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Vaccinating the Poor. Wood Engraving by Sol Eytinge Jr., 1873. Images from the History of Medicine (IHM) Collection, NIH National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD, http://resource.nlm.nih.gov/101392773.

Abstract: *A group of men, women, and children, black and white, observe a physician as he vaccinates the tattooed left arm of a burly young man.*

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Before Fake News: How Federal Agencies Wrestled with Responding to Rumors in World War II

Mordecai Lee

Introduction: Public Administration and Rumors, Then and Now

Rumors are part of life. However, with the emergence of social media, rumors are no longer limited to whispers moving slowly from one person to another. Now they can go viral globally in a matter of minutes. Sometimes rumors end up being true, but just as many likely are false. The 2020s seemed to embody ever-higher levels of rumor-based public conversation, particularly about the COVID-19 pandemic and claims of the 2020 presidential election was stolen. President Trump's frequent claims of fake news often included assertions of alternate facts, something of a modern synonym for rumors. This pattern of behavior, that seemed to metastasize over time, undermining what was factual and what not, giving seemingly equal credibility to rumors and 'alternate facts' he repeatedly asserted regardless of circumstances (Goodsell 2019, 872; T. Lee 2019; Gaozhao 2021).

There is an overlap between the traditional concept of rumors and the relatively new phenomenon of fake news claims. Both are likely to be a mixture of false information along with a nugget of truth. It is often hard to unweave those two strands. The emergence of media features to deal with this include Snopes, FactCheck.org, the *Washington Post*'s designation of the number of Pinocchios a claim deserves, and the *New York Times*' fact-checking. They all highlight not only the frequent need for a binary true-false judgment, but often the need to assess the degree of the mix between true and false, by using such categories as partly true and partly false.

The growth of social media has also made it easier for organizational leaders in all sectors of the political economy to become aware of rumors and assertions of fake news. Now, it is possible to learn quickly the specifics of what is being claimed, and then to decide promptly on a response strategy. The obvious choices include a denial, a clarification of what is true and what isn't, a decision not to respond publicly, or a decision to try to smother the rumor or fake news report with information serving as an implicit refutation. (Another alternative limited to law enforcement and criminal justice agencies regarding investigations is a justifiable "neither confirm nor deny.")

Business corporations and nonprofits can usually be relatively agile in confronting rumors and fake news and then deciding on a response strategy. On the other hand, in public administration, government agencies often are constrained by multiple and sometimes conflicting perspectives, stakeholders, legal restrictions, and overseers. As Sayre quipped in the 1950s, "business and public administration are alike only in all unimportant respects" (1958, 245). Much more recently, Bannister identified 19 important characteristics that distinguish e-government from its counterpart activity in the business sector (2010, 42). How should today's public administrators respond to rumors and fake news? History can help. This inquiry tries to draw lessons from the experiences of federal agencies in WWII when rumors abounded. Even though today's media and technology are enormously different from the 1940s, there can be value to examining history for potential lessons. Indeed, while today's communications environment is based on new tools, it is at heart not new territory. Looking back can help us look ahead.

This historical case study examines how public administrators struggled to develop PR strategies to deal with rumors in World War II. At the time, there was no widely accepted formula, let alone across-the-board conventional wisdom. Different federal agencies variously tried to suppress rumors, smother them with counter-information, or rebut them. During the war, mass communication was largely limited to print and radio, making it harder than today to locate and hear rumors, harder to assess them, and harder to decide how to react. Nonetheless, like today, agencies had three basic options, none particularly appealing. First, they could ignore a rumor and hope it would die out of its own accord and not do too much damage. Second, they could publicly deny it with a factual counter-version. However, doing that might have the effect of further spreading the original rumor and giving it new life. Third, they could try to set the record straight without reference to the rumor itself. This would only be effective if the audience on their own made the link between the new information and the rumor. (The fourth option, used in law enforcement and criminal justice, is to neither confirm nor deny rumors about investigations. However, this approach is not applicable to public administration in fields outside of law enforcement and investigations. Therefore, it is not discussed in this case study.)

History can contribute to the public administration literature in two ways. First, as so-called "pure history" or "history as history," it is valuable for its own sake by filling in missing gaps in the literature. Gibson and Stolcis noted that public administration pedagogy often relegates "the history of public administration to the dusty backbench of the discipline's historical structure" (2006, 67). Lee called for revitalizing public administration history, arguing that the absence of historical knowledge can lead to "an inaccurate sense of modern practice occurring in a vacuum, even of newness, which can be quite inaccurate. Therefore, historical knowledge can help contemporary researchers by adding perspective and context to the subjects being examined" (M. Lee 2021, 1008). Given that little has been published on this particular subject, this reconstruction of a relatively unknown story adds to public administration history and knowledge.

Second, even though history never repeats itself exactly, lessons from the past can suggest some general applicability to the present. While not providing explicit and detailed applied guidance for managers in the 21st century, this WWII history examines the options and dilemmas that public administrators faced regarding rumors and fake news. This approach was exemplified by Goodsell's case study of the early New Deal and the lessons for the federal response to Covid (2020). As an exploratory case study, this inquiry identifies some potential applied knowledge for

managers in a time of social media, fake news, and omnipresent rumors. Notwithstanding the enormous changes in communications technology and American society, the inherent alternatives for rumor and fake news counterstrategy remain largely the same as what confronted wartime public administrators. To respond or not to respond, that is the question.

Literature Review, Methodology, and Structure

WWII spawned seminal academic and practitioner literature on rumors. Originating in social psychology, Harvard's Gordon Allport was one of the first to research rumors during the war, including encouraging creation of local rumor clinics and a recurring rumor column in the *Boston Herald* (McCormick 1942; "Rumor Clinic" 1942; G. Allport & Murray 1943; G. Allport & Postman 1947). His work encouraged others during and after the war (F. Allport & Lepkin 1945; Knapp 1944).

Since then, rumor research splayed out to other disciplines including public relations, corporate marketing, brand management, history, public health, law, and business administration. Twenty-first-century book-length scholarship has been extensive, including a history of three 1950s federal officials who focused on gossip for their reputations (Elias 2021), vaccinations, and public health (Larson 2020; J. Lee 2014; Kitta 2012), rumor control efforts in the 1960s urban riots (Young, Pinkerton & Dodds 2014), internet-based rumors in Asia (Dalziel 2013), difficulty dealing with rumors (Sunstein 2009), reputational impacts (Solove 2007), psychology-based social and organizational approaches (DiFonzo and Bordia 2007), behavioral finance (Schindler 2007), and a how-to guide for business managers (Kimmel 2004).

In the 21st century, literature relevant to American public administration and rumors have come from a variety of disciplines, but overall have been modest. It includes political science, history, public relations, and communications (Bowen and Lovari 2022, 190-93; Alaimo 2022, 130; Sparrow 2015; 2011, 84-89; Faye 2007). A few international academics have also recently published research relating to rumors and public administration, including municipal administration in an Indonesian city and how government agencies in Arab and Muslim countries should combat electronic rumors (Susanti, Rahmanto, and Wijaya 2022; Hindawy 2021).

In public administration history, just before WWII, McCamy argued that agencies had the obligation to respond to attacks (impliedly including malicious rumors) by issuing "counter releases" to the press and "counter messages" through radio and pamphlets (1939, 307). During the war, Friedrich urged agencies to pay attention to rumors, but he presciently noted the fixed dilemma for public administrators because "rigid rules for such strategy cannot be formulated, because the strategy needs to be shaped in the light of the total situation" (1943, 83).

The research methodology for this historical case study relied on triangulation, a mainstream historical research technique recommended by McNabb for political science (2021, 280, 366). Similarly, the methodological literature on conducting case studies in public administration also recommends triangulation as a research approach (Graham 2011, 13; Luton 2010, 135). The benefit of such a methodology is identifying several independent primary sources. In this case study, these sources have been archival collections, contemporaneous official federal publications, and

contemporaneous media coverage. Using these three independent historical sources facilitated constructing a balanced account of how agencies combated rumors.

The main archival source was the World War II Rumor Project at the Library of Congress (2022, henceforth Rumor Archive). Other archival sources included the Special Collections at Northwestern University, Archives of Vassar College, FDR Presidential Library, and University of Tennessee-Knoxville Special Collections. For official government documents used as sources, most federal publications were located in library collections via WorldCat/OCLC. Some were formally published by the US Government Printing Office, while others were mostly mimeograph publications issued directly by federal agencies. Media coverage came from the historical online databases of ProQuest Historical Newspapers, NewspaperArchive.com, and the Library of Congress's website "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers." When helpful, a few secondary sources were used to buttress the narrative.

The historical context for studying anti-rumor strategies in WWII is the record of the federal government during World War I. According to Hamilton, "unfounded rumors vexed the [federal] government" during (what was called) the Great War (2020, 200). In response, President Wilson signed an executive order creating the Committee on Public Information (CPI). CPI claimed that *all* anti-war rumors circulating in the US originated with German agents. The agency also sought to stomp out legitimate criticism of the government's war effort as disloyal and unpatriotic (ibid, 200-201). While CPI sometimes published pamphlets repeating the rumors and then rebutting them (CPI 1918a), it mostly focused on trying to stop them by urging citizens who were told a rumor to turn to the rumor spreader by asking, "Where did you get your facts?" (CPI 1918b). CPI was the most relevant precedent for the federal government to determine anti-rumor strategies during WWII.

The structure of the case study begins with FDR's leadership vis-à-vis wartime rumors. Then it follows in chronological order the efforts by executive branch-wide agencies to develop a consistent and comprehensive strategy for dealing with wartime rumors. Their work can be considered a horizontal approach for an across-the-board federal policy. That is followed by an examination of the counterpart anti-rumor strategies of several key agencies that were particularly impacted by wartime rumors. As vertical siloes within the executive branch, they faced more pointed and individualistic dilemmas created by rumors related to their specific field of activity. The presentation about those agencies is in rough chronological order but, by necessity, sometimes overlapping.

