participants’ ages had a limited range, from

37 to 72. The attitudes and perceptions of younger people could have changed the course of the research. Furthermore, this study only examines people's attitudes towards immigrants in a politically tense time period, which is only informative of the current climate, and cannot necessarily provide insight for the unforeseeable future. However, the goal of this research was to examine what factors white "Americans" use to negotiate their perceptions of Latinx immigration, thus the research was not intended to be generalizable to all white "Americans."

Future research should examine the impacts of white "American" attitudes on Latinx immigrants currently, to understand their experiences under this unique administration and in this contentious time period. As white "Americans" continue to construct the "immigrant other," it would be informative to examine how this group conceives of their own ethnic identity during this time. Elevating the voices of immigrants from Latin American backgrounds is crucial because it would provide insight into what is going through the minds of Latinx immigrants in the midst of threat narratives and racist nativism. In addition to examining the current experiences of Latinx immigrants, it would be important to examine the immigration attitudes of people from different racial backgrounds. Although one participant in the study acknowledged their Asian biracial background, they identified as white in paperwork. Examining the attitudes of other racial groups in the United States would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to perceptions of immigrants. The factors that proved to be the most impactful on white "American" attitudes were rooted in the power and privileges associated with whiteness and may vary for

other groups who do not identify this way. Researchers should investigate other impacts on perception for people with more diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Although white people construct dominant hegemonies in the United States, investigating the opinions of other racial groups would be informative of more general perceptions. Even though whiteness continues to be upheld in the United States, the opinions of white people are not truly representative of the factors that impact the perceptions of all people in the country.

Conclusion

The future of this work with white "Americans" would be beneficial to examine over a longer period of time, to understand if the factors that contribute to opinions are uniquely shaped by this administration or for alternative reasons. Will inflammatory media coverage persist? Will notions of "illegality" continue to be seen as a threat? Will federal policies improve? Whatever the answers may be, investigating the perceptions that white "Americans" have on Latinx immigrants contributes to a deeper understanding that is necessary to structurally change the policies in place and educate the public about the restrictionist history of the United States.

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Brazil's Belo Monte Dam: A Hydropower Dilemma

Michele Wolff

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit <https://www.colorado.edu/honorsjournal/sites/default/files/attached-files/brazilsbelomontedam.pdf>

Throughout the Xingu river basin, Antonia Melo da Silva is seen as a tireless warrior and beacon of hope. The Belo Monte Dam took her home, her livelihood, and her happiness. To this day, she still remembers the day the bulldozers arrived in her community. The fear that took root inside her and all her loved ones was incomparable, but one they soon learned to live with. Unwilling to leave anyone behind, Silva made sure everyone had a place to go before she packed up her family and said her final goodbyes to the land of her ancestors. She left, but she did not remain silent in the face of such injustice.

The dam brings death to the flora, the fauna, countless indigenous and traditional cultures that live in the Xingu basin. Our people face increased violence, unemployment and misery because the government and a group of investors want to exploit our land and rivers for profit. I dedicated my life to campaigning against this project, and though it has gone ahead, I will keep on fighting against what Belo Monte represents: a destructive, unsustainable and unfeasible development model. (Silva, 2017)

Silva created "Movimiento Xingu Vivo Para Sempre" over twenty years ago. Recently, Silva was awarded the 2017 Alexander Soros Foundation Award for her activism. The question Silva now faces is how to allocate funds in order to further the

foundation's missions. To determine the best move forward, she decided to take a holistic approach into understanding Belo Monte and the hydropower dilemma Brazil is facing.

Hydropower in Brazil

Energy is one of Brazil's greatest barriers to development. With a rapidly growing population of 207 million, the demand for energy far exceeds production. Based on current estimates, generating capacity needs to increase by approximately 5 to 7 GW to satisfy growing demand on a yearly basis (Buckley, 2012). As such, Brazil is faced with a pressing energy challenge.

The electricity sector in Brazil is the largest in South America and 97% of the total population has access to electricity (The World Bank, 2014). In the past two decades, Brazil has been transitioning from nonrenewable to renewable energy sources. Currently 76% of its electricity is generated from renewable sources (Álvares, 2007). According to Brazil's Ten-Year Energy Expansion Plans, the aim is to raise this percentage to 86.1% by 2023. Experts believe Brazil is well on its way to achieving this goal (Cabr e, 2017).