President Roosevelt's Personal Attempts to Deal with Rumors in WWII

FDR had experienced CPI's work as assistant secretary of the Navy during WWI. As president, Roosevelt repeatedly tried to discourage wartime rumors but without being quite as heavy-handed, accusatory, and propagandistic as CPI. At a press conference in February 1942, he sharply criticized rumormongers in the capital. This city "is the worst rumor factory, and therefore the source of more lies that are spoken and printed throughout the United States" (Roosevelt 1972, 19:148). The next week, in a radio fireside chat, he faced the subject head-on:

> You and I have the utmost contempt for Americans who, since Pearl Harbor, have whispered or announced 'off the record' that there was no longer any Pacific Fleet – that the fleet was all sunk or destroyed on December 7 – that more than a thousand of our planes were destroyed on the ground. They have suggested slyly that the Government has withheld the truth about casualties – that eleven or twelve thousand men were killed at Pearl Harbor instead of the figures as officially announced. They have even served the enemy propagandists by spreading the incredible story that shiploads of bodies of our honored American dead were about to arrive in New York Harbor to be put into a common grave. (Roosevelt 1969, 1942:111)

During the war, the subject continued to come up in press conferences. For example, in 1943 he lashed out at the news media for coverage that was a mix of facts, rumors, guesswork, insinuations, and innuendo (Roosevelt 1972, 22:105-112). In reaction to the Battle of the Bulge, FDR somewhat echoed CPI's aggressive stance about rumors originating from America's enemies. In a radio talk in January 1945, he said:

> I would express a most serious warning against the poisonous effects of enemy propaganda. … Every little rumor which is intended to weaken our faith in our Allies is like an actual enemy agent in our midst – seeking to sabotage our war effort. There are, here and there, evil and baseless rumors against the Russians – rumors against the British – rumors against our own American commanders in the field. When you examine these rumors closely, you will observe that every one of them bears the same trademark – "Made in Germany." We must resist this propaganda – we must destroy it – with the same strength and the same determination that our fighting men are displaying as they resist and destroy the panzer divisions. (Roosevelt 1969, 1944-45:508-509)

Struggling to Develop a Whole-of-Government Anti-Rumor Strategy: The Office of Facts and Figures, 1941-1942

Criticisms of Roosevelt, especially from conservatives, often framed the pre-Pearl Harbor production mobilization (and, later, the war effort) as "the mess in Washington." They claimed FDR was bungling the management of these efforts. They produced a continuous stream of accusations and innuendo and were often reported by the mainstream media as straight news. After all, if a US Senator or leading industrialist said it, then surely it was newsworthy.

During the pre-war national defense mobilization, Roosevelt created the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF). Its ostensible mission was to reduce the confusion of seemingly conflicting production statistics released by a multiplicity of federal agencies involved in that effort. Headed by Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish, OFF staff comprised "one of the most erudite groups in Washington – was handpicked and noted for intelligence, integrity, and ability" (Weinberg 1968, 75). In a sense, OFF was an opposite-world CPI, seeking to deal with rumors from a more positive, fact-based, and high-end perspective than CPI's near-hysterical and suppressive approach.

OFF's Bureau of Intelligence (BOI) focus included "to know whether there are forces at work in the community which may disrupt public confidence and how such forces may be counteracted."

This included monitoring "the effect of enemy propaganda" and "how the public is being informed or misinformed" (Kane 1942a, 215). A small Rumor Study Unit was eventually created deep in the Bureau's org chart, within the Area Studies Section of the Special Services Division. "It catalogs rumors reported from all parts of the country on the basis of their psychological motivation and their subject matter. Since rumors stem, in large measure, from ignorance, hostility, and anxiety, a measurement of their growth provides rough clues to the spheres in which informational efforts are needed" (Barth 1943, 73).

A month after Pearl Harbor, MacLeish was concerned that "one of the favorite propaganda tactics of the enemy is to broadcast exaggerated rumors partly to spread confusion and consternation and partly to force denials and thus receive information as to the location of forces." He favored a relatively soft response to rumors: "As soon as the facts can be told without aiding the enemy, they will be announced officially" (OFF 1942a, 56). With that approach, the release of information did not have to include repeating the rumor or even noting the implicit focus of knocking it down. A reporter depicted this approach as "how these channels are used by the enemy, and where further information is needed" ("Strategy of Truth," 1942).

One of OFF's early use of wartime polling was a January 1942 survey focused on citizens' views of how the government should handle war news. About half preferred that war news come from official government spokespersons rather than unfettered news media. One of their major reasons was because they wanted "to get rid of speculations, false rumors, personal viewpoints, sensationalism, [and] propaganda from newspapers and radio" (OFF 1942b, 9). However, another poll in March stated, "Almost half of the people felt that the news which the Government does release is an *inaccurate* picture of the true situation," hence making them open to non-governmental sources of information (OFF 1942c, emphasis in original). OFF began using posters to convey the importance of staying mum about the war. A February poster stated, "The Enemy is listening. He wants to know what you know. Keep it to yourself" ("Enemy is listening," 1942). This and subsequent posters weren't explicitly about rumormongering, but the underlying message included tamping down on repeating rumors.

In March, OFF released a report on Nazi propaganda that was successfully seeping into circulation through rumors and even irresponsible media coverage. It described the goal of Nazi propaganda as one of "divide and conquer," trying to repeat its success at demoralizing France before attacking it. Now, those tactics were aimed at Americans. "With this strategy of deceit, Hitler succeeded in duping many loyal Americans. Many rumors, all of them false, were spread throughout the country. … According to rumors, maneuvers were being held in localities so infested with rattlesnakes that thousands of soldiers were dying of snake bits. … German short-wave [radio] stories of losses at Pearl Harbor, for example, gave the signal for the Hitler agents to spread rumors that we had lost our fleet, and that our naval officials were traitors" (OFF 1942d, 13-14).

Within the Intelligence Bureau, there was a vague consensus that somebody in the national government ought to be doing something about rumors. But who and what exactly? OFF, the US Office of Education (in the Federal Security Agency), and the Psychology Division of the Office of Coordinator of Information drafted a report titled "A Project for the Analysis of Rumors." The idea was a coordinated program to deal with rumors and would include a federally approved national network of 25 rumor clinics, each affiliated with a local university. The latter qualification

was partly to promote a relatively systematic and academically respectable approach to collecting and responding to rumors. However, OFF quickly had second thoughts. Receiving incoming reports from the field on rumors seemed like a good enough idea (Faye 2007). But then what? OFF was leery of committing to a reciprocal stage by "which material is to be sent back to the clinics for local dissemination" (DuBois, 1942).

Instead, OFF leaned toward a more centralized process of deciding what outgoing information to counteract rumors should be released and generally controlling it every step after receiving field reports. By late February, OFF was getting very cold feet on the tri-agency project. In a frank letter to the Education Commissioner, MacLeish said he now realized the premise of the local college-affiliated rumor clinics included that they "would be making and publicizing their own analyses of some of the rumors they come upon." He feared such activities would lead to "public discussion without centralized control [and] would tend to spread rumors rather than kill them." Therefore, he opposed further implementing the plan without additional examination (MacLeish 1942).

Gradually OFF developed a "catch and kill" rumor strategy (Kane 1942b). First, it should seek to gather intelligence from the field about rumors circulating around the country with an emphasis on limiting reporting to field staff of federal agencies, presumably more reliable, disciplined, and professional than rank-and-file citizens. Second, it should filter reports to identify rumors that appeared to be in wide circulation as opposed to the odd local rumor. Third, OFF should not support independent local efforts by rumor clinics, newspapers, and universities to *counteract* rumors. Fourth, OFF itself should not directly counteract a rumor because that would amplify the rumor further. Instead, working with the news media, it should seek indirectly to smother a rumor by flooding the news with information impliedly refuting it (Shils 1942). Fifth, there would probably be a need for continuing generic public service campaigns to discourage citizens from repeating rumors to others.

On June 10, BOI head Kane replied to an inquiry from the Westinghouse radio network. It had notified him of some damaging rumors circulating at a GE plant in Fort Wayne (IN). Should it air any programming to counteract the rumors? Kane discouraged the network executive from doing that because it would "increase the circulation of the rumor [rather] than neutralize it." Instead, he suggested one-on-one personal conversations between those circulating the rumors and those knowing it was false (Kane 1942c).

Three days later, FDR terminated OFF's existence. He created the Office of War Information (OWI) by amalgamating OFF, the Office of Government Reports, the Division of Information in the Office for Emergency Management, and parts of the Coordinator of Information. Now, a formal government-wide policy on rumors would have to begin all over again.

Struggling to Develop a Whole-of-Government Anti-Rumor Strategy: The Office of War Information, 1942-1943

FDR appointed Elmer Davis, a popular radio news commentator to head of OWI. BOI's Kane sought to jumpstart the languishing rumor project by requesting a comprehensive report "on [the] nature and prevalence of rumors" (Katz 1942a). Eugene Horowitz, a carryover staffer from OFF

was tapped to head the effort. Horowitz was a social psychologist with a Ph.D. from Columbia (US House 1943, 917). As an academic, he sought an organized, data-based research approach to undergird any potential policy on rumors. For example, BOI needed to define what a rumor was (and was not) before any field collections of rumors. Thinking ahead about what BOI staff would actually *do* with any information it collected, he suggested what would now be called beta testing before any broad-scale effort (Horowitz 1942).

The first wave of field reports for a two-week period in August flooded Horowitz with about 3,000 rumors. They came from "rumor wardens" selected by staffers in OWI's 31 field offices and from 150 local offices of FSA (such as Social Security branch offices). Some relatively common and recurring rumors were anti-British, anti-Semitic, and anti-Black. The latter included a rumor that was so prevalent in the South that it became the subject of media coverage: the supposed existence of Eleanor Clubs. These were allegedly African American women employed as domestics who were supposedly encouraged by the First Lady to organize and escape their artificially low pay and limited economic prospects. With the wartime labor shortage, domestics allegedly had leverage to insist on pay raises or quitting for better-paying war work (Campbell 2020, 148). Davis denounced the rumor and, after an investigation, the FBI could not document it ("Lauds 4 editors," 1942; "First Lady says," 1942). An OWI field staffer in Virginia felt "the shoe was on the wrong foot – if anybody needed protection it was not the white people, but the Negroes needed protection from the whites" (Stevens 1942).

Besides the broad scope of these field reports, BOI also arranged an in-depth open-ended survey of public opinion in New Brunswick (NJ) and Portland (ME), both relatively small towns dwarfed by large military installations (OWI 1942e). The reality of dealing with this much data was daunting. During September, Horowitz and colleagues tried their social science best to draw conclusions from the tsunami of information they received. Finally, on September 30, BOI issued *Rumors in Wartime,* a confidential report to several hundred people inside the executive branch. Skipping the difficulty of a uniform and universal definition of a rumor, the report presented a typology of rumors: hostility (i.e., prejudice), anxiety, and escape. As a broad generalization, rumor spreaders were more likely to be citizens who were well-informed and had many social contacts rather than those lower on the socio-economic scale. Generally, Americans believed about 70% of the rumors they heard (OWI 1942a). Confronting the assumption that many rumors came from enemy propaganda, the report admitted to an overlap between rumors and enemy propaganda. But it emphasized that "there is no conclusive evidence to prove that rumors circulating in America had enemy inspiration" (p. 15). The report concluded:

> Rumor denial, while of some value in combatting rumors of a local nature, seems an inadequate means of meeting the problem as a whole. Such underlying psychological factors as tension and prejudice cannot be removed through direct negation. Positive information designed to overcome the tension and prejudice stands a better chance of minimizing rumor than authoritative rebuttals of the rumors themselves. Local campaigns to counteract rumors have a limited usefulness. There is a danger that they may, if carelessly directed, spread the rumors which they seek to scotch. They need careful supervision and coordination with federal policy. (pp. 17-18)

Kane sent copy #1 to FDR (1942d). Evidently based on a leak, a story in early October said OWI "has uncovered an amazing anti-war 'rumor factory' … Officials say they are 'amazed' and 'astounded'." The reporter had a relatively good source, correctly saying that OWI was preparing an internal report and that it was considering asking the news media "to help refute enormous lies founded on half-truths" (Weller 1942).

BOI's next step was to invite a couple more rounds of rumor warden reports. At this point, Leo Rosten, an assistant director of OWI's Domestic Branch (including BOI), got involved. He was at the agency's "policy level" (Katz 1942b), making him high enough in the hierarchy to decide an authoritative rumor policy. Rosten was an unorthodox figure. He had a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Chicago and had been on the staff of the President's Committee on Administrative Management (aka the Brownlow Committee). His dissertation was a social science-based study of the capital's press corps. He then moved to Los Angeles and did the same for Hollywood. Both books successfully straddled the line between popular and academic audiences. From there he dabbled in screenwriting and light fiction such as "The Education of Hyman Kaplan." In the run-up to WWII, he worked for the federal Division of Information and then OFF liaising with Hollywood studios ("Job of clarifying war," 1942). He encouraged the industry to produce feature films, documentaries, and shorts that promoted national morale. Moving with OFF to OWI, he had a broad portfolio for domestic communication.

In a series of meetings with Horowitz and other BOI staff in October, Rosten developed a firm OWI rumor policy. He wanted to discourage local rumor clinics while encouraging national magazines to write about rumors without repeating any specifics. The rumor control unit then developed a packet to reply to inquiries from a newspaper, civic group, or local unit of government about creating a rumor clinic. Slyly, it included a "Questionnaire for Local Rumor Control Projects" with 30 highly detailed questions on the project's sponsorship, supervision, community representation, expert consultants, research staff, field reporters, and finances. Along with the questionnaire, came a diagram of a "Model" organization chart. It was complicated, with 15 lines and arrows indicating how the flow of information would be expected to be structured (OWI 1942b). OWI stated that when it received a *completed* questionnaire, it would then send a working guide for use in the day-to-day operations of the local rumor clinic. In reality, it was creating so high a hurdle as to prevent virtually everyone. When the monthly magazine of the Jewish War Veterans published a story about creating local rumor clinics, it included this unambiguous guidance from OWI:

> **Caution:** Before any newspaper starts a "Rumor Clinic" it might be well to communicate with the Office of War Information, who have a questionnaire and some advice on the conduct of such a column. … When run properly such a column can be of inestimable good, but it is obvious that such a column if not done properly, might succeed in spreading rather than curbing rumors. ("Have you?" 1942, 11)

By early November, BOI's form letters on the subject had changed markedly to reflect Rosten's decisions. Responding to a query from a citizen, Kane wrote that "direct denial is not necessarily the most effective method of scotching rumors. Their appeal is apt to be to the emotions rather than the intellect, and the factual refutation often falls short of the mark." Instead, OWI's stance was that "it is best to concentrate our energy, not on fighting rumors that have sprung up but rather

on building a strong body of enlightened public opinion which is the best defense against divisionist [*sic*] and defeatist misstatements" (Kane 1942e).

Rosten now focused on a major PR campaign on rumors. He persuaded Davis to give a national radio address on "War Information and Military Security" on November 19. Without naming names, Davis fiercely criticized members of Congress returning from visiting the Pacific who were spreading rumors about Navy defeats there and that OWI was covering it up with happy talk. He called rumors "phonies" (a term Rosten suggested) and emphasized that the government was releasing all news – good or bad – short of revealing military secrets. Not all rumors originated with malicious intent, he said:

> I have cited some of the rumors that were current last month; I do not know who started them or why; but some rumors that have been traced down have started with the innocent misunderstanding of some small fact, and in no time that tiny kernel of fact has sprouted into a regular jungle growth of fiction. In those cases there was no evil intention – only a gullible willingness to believe the worst, whether it was so or not. I don't know what the government can do about that. We are trying not to fool the people, but we can't do much for citizens who insist on fooling themselves. (Davis 1942, 6)

The headline in the *Times* captured his message concisely: "Davis Denounces Rumor Mongering" (1942).

A few days later, OWI issued a three-page press release explaining its rumor policy. After analyzing more than 4,500 rumors and "in response to an increasing number of requests from newspapers, civic groups, and individual citizens for information on what they can do to guard against rumors and rumor-mongers" it described a typology of rumors: hate (the most prevalent), anxiety, escape, supernatural, and curiosity. It also discounted wild claims that most rumors had their origins in enemy propaganda. OWI encouraged individual citizens to follow five principles:

1. Never repeat a rumor.
2. Do not repeat a rumor verbally even to deny it.
3. If you know the facts which can spike a rumor, cite the facts promptly.
4. If you do not know the facts which can stop a rumor, ask the rumor-teller where he got his facts.
5. Don't give a rumor the benefit of any doubt.

Along with that, OWI endorsed how "the press and radio are fighting rumors – not by the endless process of denying each rumor, but by blanketing the rumors with authoritative information" (OWI 1942c).

OWI also used social science research to evolve a rumor policy for radio. A researcher at Columbia's Bureau of Applied Social Research had conducted an empirical study of the impact of three radio programs intended to refute rumors. He concluded that radio was not an effective medium to counteract rumors (Wiebe 1942). Reflecting on his conclusions, in December 1942, OWI sent a report to all radio stations with recommendations on dealing with rumors. "An anti-rumor program – when conducted without a realization of the dangers involved – may well have undesirable

results" (OWI 1942d, 2, underlining in original). The results of the Columbia study were "the inescapable conclusion that a rumor which has been broadcast is a rumor that will be remembered" (4, underlining in original). Therefore, it recommended that radio stations regularly broadcast programs addressing the implicit subjects of rumors, with themes like "Did You Know?" and "Things You Should Know" (6). OWI's across-the-board mantra was that "the best antidote for rumor is information" (8, underlining in original).

By the end of 1942, OWI's rumor policy had settled into orthodoxy. It shifted focus from soliciting field reports to wide circulation of its guidelines internally and publicly. In early 1943, it released "Rumors in Wartime," a confidential report with guidance for senior federal officials and the Allies (OWI 1943c). Its public-facing efforts also reflected its now-settled policy on rumors. The *Sunday Magazine* of the *New York Times* included an article about "The War on Lies." The reporter wrote that OWI's "rumor-scotching bureau" had now received and analyzed 5,000 rumors. This "rumor-spiking department…lives in constant dread" that local rumor clinics and newspaper columns (now numbering about 40) were "going to make a rumor worse by printing it and denying it in the wrong manner" (Shalett 1943). In May, as part of OWI's widely distributed series of *Information Guides* aimed at the general citizenry, it concisely presented its policy. "Fighting rumors is a complicated, technical task that…presents many problems in public information, military security, and the broad field of social psychology." Tepidly endorsing local rumor clinics, OWI emphasized that the focus should be on "information drives which do not repeat rumors." In general, "it is not practical to combat rumors on a nation-wide scale. Most of them crop up locally and need treatment as local information gaps" (OWI 1943d). Rosten was OWI's public spokesperson on information policy, speaking on two national radio programs and at Vassar College (Rosten 1942; 1943a; 1943b).