About two-thirds of Brazil's renewable electricity generation comes from hydropower. Much of Brazil's hydroelectric potential lies in the country's Amazon River Basin. According to the *Associa o Brasileira de Distribuidores*

de Energia Elétrica (ABRADEE), Brazil has 158 hydroelectric plants in operation, 9 plants in construction and another 26 authorized to be built (Álvares, 2007). The majority of these hydroelectric plants have installed capacities between 1 and 3 MW (Álvares, 2007). However, the Itaipu Dam in the Parana River has an installed generating capacity of 14,000 MW (Fearnside, 2012). It is the second largest hydroelectric power plant in the world behind the Three Gorges Dam in China. According to the Brazilian Ministry of Mines and Energy, Brazil will aim to increase hydropower capacity by 27 GW by 2024 (Minas e Energia, 2017). With the Belo Monte Dam, this will not be a challenge.

Energy Challenge

Today, the controversial hydroelectric challenge Brazil is facing regards the Belo Monte Dam that is currently under construction in the Xingu River Basin. On February 17th 2016, the Belo Monte Dam tested its first turbine (Southgate, 2016). With a planned finish date in 2019 and an installed capacity of 11,233 MW, the Belo Monte Dam is projected to not only catalyze economic growth, but to also expand access to electricity into isolated regions (Southgate, 2016). However, a host of economic, political, social, and environmental concerns associated with the construction of the dam have gained prominence.

With the future of Amazonia and all of the actors involved at risk with the continuing construction of the Belo Monte Dam, Brazil must try and find a harmonized balance between the three sustainability pillars: economic/political, social, and environmental. The dilemma is as follows:

Is the compromisation of one of

the sustainability pillars inevitable in the construction and eventual generation of the Belo Monte Dam?

If so, do any alternatives to hydropower exist?

In order to contextualize these questions, the political, economic, and social environment of the Belo Monte Dam project must be examined. As an important stakeholder, "Movimiento Xingu Vivo Para Sempre" is uniquely situated to focus attention and resources into the best approach to addressing this energy challenge.

[..]

Project Design

Construction of the Belo Monte Dam began in Altamira during 2011. Although still in construction, the dam is currently composed of two parts. One portion powers the main turbine while the other diverts the course of the river into two man-made reservoirs. In total these reservoirs cover an area of 668 km² which used to be home to thousands of indigenous people (International Rivers, 2016). The dam was functional by 2015, but projected to be up and running at full capacity by 2019 (Bratman, 2014). The project is currently suspended from further construction due to legal accusations pertaining to housing inadequacy of indigenous people. Brazil's energy mogul "Norte Energia has been accused by the Federal Public Ministry of ethnocide for its wholesale destruction of indigenous culture" (Sullivan, 2017, n.p.). Construction suspension of this project is nothing new as the political influence is backing the full operation of the Belo Monte Dam. Despite costing taxpayers \$30 billion Brazilian reais (four times the initial budget),

proposed construction of additional dams upstream are in discussion to make up for the inadequacy of the dam's current energy generating capacity (International Rivers, 2016).

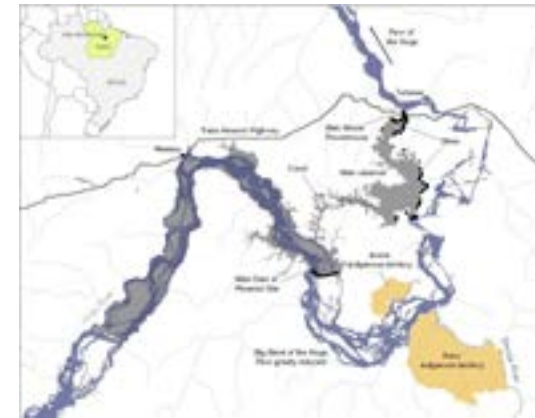


Figure 1: Belo Monte Hydroelectric Project

Map of Belo Monte Hydroelectric Project. International Rivers. (2012). Map of Belo Monte Dam. <https://www.internationalrivers.org/resources/map-of-belo-monte-dam-4595>.

Economy

The Belo Monte Dam, when fully built, would provide a power output of 11,233 MW. However, even with this massive capacity, the dam will only produce an average of 4,571 MW yearly. A capacity factor of 40.7% is low, but not altogether terrible for large scale dams (Fearnside, 2012). The low capacity factor is due to limited water availability during the dry season.

Despite various legal setbacks, Belo Monte has the backing of the Brazilian government and is being developed by state-owned power company Eletronorte. This project was projected to cost US \$13 billion, and a majority of funding came from national development banks and government

spending funds. The National Development Bank (BNDES) committed to finance up to 80 percent of the project, and elected to give a 30-year grace period on loan repayment. On the contrary, private investors have been hesitant to invest in Belo Monte due to the upheaval surrounding the project (International Rivers, 2010).

The project has the capacity to provide power to 18 million homes (Leite, 2013). Because of Brazil's heavily subsidized aluminum industry, a large portion of energy produced would be diverted into the industrial sector. This would not only fail to provide power to the people of Brazil, but also work to offset several of the proposed "green energy" benefits of the project (International Rivers, 2009). Considering the high economic cost of the construction of the dam, as well as the continued struggles in the courts, the foreseen cost for Belo Monte has increased significantly. This leads to a problem in the ability of the dam to eventually generate positive profit. Based on several research models, it becomes apparent that the Belo Monte project will likely have net negative profit over the next 50 years (The Economist, 2017).

[..]

Environment

Since IBAMA's 2009 environmental assessment, the communities surrounding the Xingu River have been displaced and are now experiencing a drastic decreased quality in life. Despite the PBA (Basic environmental Assessment Plan) in which project executives agreed to fulfill 117 socio-environmental conditions within the region, locals have faced increased surges from the river, a shortage

of fish, and sanitation issues. Many of these environmental concerns can be traced back to IBAMA's environmental assessment which is now under scrutiny for noncompliance with environmentalists and indigenous populations (International Rivers, 2016).

Prior to the construction of the dam, the river had a steady flow; however, villagers are now reporting random tides. This inconsistent flow is due to miscalculations regarding the holding capacity at one of the reservoirs. As a result, these surges are violent and, because they are unpredictable, children are cautioned away from playing in the river (International Rivers, 2016).

Many justify dams as a being a clean energy source; however, when built in tropical areas dams can give off levels of methane that are comparable to coal fired plants (International Rivers, 2016). High methane emissions are a result of decaying vegetation that is swept away with violent surges. When doing their environmental assessment, IBAMA failed to execute this component of the dam thus leading to 400km² of forest that has been uprooted from these surges (International Rivers, 2016).

Shortly after the dam was constructed, sixteen tons of fish died after the reservoir flooded for the first time. Despite IBAMA's environmental assessment, they failed to include the economic loss in such a large reduction of fish. Rather than taking accountability for their inefficient assessment, IBAMA fined North Electric for the loss in fish. It is unknown if the funds from this fine made it into the hands of the fishing communities; however, it is highly unlikely when reflecting upon Brazil's highly corrupt government. Not only are communities facing economic distress over the construction of the dam,

many are also flooding, and poor sanitation is a result. Giardine Indipendici-1 is a community that has suffered from the diverted river that has caused massive flooding and contamination. Video footage shows sewage backing up and high flooding in housing when the river is diverted. Whirlpools of trash and human waste are now commonly swept through communities and into houses. Many are feeling helpless without the fulfilled promise of an updated hospital in Altamira, which has seen a 50% increase in population since the construction of the dam. People are unable to receive medical treatment as a response to the poor sanitation conditions that have arisen from the dam.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Diversification of Renewables

One proposed solution in order to prevent a project such as the Belo Monte Dam from happening again is shifting the support for hydropower to other sources of renewable energies. Solar and biomass are Brazil's top primary alternatives based on the country's geography and access to resources. Due to Brazil's high levels of sunlight, 4.25 to 6.5 sun hours/day, solar energy has great potential in Brazil (Renato, 2017). According to Rodrigo Sauer, the CEO of Brazilian Association of Photovoltaic Solar Energy (ABSOLAR), "The technical potential of solar photovoltaic energy in Brazil is immense and surprising. It is more than 28,500 GW in large-scale generation and more than 164 GW in residential roofs in the distributed generation, and these are conservative estimates."

If Brazil rallies behind Sauer's optimism and harvests more solar energy, solar could steal some of hydropower's slice in the

renewable energy pie. The country's biggest hurdles with respect to solar power will be the expensive cost and inconsistent availability. Even though the cost of solar energy has substantially decreased over the past decade, centralized and distributed solar power still requires the proper infrastructure, skilled labor, and storage technology, which can be costly. Furthermore, the harsh reality is that solar energy generates less than 0.01% of the country's electricity demand. Solar energy becomes even more inefficient during cloudy days or non-sunny times. Solar's inconsistent availability poses an energy issue.

Biomass, specifically sugarcane, is also making a lot of headway in Brazil. According to data provided by the *National Electric Energy Agency (ANEEL)*, the nation's installed power in sugarcane biomass plants has reached 10 GW. Brazil has over 380 plants of biomass-based sugarcane (Bayar, 2015). One potential issue with respect to sugarcane biomass is that the crop requires vast land plantations which are often hacked out of CO₂-absorbing forests. This poses its own problems in the fight against global warming.

Moreover, the support must shift away from hydropower and towards other renewable energies if Brazil wants to avoid another Belo Monte Hydroelectric dilemma.

[..]