Congress largely defunded OWI's Domestic Branch effective June 30, 1943 (Winkler 1978, 70-72). Its anti-rumor activities now evaporated, and Rosten and Horowitz departed OWI.[1]

Anti-Rumor Strategies by Individual Agencies: The Military and the Office of Price Administration

While griping is part of military life, the services tried to suppress rumors as much as possible. The Navy warned new sailors, "*Don't repeat scuttlebutt* about military subjects. Challenge all rumors and harmful stories about our allies, our inefficiencies or mistakes, the enemy's strength, race dissension or breaches of discipline. Keep scuttlebutt to yourself and tell your shipmates to do the same" (US Navy 1944, 88, emphasis in original). The Marines issued a poster stating, "Blackout—The Rumors!! Silence Saves Lives" (Smithsonian, 2022). One of the most widely repeated rumors in the Pacific Theater was that anyone with VD would be quarantined on an island off California before discharge. "The story circulated so widely that Mrs. Roosevelt had to issue a denial" (Kennett 1997, 132).

There was probably no wartime federal agency more unpopular than the one dealing with prices and inflation. Consumers griped about shortages and rationing while producers complained loudly about unfair price regulation. Business lobbies and Congressional conservatives were glad to stoke the fire. Before Pearl Harbor, Leon Henderson headed the price stabilization effort, first in the

National Defense Advisory Commission. After Pearl Harbor, it became the Office of Price Administration (OPA).

As early as September 1940, Henderson was batting down rumors by explicitly denying them. This first occurred regarding excessive increases in lumber prices due to expectations about defense needs crowding out civilian needs. He said that any preemptive price increases were based on "unfounded rumors." He asserted that current production levels were adequate to serve civilian needs as well as acquisition of lumber for new army camps (National Defense Advisory Commission 1950, PR 95).

That was just the beginning. A postwar in-house history of OPA noted the unremitting rumors and criticisms. There was routine dynamic that played itself out repeatedly: "If a reporter heard a trade rumor, or shrewdly put bits of evidence together to make a guess in a 'dope story,' and asked for confirmation – or published it first and let readers inquire – what was OPA to say? The record suggests that [the office of public] Information was unskilled in dissembling" (Mansfield 1948, 304). This had the effect of further encouraging reporters to write about rumors and for critics to feed them more – even if wholly invented. Looking back on OPA's rumor strategy after the war, the historians concluded that the tidal waves of rumors attacking the agency were being generated by those who would never stop their "half-truths and innuendos." When dealing "with irreconcilable antagonists, individuals or organizations, none of the possible tactics open to OPA comported very well with the goal of winning confidence and consent through understanding. Candor and education presupposed an open-minded audience; when minds were closed the question became simply one of political victory or defeat" (318). Notwithstanding this fatalistic perspective, "it was OPA policy to react vigorously, however, to criticism believed to be unjustified, and to misstatements of fact; and the agency defended its right to keep the record straight" (317).

Anti-Rumor Strategies by Individual Agencies: Lend-Lease, 1941-1945

President Roosevelt's pre-Pearl Harbor effort to help Great Britain fend off Nazi Germany led to the creation of Lend-Lease of the US providing it with military materiel and farm goods. To sell his idea to the public, he used an instantly understandable metaphor in a fireside chat on the radio. If my neighbor's house is on fire, wouldn't it be in my interest to lend him my water hose? Congressional approval was a major accomplishment in face of fierce opposition by isolationists and the peace movement, such as the America First Committee and its marquee spokesperson, Charles Lindbergh. After Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in mid-1941, FDR quickly expanded Lend-Lease to assist Stalin. Once the US joined the war, Lend-Lease was expanded to all the allies fighting Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Naturally, some military assistance, such as bullets, could not be returned. Instead, a program called reverse lend-lease calculated spending by the recipient nation to assist the US's military effort as the way lend-lease funds were paid back. Examples included building an airfield for use by the Army Air Force or providing food and clothing for US service members stationed in that country.

Even after Congress passed Lend-Lease, isolationists didn't give up. Their criticism of Lend-Lease continued at a high pitch. For example, at a press conference on August 26, 1941, FDR was asked by reporters about a newspaper story alleging misuse of Lend-Lease funds. He forcefully answered that such stories were "vicious rumors, or distortions of fact, or falsehoods." He then carefully added that his comment was "not a denial" (Roosevelt 1969, 1941:346). In other words, reporters could not file a story with the lead of "President denied the report that…" FDR understood that an on-the-record *denial* of a rumor had the effect of keeping it alive as well as giving it further credence because a denial was merely half of the conventional journalistic trope (later called) he-said-she-said.

Even after Pearl Harbor, Lend-Lease had only moderate support from public opinion. For example, the anti-FDR *Chicago Tribune*, while conceding it supported the war, continued to criticize Lend-Lease. An editorial in July 1943 titled "Lend-Lease as Fact and Fiction" focused on what it considered the misleading packaging of the program and the false expectations about anything being returned to the US after the war ("Lend-Lease as Fact," 1943). Many of the rumors OWI cataloged included negative ones about Lend-Lease. OWI also used survey research to poll public opinion about Lend-Lease. In spring 1943, it concluded that knowledge and support for Lend Lease were relatively high, but "as a means of guarding against ill-feeling arising out of post-war [financial] settlements, our information policy should continue to stress the two-way aspects of lease-lend" (OWI 1943a, 1). A follow-up survey focused on increasing awareness of reverse Lend-Lease (OWI 1943b), which tallied costs incurred by recipients of lend-lease to aid the US war effort and partially offset the amount of aid received and owed.

By early 1945, Lend-Lease administrators decided that the program needed an aggressive PR effort to face damaging rumors head-on. OWI's policy of not responding substantively to rumors nor counteracting them no longer seemed enough to stem the tide. As a result, Lend-Lease (then a unit within the Foreign Economic Administration [FEA]), released a report titled *Lend-Lease Fact and Fiction* on February 2, 1945. The agency justified the need for the report because "many of the rumors about lend-lease operations are without foundation in fact, while others are based on some fragment of truth but have become so distorted that they are entirely misleading" (FEA 1945, 1). It then listed 38 "fictions" about lend-lease, each followed by rebuttals.

For example, #9 regarding the rationing of butter in the US: "American tourists in Canada have been able to purchase all the butter they want, at low prices, and have allegedly found that the butter contains a lend-lease label." Answer: "Canada has not received any butter, nor any other commodity, under lend-lease. All of the butter that has been scheduled for export under lend-lease has been sent to the U.S.S.R. for use by the Russian army." Furthermore, butter "has been shipped in large tubs or fiber containers and not in pound prints, such as are sold at retail to customers" in the US.

FEA made a full-court PR push to circulate the document. It was covered extensively in the press, including national wire service stories from the Associated Press (Marlow 1945) and Hearst's International News Service (INS 1945). The *New York Times* published a long excerpt ("Lend-Lease 'Facts'," 1945). The *Los Angeles Times* (usually conservative and Republican) editorialized favorably because it was important "that Americans receive official facts which will refute baseless rumors" ("Lend-Lease Fact and Fancy," 1945). FEA also sought to amplify its message through

other federal publications, such as the Commerce Department's *Journal of International Economy* and the military's *Army Talks* ("Lend-Lease Fact and Fiction," 1945a; 1945b). A few months later, the information was included in one of President Truman's regular Lend-Lease reports to Congress. New graphics helped convey the information in visually memorable ways. For example, one chart showed that if a single cigarette represented Lend-Lease cigarettes, the military supplied 20 to US troops abroad and 60 were smoked domestically (US House 1945a, 44).

FEA released *Fact and Fiction* just in time for a House hearing in early 1945 on whether to extend the program. Conservative critics remained dubious and openly skeptical. They gave credence to rumors and were disinclined to believe official rebuttals. For example, Rep. Karl Mundt (R-SD) grilled Lend-Lease deputy administrator Oscar Cox about Britain charging the US military for the operations of an American air base in Prestwick, Scotland. Even after Cox answered his question by quoting from *Fact and Fiction* (#16), Mundt kept *insisting* that something was amiss based on the rumors he had heard, specifically that the British government charged a landing fee for every US plane landing there. He claimed that he believed this "because it was there that I heard the rumor" (US House 1945b, 30). The FEA document did not persuade him otherwise. Cox had to promise to double-check and submit a further elaboration for insertion into the hearing record. Cox's eventual response reconfirmed that the "United States Army and United States Navy planes do not pay a fee for landing on the Prestwick air base." In general, American "use of that field is made available to us as reverse lend-lease and without payment by us." In this case, it was a reference to the UK's spending for construction of air bases as a form of partial repayment of the value of lend-lease supplies it received. This brief exchange was a synecdoche for the fierce conservative political attacks on FDR's wartime leadership and the record of federal war agencies. Truth was secondary to the political benefits of circulating negative rumors about Roosevelt's botched war effort. Doing that might pay off at the next election. It was an early version of fake news.

After House passage, the bill went to the Senate. At its public hearing, Senator Arthur Vandenberg (R-MI) bored in on the report's claim that the rumor about the British charging the US for carrying freight on its railroads. The denial carefully stated the US "pays nothing" for that. Rather they were paid by reverse lend-lease. Vandenberg caught the slippery wording, "it is not true the United States pays nothing." While the US was not *paying* cash, freight charges included in reverse lend-lease were an *exchange* of services. Lend-Lease deputy administrator Oscar Cox had to confess that a more accurate wording should be "does not make cash expenditures." Vandenberg, triumphant, said, "That is a totally different thing. I think you have got a little fiction in your 'Fiction Department'." Cox had to concede that Vandenberg had "defictionalized" part of the document (US Senate 1945, 38). While no lasting damage had occurred (in terms of renewing the program), it was a lesson to bureaucrats about not parsing their statements so finely that something legalistically accurate deliberately gave a false impression.

Fact and Fiction helped carry the program through to Congressional renewal in the spring of 1945. But it was a close call. Lend-Lease now had tenuous political and public support, rapidly diminishing as the end of the war came in sight. This was one reason President Truman abruptly terminated it on August 21, 1945. He could have claimed that the extension statute gave him authority to maintain it a bit longer, possibly triggering a major battle with Congressional conservatives.

Political realities outweighed the managerial rationale for a phased shutdown. (He later relented slightly.)