Conclusion

The hydroelectric energy challenge in Brazil has no clear solutions. However, what is clear is that the economic, social, and environmental costs of large hydroelectric projects like Belo Monte are unsustainable. At this time, Silva is unsure as to the proper allocation of her award funds in order to bring

relief to the largest number of people possible. Furthermore, she is going to conduct a careful evaluation of our research to see which of our recommendations is the most tangible and beneficial for her organization and mission goals.

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Tree Fish

Anna Morgenthaler

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit <https://www.colorado.edu/honorsjournal/sites/default/files/attached-files/treefish.pdf>

Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

—Albert Einstein

The intent of this project is to make teachers more aware of all aspects and features of dyslexia, and make them more capable of educating dyslexic students. Through compiling both biography and research, I hope to reanalyze our current understanding of dyslexia and propose a new, positive view and approach to it. I hope to deconstruct preconceived notions of what dyslexia is, provide a personal account to allow for a better understanding of the personal hurt and challenges the dyslexic student faces, and propose a new view of looking at dyslexia that considers not only its challenges, but more importantly, its strengths. I will provide resources for how to change not only individual thinking, but collective thinking, in the hopes of impacting the future education system. With the compilation of resources I have provided, I hope to illustrate how the positive features of dyslexia can be utilized in the classroom to help the dyslexic student develop, not only academically but emotionally as well, and to show how this more dynamic and integrated approach to teaching is beneficial for all students. This is not a guide to understanding the language-based challenges

of dyslexia, and how to “correct” or “cure” them. Rather, this is a detailed analysis of the dyslexic mind, its capabilities, the emotional and academic experience of being dyslexic, and how positivity and acknowledgment of the strengths of the dyslexic mind can allow for academic and general success.

I remember realizing for the first time that I was stupid. It was during my second grade DIBELS testing. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a short, one minute test that measures literacy skill acquisition (University of Oregon Center). It is a timed fluency measure that assesses the big ideas of reading—a dyslexic student’s worst nightmare. I was taken to the school library by a parent volunteer, who would be administering the test to collect data on my reading and comprehension skills for the school. We sat down at a table near the entrance, my pulse racing with apprehension, as the test administrator removed the instructions and read a passage from the folder in her hands. By this point in my life, I understood that I was not a good reader, and this was about to be proven. I was going to be asked to read aloud, racing against the clock,

and I was determined to succeed.

My tester read the instructions aloud; I would read a passage while she timed me, and at the end of one minute she was going to stop me and ask me some questions about what I had just read. She placed the passage in front of me, the end of each line labeled with a number that would later be used to calculate my score, then pressed the start button on the timer. *Beep.*

In one minute, I managed to make it about three lines or so down the page, stumbling and stuttering over the words. It was at the end of this one minute that I felt it. The thoughts and emotions of my tester poured off of her. She did not even have to say anything; I heard her thoughts, the general sentiment of which were, "Oh man, this kid is screwed." I felt her judgment, her negative analysis of me. I had been determined to prove my ability, but instead I had been dragged into the light, my challenges had been exposed, analyzed, and I had been found wanting. I felt how my performance defined me for this woman, how she understood me. I felt the weight of my performance, what it meant, its essential role in determining my intelligence and self-worth, and recognized that I had failed.

I cannot tell what the passage had been about, any more than I could have told my test administrator what it had been about on that day that I read it. However, I can still remember many of the obscure visual and poignant emotional details of that experience. I remember that the folder that the testing materials had been in was red, that the table we sat at was placed at the end of the first shelf of books in the library, and that the alphabetical label of this shelf was mounted on blue and lime-green paper. I can tell you that the table was round, the chairs incongruently

square, the tabletop a light grey encased in a pale artificial wood. I can tell you that a statue of Dobby the house elf, donated to the school upon the release of the second Harry Potter film, stood to my right beside the table, his tennis ball sized eyes staring in total terror of the monster that stood before him, his fear reflecting my own.

I can tell you all of these things for the same reason that I was unable to tell my test administrator what happened in the passage beyond the third line: I am dyslexic. My being dyslexic is what allowed for this moment to exist as it did, as it does in my memory, with the combination of the challenges I faced in acquiring reading and writing skills, the negative emotional impact that resulted from having such challenges, and the strong visual strengths that my dyslexic processing style has granted me.

[...]

Support: Recognizing Ability and the "So What?"

Fostering and supporting dyslexic students is essential in ensuring that these students' challenges with reading and writing do not become emotionally and academically disabling. Dyslexic students are constantly at risk of suffering from their apparent inferiority, as their contact with repeated failure can result in a sense of powerlessness. This constant negative emotional bombardment can lead to extreme self-deprecation and the understanding that their challenges are "permanent (or unchangeable), pervasive (affecting not only the areas where the failures occurred but every aspect of life), and personal (or due to some defect within themselves, which they believe to be inescapable or even deserving of punishment)" (Eide, 209).