Anti-Rumor Strategies by Individual Agencies: Tennessee Valley Authority, 1945

As governor of New York, FDR was a supporter of public power, i.e., the generation of electricity from hydroelectric dams built by the government. Bringing that policy to the White House, he supported including in the New Deal an unprecedented regional federal agency called the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Its mission included power generation, flood control, and navigation. It was controversial from the start, in particular because it competed with for-profit utilities. Wendell Willkie, the 1940 Republican nominee for president, had established his national reputation as a lawyer battling the legality and constitutionality of the TVA. Senator Kenneth McKellar (D-TN) fought a years-long battle against it, in part because he sought to have patronage control over its employees. These political and conservative attacks on TVA continued unabated during WWII. Toward the end of the war, the fading of support for New Deal policies reflected in part in aggressive rising of pro-business narratives from the conservative coalition. TVA was facing an existential threat.

In early 1945, like Lend-Lease, TVA decided to issue a comprehensive rebuttal to these attacks. *TVA Facts versus Fiction* was a mimeographed report explaining that the agency was being "subjected to a degree of intensified and continuous scrutiny and observation by the public, the press, and investigating visitors which is probably unprecedented in the history of public enterprises" (TVA 1945a, 16). The report presented ten statements that, somewhat defensively, were replies to accusations and charges. For example, "TVA power operations are sound financially" (1), "TVA low rates are based on an accepted American business principle" (7), "TVA is responsible to Congress and to the President and is subject to adequate governmental checks and reviews" (14), and "TVA has cooperated with the states and strengthened, rather than weakened, their functions" (16).

After each statement was a detailed explanatory text. Some were technical rebuttals of charges from for-profit utilities, such as how TVA calculated net operating revenues and how it allocated the costs of dams between power generation, flood control, and navigation. The accusation that TVA was not subject to routine governmental oversight was explained with an elementary summary of federal budgeting, including annual appropriations from Congress, oversight by the Federal Power Commission, and auditing by GAO. TVA rebutted the political charge from conservatives that it was a threat to states' rights (code for Jim Crow) with quotes from southern governors who were modestly complimentary or, at least, did not view it hostilely.

TVA's PR offensive against rumors continued beyond V-J Day. In September, it reissued a slightly condensed 17-page report (TVA 1945b), and in April 1946, a slightly longer update (TVA 1946). Eventually, TVA changed tactics. Beginning in 1954, it started issuing annual pamphlets titled *Facts about TVA Operations* (TVA 1954). They largely covered the same subjects but presented them in a more positive light. TVA likely concluded the near-death existential danger had passed and that positive packaging was a more effective PR strategy.

Conclusion: Anti-Rumor Strategies from Then to Now

Bureaucracies are rarely popular. Wartime suspends some of the usual criticisms as well as government benefiting from national solidarity. For agencies in WWII, the only precedent was WWI's CPI. It had used heavy-handed PR tactics to respond to any rumors critical of the administration. Rumors were countered with accusations of disloyalty and claims that all of them originated from German propaganda. However, the social and political context of WWII was different, including the unremitting conservative and business hostility of just about everything FDR did – war or no war – as well as his expansion of the scope of government before the war with the New Deal.

In WWII, federal agencies were a juicy target for rumors and criticisms. That the rumors often comprised negative comments about *how* agencies handled the wartime emergency made it that much harder to develop a comprehensive and effective PR counterstrategy. "No, we really are doing a good job!" was a non-starter. After extensive study, OFF and its successor, OWI, eventually concluded that counteracting individual rumors was futile and that point-by-point rebuttals were not effective. Instead, these PR agencies evolved a two-pronged approach: a general strategy of fighting rumors with positive information about the selfsame subject and broad condemnations of rumors per se. However, some individual wartime agencies disagreed with that approach. In particular, Lend-Lease, OPA, and TVA concluded they had to rebut aggressively major individual rumors. They concluded that OWI's approach was a losing strategy given their particular missions, the instability of their support on Capitol Hill, and the specificity of critical rumors regarding their operations.

These contradictory wartime strategies may hold important lessons for today's public administrators. Technologies have changed and the pace of communication has sped up, but the decision-making facing managers when dealing with rumors is roughly similar. Whether categorized as rumors or as fake news, they can spread quickly and virally. Social media can put agencies in a permanent defensive posture. However, there is no one-size-fits-all best practice that can be learned from history. Rather, the anti-rumor strategies of the federal government during WWII present today's government manager with a full menu of options that were developed during the war and are still, at heart, relevant to modern times. Instead, government managers are always at square one when facing deleterious rumors and fake news. In that sense, the changes in communications technologies have not superseded this basic dilemma. Therefore, each particular situation needs to be assessed and then, in reaction to the specifics of the situation, decided upon from the menu of options used during WWII. At heart, today's managers continue to have three basic alternatives: Ignore? Deny? Respond indirectly? (As discussed earlier, the option of neither confirming or denying something is limited to law enforcement and criminal justice.) In an era of fake news and omnipresent suspicions and accusations about government, public administration's PR predicament remains largely unchanged: To respond or not to respond, that is the question.

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Appendix: Acronyms

BOI: Bureau of Information (within OFF and then OWI)
CPI: Committee on Public Information
OFF: Office of Facts and Figures
OPA: Office of Price Administration
OWI: Office of War Information
TVA: Tennessee Valley Authority

Endnote

[1] Rosten's subsequent career focused on popular writing rather than returning to his academic roots, including *The Joys of Yiddish* (1968). Horowitz returned to the academy, but changed his name to Hartley. At the time, this was common by Jews in the professions to reduce their obvious Jewishness and finesse invisible anti-Semitic employment barriers. For example, architect Frank Gehry was born Frank Goldberg. Similarly, just before graduating from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1939, my father changed his name from Jacob Levy to Jack Lee.

Dr. Mordecai Lee is Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has authored 11 books, all relating to American history and published by university presses. Several examined public management during FDR's presidency, including *FDR's Budgeteer and Manager-in-Chief: Harold D. Smith, 1939-1945* (2021), *Get Things Moving! FDR, Wayne Coy, and the Office for Emergency Management, 1941-1943* (2018), *A Presidential Civil Service: FDR's Liaison Office for Personnel Management* (2016), and *Promoting the War Effort: Robert Horton and Federal Propaganda, 1938-1946* (2012). He has been a frequent contributor to *Public Voices*. Before joining the academy, he was Legislative Assistant to a Member of Congress, elected to three terms in the Wisconsin Legislature's State Assembly and two terms in the State Senate, and was executive director of a faith-based nonprofit.

Renaming the Derogatory and Offensive Toponyms of the American Landscape: The Role of Public Administration

Derek R. Slagle

Introduction

As a result of the racial and social equity movements, there has been continued and renewed focus on the usage of derogatory and discriminatory language in the United States of America. While the controversies over names have frequently been associated with cultural features (e.g., monuments, buildings, and military bases) (Shelley, 2020), there have been ongoing efforts, administrative practices, and controversies surrounding the (re)naming of the physical features of the domestic landscape, as well. The focus of this article is to highlight the role and processes of public administration in the naming and renaming of derogatory toponyms and the impact and usage of slurs in human geography discourses and politics. Furthermore, the institutionalization, formalization, and adoption of offensive and derogatory place names can directly be tied to administrative processes for name standardization and scientific reporting in the late 19th century and early 20th century. The original naming of places was a political act by which holders of power engraved ideological views onto public and social spaces. The subsequent renaming of places through bureaucratic processes founded in deliberative and collaborative discourse can then be a celebration of the emancipation of the targeted groups and the negation of power imbalances that embedded slurs into the geographic landscape.

While the role(s), processes, and impact of language, ideographs, discourse, and communication are not new for public administration, affairs, and policy (see Miller, 2012) this research attempts to fill a literature gap specific to public geographies, toponyms, and the roles and processes of public administrators to address these inequities. Using publicly available administrative data, this study produces a descriptive analysis of a governmental agency for reclaiming derogatory and offensive place identities from 2011 through 2020. Subsequent discussion and arguments support previous findings on the necessity to promote the "collaborative policies and practices […] to actively promote communal unity and diversity without compromising institutional demands for organizational efficiency, accuracy, and consistency" through instituting organizational "policies and legislative acts for eradicating language use injurious to minorities" (Nick, 2017, p. 233).

Literature Review

Landscapes and topographies can be seen as transformations of political, social, and cultural ideologies (Duncan & Duncan, 1988), viewed symbolically, and reflective of crucial links to history (Taylor, 2012). Toponyms come to being under certain sovereign and social circumstances and are thus necessarily intertwined with social and political life and specific power relationships (Hausner, nd). While toponyms convey reliable location-based data they are also historical and linguistic communications that illustrate social, political, ecological, and cultural conditions for a society (Willems, 2000). A new field of human geography research, 'critical toponomy', particularly explores these phenomena by which toponyms intersect with politics, power structures, culture, and cultural heritage in the naming, renaming, or adoption of names by new occupiers (Hausner, nd).

Similarly, Taylor (2012) argues these 'cultural landscape constructs' are not isolated occurrences but instead represent interdependence between geographies, people, and social structures. A potential way to approach and interpret this cultural, social, and political landscape is by examining alternatives to grand narratives and focusing on pluralistic, specialized knowledge and local narratives that can legitimate community members being, experiences, beliefs, roles, and actions (White, 1999). A focus on the discourse in policy allows for a way to frame the world in a communicative context which then allows for new exchanges, mutual learning, and handling of potential challenges (Torgerson, 2003) – which further encourages democratic outcomes. Similarly, a focus on narrative action is useful since discourse and language directly impact social actions, thus ideographs and narratives play a role in the enactment and manifestation of social change (Slagle, 2016).