To help limit the impact of these

negative emotional and psychological effects, teachers and other support structures should help the dyslexic student not only recognize, but utilize, their strengths and abilities. They should highlight the dyslexic learning style's tendencies toward late-blooming development, ensuring that the student understands that their challenges are surmountable. More than this, it is important to acknowledge how the strengths of the dyslexic mind can not only be used to cope with its challenges but also be used to open up unique and amazing opportunities for them. It is important to teach dyslexics that their "challenges are temporary and conquerable...and due to specific patterns of brain organization and function rather than to a lack of effort or merit on their part" (Eide, 209), to deter any tendency toward a fixed growth mindset. The support of teachers and parents in encouraging the "cans" of dyslexia, rather than the "can'ts" is crucial to the development of the student. The recognition and praise of hard work and strengths promotes future efforts and eventual growth.

Beyond encouraging the strengths of the dyslexic processing style, it is important to minimize the weight given to the weaknesses and challenges of the dyslexic mind—what I will refer to as the, "So what?" I encountered this approach of the "So what?" in one of my final tutoring sessions with Kelly. I had been seeing Kelly for almost four years at that point and had experienced exceptional growth in my reading and writing skills. I still struggled, and continue to struggle, with my spelling ability. My mom asked Kelly what the next step should be in helping me grow in my spelling capability. Kelly responded simply, "Anna is never going to be a great speller. So what?" At that moment, Kelly took the power away

from my weakness, not allowing it any unjust strength, and redirected the power to me. She empowered me and lent me strength that has kept me motivated throughout my schooling, despite my poor spelling and the self-consciousness I still experience about it.

Fast paced reading and proper spelling are just one part of the puzzle, and definitely not the most important pieces. There is so much more to the individual, and their abilities, than these challenges. These are challenges that one cannot only live with but thrive in spite of, as their talents and abilities exist beyond these weaknesses. Recognizing the quality of thinking that lies behind superficial errors is important for supporting the dyslexic student and correctly identifying their true intelligence and capabilities. It is not that these skills should not be worked toward or strengthened, but in most cases the dyslexic student is doing all they can to produce their best work, and the act of cluttering a paper with red ink is only detrimental. An act like this can be so devastating and defeating to the student, and yes, I speak from personal experience. What is one, or even twenty, misspelled or misread words, to an entire education; to a life; to an individual, their self-motivation, and their self-worth?

The education system should encourage the placing of dyslexic students' abilities, rather than their disabilities, at the center of what it means to be dyslexic. A revision of thinking would not only impact the way we educate and teach these individuals, but also the way these individuals feel about themselves, their abilities, and their futures. Dyslexia does not imply inevitable failure; like anything, it comes with its challenges, but also a set of strengths that can be utilized to not only cope with these challenges,

but help individuals accomplish significant achievements in a variety of fields.

Reshaping Education

The current structure of the education system allows students who learn differently, like dyslexic students, to be left behind. If they are to learn the skills and methods that work best for their way of thinking they are forced to learn these outside the “normal” classroom. So, perhaps it is time to consider making the classroom less “normal.” The current standardized education and testing system favors students with conventional learning styles and left-brain dominance. It values logical, analytical, and verbal learners, and disregards global, visual, and creative learners. The current education system lends no value to, and provides little acknowledgment of, visual and kinesthetic learning styles (Vlachos). Curriculums should be restructured to incorporate more dynamic lessons that appeal to a larger variety of learning styles. When teaching styles are compatible with student learning styles, students retain information longer, apply it more effectively, have a more positive attitude toward their subjects and are greater achievers (Vlachos, 2). This more dynamic and integrative style of teaching has been proven to be beneficial for not only dyslexic students, but students in general, through methods that embraced both Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences and Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences illustrates that all individuals learn through more than one style, in a range of intelligences, including: visual, naturalist, interpersonal, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, musical, mathematical and linguistic. Gardner argues that “a contrasting set of assumptions

is more likely to be educationally effective” than simply teaching to the more linguistic and logical-quantitative modes which the educational system tends towards (Gardner, 1992). It is recognized in the field of educational psychology that intelligence goes beyond test scores but encapsulates good judgment, intuition, forming relations, adaptation, purposeful action, planning, comparing memory, problem solving, all of which are things that the dyslexic processing style allows for exceptional performance in. Gardner’s approach to learning encourages the application of problem solving and creation in the classroom, which, as discussed above, is not only suited to benefit the strengths of the dyslexic learning style, but is proven by Gardner to benefit all students (Gardner and Hatch). This evidence supports the concept of not just asking students to remember, understand, and apply, but also to analyze, evaluate, and create, with their education. This concept is further supported by the structure of Bloom’s Taxonomy: a multi-tiered model used to classify thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity, which moves through the levels of remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create (Forehand). There is a call for the differentiation of curriculum that acknowledges students’ diverse strengths and abilities, rather than their deficits, and provides learning formats that cater to individual learning needs. A combination of the practices of Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, in tandem with the structure of Bloom’s taxonomy, allows for a more integrative and inclusive classroom, and has proven successful, through observational study, in helping students grow and hone their own personal learning styles, and achieve academic success (Noble).

...

Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

—Albert Einstein

What can we change? We cannot change the fish. It is and always will be a fish, as it should be. We cannot change the tree, it is necessary and important, it is a foundation of our society and an important foundation for every individual. But we can change the verb: “climb.” We need to recognize that there are so many ways to get to the top of the tree, all legitimate, and this should be supported and understood by the education system. The fish may not be the best climber, but it is an excellent swimmer. Educators and society in general should recognize this; they should respect, acknowledge, encourage, and utilize the strengths of individuals to help them reach their full potential. We need to change the verb, change our understanding and approach to dyslexia within education, so we can allow all students to see the view from the top of the tree.

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“Big Prawn’s” Little Pawns: Environmental Injustice in Bangladeshi Shrimping Aquaculture

Kela Fetters

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit <https://www.colorado.edu/honorsjournal/sites/default/files/attached-files/bigprawnslittlepawns.pdf>

Global demand for animal-source proteins has surged in concert with world population growth and rising incomes (Hilborn et al., 2018). Consumption of shrimp has dramatically increased in Western nations in the past several decades, fueling a lucrative shrimping industry in the Global South in coastal Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, and Thailand (Brototi, 2017). According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, shrimp is the world’s second most valuable seafood, after salmon (Shrimp Synopsis Report, 2015). In Bangladesh, tiger shrimp and their relatives have entered the cultural lexicon as “white gold” due to their high export value. The country’s southwest coastline and warm climate are ideal for shrimp aquaculture and prawn farming is currently one of the largest sectors of the national economy (Ahmed et al., 2017). But as the price of shrimp plummets in Western supermarkets, the rural poor of producer countries like Bangladesh bear the burden of the profit margin. The price tag on a bag of our favorite frozen prawn cannot capture the full socio-environmental cost of the animal’s cultivation and export. Equal parts ecosystem member and commodity good, shrimp satiate the appetite of the Global North at the expense of the environment and adjacent communities

in the Global South. In this paper, I will examine environmental injustice in Bangladeshi prawn farming, from farmer to food system, within the framework of global capitalism and political ecology.

Environmental injustices at the scale of the individual Bangladeshi include land dispossession, food insecurity, pollution of drinking water, poor working conditions, and impacts on health and education (Smash & Grab, 2003). The country’s most productive resources are its warm, wet coastlands, access to which sustains poor rural communities. Shrimp aquaculture requires large salinized ponds and pumping infrastructure; consequently, cropland traditionally used for rice and vegetable farming is repossessed, often forcibly, and inundated with saline water. As of 2003, an estimated 120,000 farmers in the Satkhira region alone endured land seizures due directly or indirectly to shrimp farming. Communities dispossessed of coastal and estuarine resources are vulnerable to increased poverty and food insecurity (Smash & Grab, 2003).

[..]

Women and young girls are disproportionately affected by sexual harassment and violence in the shrimping

industry. While rural women traditionally perform household-based agricultural activities like threshing, processing and storing produce, feeding and grazing livestock, and cooking and cleaning meals, shrimp farming has drawn females into new roles on shrimp depots, processing plants, and as collectors in saline ponds. Their transition into labor dominated by male superiors has been marked by sexual intimidation. In Katahali, a village in the Bagerhat district, 30 women were reported kidnapped and 150 reported rape in 1993 alone (Smash & Grab, 2003). The enervation of women’s well-being is one of the most egregious social costs of Bangladeshi shrimp farming.

Coastland conversion for intensive shrimp farming requires the transmogrification of an entire ecosystem. Mangrove forests permeate Bangladeshi intertidal zones; the carbon-rich trees play host to a litany of marine life. The country is home to Sundarban, the world’s largest mangrove forest and a UNESCO World Heritage site. This critical habitat is a nursing ground for hundreds of species of fish, shellfish, and crustaceans of value to subsistence harvesters (Ahmed et al., 2017). Additionally, mangrove forests are vital refuges for endangered river dolphins and crocodiles (Murky Waters, 2012). Due to a variety of ecosystem services, some reports suggest that the livelihoods of over 3.5 million Bangladeshi are directly or indirectly dependent on mangrove forests (Ahmed et al., 2017). Their destruction has implications for local food security, livelihood, and global carbon emissions. Shrimp farming is responsible for up to 38% of global mangrove forest loss; in Bangladesh, over 10,000 hectares of mangrove loss is attributed to the practice (Ahmed et al., 2017). In a poignant