The social constructions embedded in discourse, narratives, and ideographs can become institutionalized (e.g., by formal governmental naming processes) and embedded in conceptual frameworks of systems of meaning (Hajer, 2005). The metaphorical representations are then instancing social constructions. (Schneider & Ingram, 2005). The naming of offensive and derogatory toponyms is a form of the social construction of a target population and "refers to the cultural characterizations or popular images of the persons or groups whose behavior are being affected by public policy. These characterizations are normative and evaluative, portraying groups in positive or negative terms through symbolic language, metaphors, and stories" (Schneider and Ingram, 1993, p. 334).

Derogatory and injurious geographic names function as slurs. The usage of slurs is not only a social construction of target populations but also a type of hate speech that has various effects and alters discourse roles by attempting to achieve unjust power imbalances among discourse participants (Popa-Wyatt & Wyatt, 2018). Slurring invites a particular perspective by informing thinking and directing responses because of the specific "kind of perspective-taking it provokes" (Bianchi, 2018, p. 188). Slurs are then modes of thinking about human targets; their usage can be harmful (Lepore & Stone, 2015). Bianchi (2018) argues that "hate speech, acts performed by means of slurs are usually conceived as speech acts with two distinct senses: (i) as perlocutionary acts that cause harm and discrimination and produce changes in attitudes and behaviors, including oppression and violence; [and] (ii) as illocutionary acts that constitute harm and discrimination, legitimate beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of discrimination, and advocate oppression and violence" (p. 187).

The metaphorical interpretation found in the usage of slurs and discriminatory language in the American landscape not only targets individuals and groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, etc. (Dummett, 1981) but comes with an invitation to view others from a certain perspective that is harmful (Lepore & Stone, 2015; Lepore & Stone, 2014) and one often associated with negative stereotypes that are not a matter of content (Bianchi, 2018). Rather than creating a meaning, i.e., the stereotypical qualities often affiliated with slurs, the usage of slurs creates a lens through which to view the target group, rather than describing members of a group, (Bianchi, 2018) which then guides thinking and responses about the target group. The notion that slurs can alter the attitudes of audience members, by overriding declared individual ideologies to provide a social circumstance for discrimination and an altered disposition toward members of a target group is supported within the academic literature (Popa-Wyatt & Wyatt, 2018).

Addressing discriminatory language and correcting past inequities is relevant for public administration scholars and practitioners as equity serves as a foundational normative pillar of public administration (Norman-Major, 2011). Additionally, the fact that administrative processes aided in the creation and perpetuation of said inequities further lend credence to the notion that public administrators have a distinct responsibility to name and claim those inequities (Gooden, 2014). Thus, there is a central role for public administration to further understand the roots that led to persistent inequities (Gooden, 2015), to engage in decision-making with and on behalf of marginalized communities (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Lynn & Parker, 2006), to further promote cultural competency, and foster diversity and inclusion (Mackey & McCandless, 2020). Having public administrators adopt an equity mindset for the deliberative processes of renaming derogatory and offensive toponyms helps prevent the re-creation of systems of disadvantage (Svara & Brunet, 2004) and further moves to remedy previous government actions toward marginalized populations (Frederickson, 2010).

Given the mobility of naming habits and people, the flexibility of language, and the need for uniformity and standardization of names, spellings, mapping, and scientific reporting President Harrison established the United States Board of Geographic Names (BGN) in 1890 by Executive Order to settle unresolved conflicts over naming (Orth & Payne, 2003; U.S. Board of Geographic Names, 2021). President Roosevelt extended the scope of the Board with an executive order from not only resolving naming conflicts but to standardizing all Federal Geographic names – including new names and name changes (U.S. Board of Geographic Names, 2021). Congress codified and reorganized the Board in 1947 by public law to ensure uniform geographic name usage. A unique feature of the BGN is that it is a board operating conjointly with the Secretary of the Interior, but ultimately the board is an amalgam of members and deputies from other Federal departments and agencies, operates without a budget, and compensation for its members (Orth & Payne, 2003). Current members and deputies represent the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Postal Service, Library of Congress, and the Government Printing Office. The committee on Domestic Names (DNC) also receives staff support from the U.S. Geological Survey. The Foreign Names committee receives staff support from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in the Department of Defense.

Since the creation of the BGN, the standardization (not regulatory) principles of domestic names have focused on formal recognition processes of the federal entity to be a reflection of 'present-

day local usage'. This emphasis on local knowledge has required BGN DNC staff to collaborate with other intergovernmental authorities and non-governmental entities – including State geographic agencies; Tribal, State, & Local Governments; the general public, and other land management boards and agencies. The process of renaming is multi-faceted and draws upon diverse, sometimes competing, values and information that relies on archival materials, historical facts, individual and societal participation to create "participatory solutions among disparate opinions […] using a toponymic genealogy approach to excavate an ongoing politics of toponymy" (Wideman, 2015, p. 8). Given the potential longevity of a name and the impact of a new name on a place, proposals for naming focus on acceptability and appropriateness (U.S. Board of Geographic Names, 2021). The process by which BGN utilizes local knowledge and engagement of intergovernmental and public actors aligns with existing conceptions of public administration in democratic processes which require a representation of discourses, individuals, and groups (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2008). Thus, democratic legitimacy can be generated through collective decision processes utilizing the collection of public discourses balanced with reflective, informed, and competent actors (Dryzek, 2000). Deliberation is key to reflective government and the reflexivity of deliberative ideas can further manage tensions as social-ecological systems reconfigure in response to reflections on their impact and performance (Dryzek & Pickering, 2017). Fournier (2016) also notes that public engagement in the 'democratic' naming processes and coordination with nongovernmental entities extends the standardization process on actual name usage and provides a lens to understand the deeper historical and cultural contexts. By having all appropriate and competent decision-makers related to the cultural, historical, and land-use present there is a generation of an 'everyday geography making' (Werlen, 1992) process that develops by actual actors in the process (Ernste, 2012).

The deference to local, present-day usage as a guiding principle applies uniformly except for when the name can be considered offensive or derogatory, particularly to racial and ethnic groups, religious groups, and gender. The board is notably conservative when it comes to naming changes due to a deference for historical appreciation in toponyms and the circumstances by which the geographic names arose (Fournier, 2016). There are only two words considered derogatory in all instances, as per BGN guidelines:

> "*In 1963, the Secretary of the Interior mandated the word "Nigger" in geographic names on Federal maps and other products be changed to "Negro." In 1974, the BGN mandated the word "Jap" in geographic names on Federal maps and other products be changed to "Japanese" (p. 15).*

Outside of those two uniformly prohibited words, all other offensive or derogatory names and words are determined on a case-by-case basis given the acknowledgment that language is dynamic, and connotation can shift over time and place. In renaming derogatory landscapes, efforts are still made to take into account the cultural, ethnic, or historical significance of the names and landscapes as alternatives. The BGN DNC is unique in that its methodology and administrative process allow for public petitioning to the board to apply names not formally recognized by the federal government (Fournier, 2016). The (re)naming process therefore can represent a "technique of symbolic re-possession to (re)claim place identities from the powerful" (Wideman, 2015, p. 18) and can allocate new or lost meaning, values, and purpose to places through these new interpretations of places and new meanings for the landscapes (Hulst, 2008). Extending the focus and process of

addressing derogatory and offensive toponyms beyond different actor groups' interests and opinions to contestation over ideas and meanings (see Stone, 2001) and to frame those shifted changes to localized expressions of cultural maps creates a new shared basis for those interpretive processes of perception (Bateson, 1973). The subsequent analysis examines the result of those deliberative processes and cooperative coordination in governmental policies and practices for renaming toponyms.

Materials and Methods

In order to compile a list of the derogatory and offensive name changes, the researcher analyzed monthly meeting minutes of the Domestic Naming Committee of the U.S. Board of Geographic Names (BGN DNC). Additionally, correspondence with staff at BGN DNC resulted in the production of an agency list for derogatory name changes for the past decade. While there are state commissions tasked with similar roles, the Domestic Naming Committee of the U.S. Board of Geographic Names was utilized because of (1) the historical role in the standardization and naming of public, federal lands; (2) the bureaucratic processes discussed in addressing toponyms; (3) the ability for anyone to publicly submit an injurious name for consideration and study; and (4) the standardization of data and reporting is inconsistent from state to state. Future research would benefit from a multi-source database utilizing data from federal, state, and local commissions or the inclusion of legislative interventions in renaming derogatory landscapes outside of the previously discussed bureaucratic processes. Qualitative and descriptive quantitative analyses were conducted utilizing compiled information based on individual states, usage of terminology, and the overall productivity of the BGN DNC in enacting policy change.

Figure 1. States with Name Changes for Derogatory or Offensive Toponyms by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names, 2011-2020

Results

From 2011 to 2020 there were 137 derogatory toponyms renamed by the Board of Geographic Names across the United States. In total, there were 28 states with renamed derogatory or offensive physical landscapes (See Figure 1 and Table 1).

The top ten states with the most approved derogatory and offensive renames from the U.S. Board of Geographic Names from 2011-2020 included: (1) Oregon (46%); (2) California (6.6%); (3) Washington (6.6%); (Tie- 4) Maine (4.4%); (Tie-4) South Dakota (4.4%); (Tie-4) Wisconsin (4.4%); (Tie-7) Alaska (3.6%); (Tie-7) Virginia (3.6%); (9) Tennessee (2.5%); & (10) Texas (1.5%)

Further analysis revealed that 85.4% (n=117) of the derogatory and offensive name changes for the decade, 2011-2020, occurred in states with State Geographic and Historical Name Committees/ Boards/ Commissions/ Councils that are recognized by BGN. While purely descriptive, there is an indication that there are either more names submitted for review from the state level or that the presence of a state committee, board, commission, or council specific to geographic and historical name changes has a role in administrative and review processes with the federal board and support staff inquiries. While the data does not allow for causal inference about the presence of state and local boards and commissions and name changes at the federal level, the assumption is that localized knowledge and state, local, and tribal administrative reviews and formalized processes may facilitate the submission, review, or determination process at the federal level. Future research should collect data for investigating the relationship between procedures and norms among the intergovernmental levels with regard to renaming toponyms. Qualitative analysis revealed that an overwhelming amount of the derogatory and offensive names that were renamed were directed toward indigenous U.S. Americans (72%) and Blacks/ African Americans (22%) with a smaller amount directed toward religious groups (i.e., Jewish) (2%) and the remaining offensive name changes related to controversial military figures and groups (3.6%). A full listing of the name changes by state can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 1: States with Renamed Toponomy by U.S. Board of Geographic Names, 2011-2020

State	Frequency	Percent	State	Frequency	Percent
AK	5	3.6	NV	1	0.7
AL	1	0.7	NY	1	0.7
CA	9	6.6	OK	1	0.7
CO	1	0.7	OR	63	46.0
CT	2	1.5	OR, WA	1	0.7
GA	1	0.7	RI	1	0.7
IL	1	0.7	SD	6	4.4
KS	1	0.7	TN	3	2.2
ME	6	4.4	TX	2	1.5
MI	1	0.7	UT	1	0.7
MN	2	1.5	VA	5	3.6
MT	1	0.7	VT	1	0.7
NC	2	1.5	WA	9	6.6
NH	1	0.7	WI	6	4.4
NJ	2	1.5	**Total**	**137**	**100.0**

Discussion

Every year, the United States Government reviews hundreds of petitions to (re)name formalized geographical features and landscapes with the explicit goal of improving naming efficiencies while also 'minimizing public injury' (Nick, 2017). What is unique for the BGN from many other bureaucratic structures and federal processes is the (1) network of administrative expertise and actors and (2) the "strict principle of collaborative decision-making" (Nick, 2017, p. 224) which mandates 'government-to-government relationships' (Orth & Payne, 2003) – particularly between federal entities and state, local, and tribal governments. While this collaborative approach runs counter to previous federal administrative practices and policies, Nick (2017) argues that it is born of both pragmatism and a raised consciousness of previous administrative insensitivities. Other articles support the notion that top-down coordination for language policy not only undermines the policies but produces both immediate and long-lasting communal resentments that undermine policy goals and other initiatives (Baldauf, 2010; Muhlhausler, 2010). Unfortunately, there are centuries of top-down discriminatory policies, toponymic cultural erasure, and disrespectful policies meant to erode cultural heritage and marginalize minority populations based on race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and gender (a quick search through the database reveals hundreds of similar derogatory geographies not yet addressed).

While the scope of the methodology and analyses are limited, the current research revealed important information about the roles of public administration and government in the complex task of place-naming and standardizing localized language policy for public, federal landscapes. A decade of work for the BGN DNC renamed 137 derogatory and offensive toponyms. Findings indicated that the originally named, now renamed, toponyms were largely targeted at Indigenous U.S. Americans and Blacks/ African Americans. Also, the collaborative, deliberative, and localized context by which these policies and administrative acts occur demonstrate that there are avenues for public administration to promote equity while also ensuring other normative pillars like economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. The study also revealed that states with dedicated geographic and historical naming entities were a large percentage (85%) of those name changes for the past decade. Given the deference to local and state governments; localized knowledge and context; tribal authorities and government; and community stakeholder involvement in the renaming process it is not particularly surprising that the presence of a state committee, board, commission, or council specific to geographic and historical name changes indicated a greater likelihood for a federal name change for a derogatory or offensive toponym. Finally, given the conceptions of public administration as a value, an ethic (Waldo, 2006), there is a necessity for public administration scholars and practitioners to be aware of past bureaucratic wrongs and the current administrative and policy efforts to reaffirm marginalized social identities, discourses, beliefs, cultures, and histories.

Delimitations, Limitations, & Future Research

While there are two sub-committees under BGN, the focus of this research is the renaming of domestic derogatory and offensive names which falls under the purview of the Domestic Names Committee (DNC). Thus, a delimitation of this study is that emphasis was placed on that specific sub-committee and only the (re)naming policies associated with derogatory and offensive names

domestically in the United States. Similarly, while the DNC is tasked with other naming functions outside of derogatory and offensive name changes (e.g., Commemorative or honorary naming, naming new places/ features, & renaming non-derogatory landscapes) the study is delimited to only those name changes listed as offensive or derogatory. Another delimitation of the study is in the lack of qualitative analysis in explanation of *why* the 137 changed names were deemed necessary to change while other publicly submitted requests to amend derogatory toponyms were not selected. This inability in discerning why the names are derogatory is in part due to (1) the use of administrative data from meetings in compiling the list and (2) the fact that determination and recommendations presented to the board are done so after examination of etymological, historical, political, economic, social and geographical contexts by a network of agencies and done so in consultation with local stakeholders. Future research should be conducted to determine what derogatory and offensive names are submitted (but ultimately not addressed); case studies on why certain names are deemed offensive, and further explication on why certain names are rectified, over others.

Future research should be conducted on broader name changes and trends for physical landscape discourse and planning. This study is delimited since BGN only applies to federal land usage. Future analysis should examine state and local administrative processes and political/ social attention to these issues outside of the federal context. Since there are inter- and intra-governmental collaborations found in the administrative processes and policies of renaming the American landscape there should be further attention to this unique administrative framework. The focus of the research encompasses the period from 2011-2020. Further analysis should be conducted on the (re)naming functions that occurred before 2011. However, the year 2011 was selected as the starting point of this research since there was a standardization of board information and processes starting at this point. Since there have been several iterations of the board's role and duties, further analysis should be conducted on how those formalized aims corresponded with addressing culturally and socially relevant toponym changes and standardizations. Additionally, the scope of this research was on those derogatory and offensive toponyms where a name change did occur. Future research should investigate publicly available minute data to determine what offensive and derogatory name changes were denied by the board and the determination processes– along with other relevant analyses on failed name changes. Finally, this article represents the first attempt at a critical analysis of toponomy for public administration and follow-up research should be conducted to expand beyond this initial article.

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Appendix 1

U.S. Bureau of Geographic Names (BGN) Domestic Naming Committee (DNC) Offensive and Derogatory Name Changes, 2011-2020

New Name	Former Name	State	BGN Approved Date	Federal Land Management Agency*
Scopan	Squapan	ME	7/14/11	
Scopan Inlet	Squapan Inlet	ME	7/14/11	
Scopan Knob	Squapan Knob	ME	7/14/11	
Scopan Lake	Squapan Lake	ME	7/14/11	
Scopan Mountain	Squapan Mountain	ME	7/14/11	
Scopan Stream	Squapan Stream	ME	7/14/11	
Bushoowah-ahlee Point	Squaw Point	WA	9/8/11	
Wünüpü Peak	Squaw Peak	CA	10/27/11	
Aspen Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	12/8/11	FS
Aspen Spring	Squaw Spring	OR	12/8/11	FS
Lone Butte	Squaw Butte	OR	12/8/11	
Łochenyatth Creek	Negrohead Creek	AK	3/8/12	
Aunt Clara Brown Hill	Negro Hill	CO	4/12/12	
Carleton Pond	Jew Pond	NH	8/20/12	
Tł'oo Hanshyah Mountain	Negrohead Mountain	AK	11/8/12	FWS
Heron Creek	Squaw Creek	WI	3/14/13	
Osprey Creek	Squaw Lake Creek	WI	3/14/13	
Osprey Lake	Squaw Lake	WI	3/14/13	
Richardson Bay	Squaw Bay	WI	3/14/13	
Imnáha Gulch	Squaw Gulch	OR	4/30/14	FS
John Brown Canyon	Negro Brown Canyon	OR	4/30/14	
Mud Pond	Negro Pond	VT	4/30/14	
Isanti Creek	Squaw Creek	SD	9/11/14	
Nokmes Creek	Squaw Creek	MI	10/9/14	
Bey Cha Ravine	Digger Ravine	CA	11/13/14	FS
Bey Cha Creek	Digger Creek	CA	11/13/14	FS
Waqíima Butte	Squaw Butte	OR	2/12/15	FS
Waqíima Spring	Squaw Spring	OR	2/12/15	FS
Tahc'a Okute Wakpa C'ikala	Little Squaw-Humper Creek	SD	6/11/15	NPS
Tahc'a Okute Aglehan C'ikala	Little Squaw-Humper Table	SD	6/11/15	

New Name	Former Name	State	BGN Approved Date	Federal Land Management Agency*
Tahc'a Okute Wakpa	Squaw-Humper Creek	SD	6/11/15	
Tahc'a Okute Aglehan	Squaw-Humper Table	SD	6/11/15	FS
Tuhu-u Spring	Squaw Spring	OR	11/12/15	FS
WogonagaT potso-na Flat	Squaw Flat	OR	11/12/15	FS
WogonagaT potso-na Flat Spring	Squaw Spring	OR	11/12/15	FS
Táx̣špa Butte	Squaw Butte	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Kaiba agai Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Se-ng abi Huudi Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Se-ng abi Huudi Reservoir	Squaw Creek Reservoir	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Se-ng abi Huudi Creek Spring	Squaw Creek Spring	OR	12/10/15	BLM
aa-Tiipi Flat	Squaw Flat	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Ede huudi Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Ha-ng isa Reservoir	North Fork Squaw Creek Reservoir	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Hu Tsi Tehaga Creek	North Fork Squaw Creek	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Kwii-na-a Spring	Squaw Creek Spring	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Pisa Paa Ta Tsi Tsa-da Reservoir	Squaw Flat Reservoir	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Puhi-Pane Na-De Flat	Squaw Flat	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Puhi-Pane Na-De Lake	Squaw Lake	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Sai-be Spring	Squaw Creek Spring	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Ti-he-cha-paa nena Creek	South Fork Squaw Creek	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Tipi-Tehaga Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Tuu-Tiipi Flat	Squaw Flat	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Yapaa Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	12/10/15	BLM
Little Škáypiya Creek	Little Squaw Creek	OR	4/14/16	BLM
Škáypiya Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/14/16	BLM
Kúckuc Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/14/16	FS
Wíwaanaytt Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/14/16	FS
Little Wíwaanaytt Meadow	Little Squaw Meadow	OR	4/14/16	FS
Wíwaanaytt Meadow	Squaw Meadow	OR	4/14/16	FS
Donaldson Rock	Squaw Rock	OR	4/14/16	FS
Mona Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/14/16	FS
Sharp Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/14/16	FS
Shootingstar Meadow	Squaw Meadow	OR	4/14/16	FS
Goose Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/14/16	BLM