example of ecological devastation, small-scale fishermen in the Bangladeshi village of Chokoria reported 80% declines in fish catches after mangrove destruction and dike construction for shrimp farming (Smash & Grab, 2003). Mangrove forests provide the indispensable ecosystem service of shoreline stability; their destruction engenders the inundation of coastal communities. In 1991, thousands died when a tidal wave overtook a coastal area swamped by shrimp farms. The same area was razed in 1960 by a wave of comparable magnitude, but mangrove forests had absorbed its force and mitigated damage (Ahmed et al., 2017).

Hardy et al.’s 2017 investigation of “racial coastal formation” contributes to the discourse on mangrove forest destruction. As the authors argue, environmental disasters related to coastal inundations are influenced by socio-ecological formations of coastal regions (Hardy et al., 2017). On the Bangladeshi coastline, poor communities are left vulnerable to environmental hazards like tidal wave inundations due to the destruction of formerly protective ecosystems. Oftentimes, inhabitants of flood-prone areas are reliant on prawn farming for income. As a result, the practice of shrimp-seedling catching and prawn rearing is indispensable to those who are most vulnerable to the consequences of mangrove forest destruction.

Where the forests are not damaged, the ecosystem is imperiled by the harvesting of wild shrimp larvae, which are used to stock the ponds of commercial aquaculture. A report by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation estimates that for every larva caught, an average of fifty juvenile fish die in the fine-mesh nets (Murky Waters, 2012). This practice results in the decimation of fish

stocks on which subsistence fishermen and endangered species rely.

The conversion of natural ecosystems into shrimp farms exemplifies the concentration of an open-access resource into a private, single-user one, sometimes termed the “tragedy of enclosures” in the parlance of urban political ecology (Truelove, 2011). In Bangladesh, the enclosure of mangrove ecosystems disrupts their constituent elements, as both local communities and endemic animals are endangered by habitat loss. Land values decrease by approximately \$10,000 per hectare when mangroves are cleared for shrimp culture (Ahmed et al., 2017). This fact calls into question the state-sanctioned enclosure of valuable native ecology in favor of export-oriented shrimping. Lucrative short-term profits may attract commercial shrimpers, but the long-term value of the ecosystem will degrade without sustainable management.

Historical-political processes lend context to the ecology of shrimp aquaculture (Amazu, 2018). On the scale of the food system, global market forces operate to reinforce injustices to individual Bangladeshi farmers. Global neoliberal ideology holds that market dynamics of consumer demand in the Global North result in increased production in the Global South. The shrimp industry is the second largest export industry in Bangladesh, worth US \$506 million in 2016 (Al-Amin & Alam, 2016). Total operational farming areas have increased in size from 3,500 hectares in the 1980s to 276,000 hectares in 2010. The shrimp sector is a significant component of the nation’s rural economy, reportedly employing over two million farmers on-site and in associated value chains (Ahmed et al., 2016).

A political ecology (PE) perspective deconstructs the politicization of ecological systems in terms of power structures and environmental decision-making (Amazu et al., 2018). In Paul Robbins’ *Political Ecology*, one functional definition of PE is the “study of the complex relations between nature and society through a careful analysis of what one might call the forms of access and control over resources and their implications for environmental health and sustainable livelihoods” (Robbins, 2004, p. 16). An application of PE with respect to Bangladeshi shrimp aquaculture dissects the social relations of production, property, and power in the context of the global agro-food system. According to a report in the *Journal of Rural Studies*, themes in political ecology include global value chains, “aquarian” transitions, primitive accumulation, gendered labor, and food sovereignty (Belton, 2016). A thorough study of access and control to shrimp is necessary to apply Robbins’ definition of political ecology. In Bangladesh, access and control to the resource of shrimp is not neutral, as revealed by historical analysis. In the 1980s, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other donor agencies imposed structural adjustment programs (SAPs) to incentivize export-oriented economic decisions (Adnan et al., 2007). These reforms were intended to enhance the productivity of “under-developed” countries through an economic system based on free-market values of privatization, deregulation, and liberalization. In order to obtain World Bank loans and assistance, Bangladesh was required to adopt the SAP model (Aminuzzaman et al., 1994). The World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funded Bangladesh’s

Shrimp Culture Project in 1986 and the Third Fishing Project in 1991 (Brototi et al., 2016). Pulido (2017) points to programs like these as the basis for a “neoliberalized racist state” in which the dynamics of global capitalism enable land appropriation, privatization or “enclosure,” and state-sanctioned violence. In this way, Western neoliberal policy induced the Bangladesh government to displace rice farmers in favor of high-value shrimp ponds (Belton et al., 2016). With significant foreign backing, state powers systematically dispossessed peasants of land and enclosed these ecosystems for export production in an iniquitous example of primitive accumulation. The transition from rice paddy-dominated subsistence agriculture and mangrove fishing to commercial aquaculture is an example of neoliberal globalization.

On the heels of rising demand from consumers in the US, Japan, and Europe, wealthy domestic interest groups lobbied the government for prioritization in the allotment of shrimping lands. Their influence prompted the 1992 Chingri Mahal (“Shrimp Zone Rules”), which rescinded de jure prioritization of poor peasants in state land allotment. Under the new code, the state turned a blind eye to the illegal use of force and manipulation of land records by wealthy interest groups (Adnan et al., 2007). In some cases, the state was actively involved in fraudulent land-grabbing. Armed exponents of political leaders used sluice gates in deltaic regions to flood cropland, forcing rural landowners and fishers out and creating saline pools for shrimp aquaculture (Greyl, 2016). As communities systematically lost access to traditional food production, their self-sufficiency declined and their dependence on the market for survival increased. As described previously, salinized soil induced

many farmers to sell their holdings to shrimp operators. One Salabunia villager reported that “[before shrimp farming] we always had rice in stock so there was no tension” (Belton, 2016, p. 46) Another Salabunia villager remarked that “[prior to the advent of shrimp aquaculture] we could produce everything, but now we have to buy every single thing” (Belton, 2016, pg. 46). Bangladeshi people who lost access to land altogether joined the aquaculture industry as laborers. This transition is culturally problematic as laborers are accorded much lower social status than farmers (Belton, 2016). Work on shrimp farms consists primarily of dike maintenance, pond guarding, and weed clearing. But as men increasingly migrate from their villages to find other labor, women perform low-level work on shrimp aquaculture operations. Statistics reveal the feminization of shrimping labor: 73% of depot workers and 65% of process plant laborers are women (Islam et al., 2003). While shrimp culture has opened up new avenues of employment for rural women, Truelove argues that “feminine” labor is often devalued. Indeed, women employed in shrimp aquaculture in Salabunia averaged a daily wage of just \$0.91 (Belton, 2016).
[..]

Shrimp is but one constituent of a global food system with externalities unknown or ignored by the average consumer. We are complicit in environmental injustice when we purchase food from the supermarket because the global food industry actively cloaks injustice in cheap price tags. The environmental impact of shrimp can be considered from perspectives such as inputs (energy, fresh water, labor), consequences (greenhouse-gas emissions, land-use change, habitat degradation), and, as emphasized by

an environmental justice approach, human impact (land dispossession, health violations) (Hilborn et al., 2018). The nebulosity of the environmental impacts of shrimp farming necessitates a multi-scalar, dynamic investigation. The state has operated in consonance with the global neoliberal agenda and reified a system of land dispossession and innumerable human rights violations. The nascent shrimp industry of the 1980s was touted by development agencies as an answer to Bangladesh's poverty and unemployment, but the economic benefits of the industry have accrued in the hands of wealthy operators while rural communities bear the brunt of the costs. If Bangladesh is to rely on shrimp farming as a substantial part of their economy in perpetuity, the state must regulate the industry to protect and benefit vulnerable communities. One solution might be sharecropping arrangements for shrimp ponds, which would allow farmers with limited capital to lease small shrimp aquaculture operations (Belton et al., 2016). Mangrove reforestation would improve biodiversity and enable the diversification of seafood exports, should the state government invest in sustainable fishing methods. Though the feminization of shrimp farming in the present form devalues women's labor, there is an opportunity for empowerment. If women are provided a fair income unattached to male earnings, then they will have more influence in household decision-making. Finally, there is evidence to suggest that diversified or integrated farming is a sustainable alternative to shrimp monoculture. In one Bangladeshi village, Bilpabla, farmers rotated production of shrimp with rice, vegetables, and small fish as opposed to year-round shrimp cultivation. The result was higher levels of food sovereignty as

households generated both subsistence and a marketable surplus of diverse crops, high local wages, and equitable land allotment through healthy rental markets (Belton et al., 2016). To revisit the political ecology perspective, political decisions regarding shrimp aquaculture implementation and regulation have exploited and thereby perpetuated inequalities. Bilateral agencies like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank funded the rapid and poorly-regulated expansion of the shrimp farming industry, and now donor agencies have an incentive to provide financial and technical assistance in a just, humane manner. Aid requires a foundational shift to indemnify the ecosystems it has traditionally sacrificed; this may include mangrove forest restoration, long-term social benefit programs, robust stakeholder analysis, and penalties for bad actors.

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HUMANITIES