New Name	Former Name	State	BGN Approved Date	Federal Land Management Agency*
Frosty Meadow	Little Squaw Meadow	OR	4/14/16	FS
Myrtle Spring	Little Squaw Spring	OR	4/14/16	FS
Wewa Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/14/16	BLM
Suukjak Sep Creek	Squaw Creek	WI	5/5/16	DOD
Suukjak Sep Lake	Squaw Lake	WI	5/5/16	DOD
Áatway Spring	Squaw Spring	OR	6/9/16	BLM
Nolands Creek	Squaw Creek	KS	6/9/16	
Black Elk Peak	Harney Peak	SD	8/11/16	FS
Revels Mountain	Negro Mountain	NC	8/11/16	FS
Revels Prong	Negro Prong	NC	8/11/16	FS
Raccoon Creek	Coon Creek	CA	2/9/17	
Tims River	Negro Run	VA	2/9/17	NPS
Unity Island	Squaw Island	NY	5/10/17	
Beare Hill	Jim Crow Hill	WA	5/10/17	
Brookfield Point	Jim Crow Point	WA	5/10/17	
Harlows Creek	Jim Crow Creek	WA	5/10/17	
Grandstaff Canyon	Negro Bill Canyon	UT	10/12/17	BLM
Reef Net Bay	Squaw Bay	WA	11/9/17	
Lake Keewahtin	Halfbreed Lake	MN	2/8/18	
Tekpé Gulch	Squaw Gulch	OR	4/12/18	BLM
Háawpa Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	BLM
Patúšway Spring	Squaw Spring	OR	4/12/18	FS
Mitáat Hiwéelece Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	FS
Cúuy'em Butte	Squaw Butte	OR	4/12/18	FS
Pe'ískit Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	FS
Wináha'ay Spring	Squaw Spring	OR	4/12/18	FS
Téemux Creek	Squaw Creek	OR, WA	4/12/18	FS
weelikéecet Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	FS
tíkem Falls	Squaw Falls	OR	4/12/18	FS
tíkem Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	FS
taxsāwkt Canyon	Squaw Canyon	OR	4/12/18	BLM
waqímataw Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	FS
South waqímataw Creek	South Fork Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	FS
East waqímataw Creek	East Fork Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	FS
ípsus tíḿe Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	4/12/18	FS
Hungalelti Ridge	Squaw Ridge	CA	4/12/18	FS

New Name	Former Name	State	BGN Approved Date	Federal Land Management Agency*
Walaluuks Creek	Squaw Creek	WA	4/12/18	BLM
Springtown	Confederate Corners	CA	4/12/18	
Bde Maka Ska	Lake Calhoun	MN	6/21/18	
Swaram Creek	Squaw Creek	WA	6/21/18	FS
Emancipation Pond	Negro Pond	TX	6/21/18	
Wintu Bay	Digger Bay	CA	8/9/18	FS
Wintu Creek	Digger Creek	CA	8/9/18	FS
Johnson Creek	Negro Creek	TN	8/9/18	
Fishback Run	Negro Run	VA	10/11/18	
Ashby Creek	Negro Run	NJ	11/8/18	
Freedom Creek	Runaway Negro Creek	GA	4/11/19	
Steinberg Creek	Kyke Creek	MT	5/9/19	FS
Doso Doyabi	Jeff Davis Peak	NV	6/13/19	NPS
Fort Towson Creek	Negro Creek	OK	8/7/19	
Courage Creek	Negro Run	VA	9/12/19	
Nestucca Bobb Creek	Squaw Creek	OR	10/10/19	FS
Skanáx̲ Bay	Saginaw Bay	AK	11/14/19	FS
Bonham Hollow	Dead Negro Hollow	TN	12/12/19	
Saddle Rock	Squaw Saddle	WA	12/12/19	
Freeman Hill Brook	Negro Hill Brook	CT	2/13/20	
Totoket Bar	Negro Heads	CT	2/13/20	NOAA
Sawmill Brook	Negro Sawmill Brook	RI	3/12/20	
Engine Creek	Injun Creek	TN	3/12/20	NPS
Sand Lake	Negro Lake	IL	3/12/20	
Buffalo Soldier Draw	Dead Negro Draw	TX	4/9/20	
Ayiklutu	Seduction Point	AK	4/9/20	
Freedom Point	Negro Point	VA	6/11/20	
Skanax̲héen Creek	Saginaw Creek	AK	6/11/20	FS
Da-ek Dow Go-et Mountain	Jeff Davis Peak	CA	7/9/20	FS
Páatstel Creek	Squaw Creek	WA	7/9/20	
Nokes Hill	Negro Hill	VA	9/10/20	
Kakeout Mountain	Kikeout Mountain	NJ	10/8/20	
Ben Johnson Mountain	Negro Ben Mountain	OR	11/12/20	BLM
Latgawa Soda Springs	Dead Indian Soda Springs	OR	12/10/20	FS
Latgawa Creek	Dead Indian Creek	OR	12/10/20	BLM, FS
Latgawa Mountain	Dead Indian Mountain	OR	12/10/20	BLM

Moore Bayou	Negro Bayou	AL	12/10/20	

*FS: U.S. Forest Service; NPS: National Park Service; BLM: Bureau of Land Management; NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; FWS: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; DOD: Department of Defense

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Unmasking the Carnivalesque and Donning the Guerrilla Suit: Outing the Gendered Public Organization

Serena Hoermann

Introduction

Although gender equality has been recognized as an objective of public administration, traditional stereotypes and prejudices persist against women in authority (Connell 2006) and people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons 2012). While Connell (2006) observed a trend toward neutrality in public sector worksites, Stivers (2010, 223) finds that in public administration "women must leave behind a part of themselves—as, indeed, must men." Ignorance of gender in public agencies allows masculine processes to continue to shape careers, incomes, expectations and opportunities (Bishu, Guy & Heckler 2019). This paper takes the position that behaviors that relate to identity are personal reactions that may support or challenge organizational norms, that may further or stifle careers, or may enhance or corrode organizational integrity. When challenging the public organization, individuals seek to reinvent government. This paper proposes that conditions within gendered public organizations may precipitate disruption along a continuum of increasingly destabilizing behaviors. To demonstrate this idea, critical analysis examines a fictional local government, where the behaviors result in disastrous consequences for the organization. Furthermore, in real-world public organizations, addressing inequitable conditions may prove to be a stabilizing force.

This discussion consists of three sections. Part one introduces the gendered organization, critical discourse analysis, and the power of popular culture to inform public administration theory. As scholars continue to challenge the concept of the gender-neutral public organization, critical discourse analysis provides tools to spotlight dialectic power dynamics as revealed in popular culture. Artifacts from popular culture provide an opportunity to examine public administration's ethical obligations to foster social equity (McCandless and Elias 2020). Part two introduces a fictional gendered public organization facing disruption due to the rejection of prescribed gender roles. *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* depicts a theocratical society that demonstrates three kinds of behaviors within the gendered organization: role performance, carnivalesque displays, and guerrilla government. Table 1 lists the individuals and behaviors. In part three, critical

discourse analysis suggests the behaviors exist along a spectrum of increasingly impactful yet less visible responses (Figure 1), from (overt) role performance and carnivalesque displays that tend to reinforce the organization to (covert) guerrilla government, which promotes destabilization. So, the gendered public organization may sow the seeds of its own disruption. The following section lays the theoretical groundwork for analysis.

Gendered Organizations, CDA, and Popular Culture

Gender analysis illuminates the practices, activities, meanings, and interpretations that produce gender and confronts the façade of a gender-neutral public administration (Stivers 2010). While previous feminist scholars exposed gender roles within organizations (Feldberg & Glenn 1979; MacKinnon 1979; Ferguson 1984), Acker (1990) advances the idea that *organizations* are gendered entities, although they claim to be neutral. Striving to exert control and enforce order, organizations suppress sexuality by excluding women and (unsuccessfully) attempting to eliminate homosexuality (Burrell 1984). Pursuit of an asexual workplace supposes the neutral worker—one stripped of sexuality and gender; yet the abstract worker is the heterosexual male (Acker 1990). In the abstract, the worker as a major wage-earner focuses on his career, while his wife or other female tends to his needs and children (Acker 1990, 149). As the male hegemony represents the workforce, the organizational structure is not gender neutral (Acker 1990), and traditionally male domains favor perceived male power (Fiske & Berdahl 2007). Hegemonic (that is, heterosexual) masculinity coalesces in dominance over women and other masculinities (Acker 1990 referencing Connell 1987).

However, as Louw (2001) cautions, power is, at best, a temporary phenomenon, not bound to its brokers. The Acker (1990) model predicts that individuals endure gendered processes to produce gendered products or, presumably, leave the organization for greener, more equitable pastures. This discussion focuses on varying responses to gendered institutions, that is, a dialectical view of discourse between hegemonic and marginalized actors' actions to produce new outcomes. The methodology employs critical discourse analysis (CDA). As Fairclough (2013) notes, compared to other approaches, CDA provides a more fruitful discussion of the interplay between discourse and social change by considering discourse in tandem with action and acknowledging external reasons for choosing certain actions (192). Furthermore, CDA incorporates an advocative dimension—putting right societal wrongs (Fairclough & Fairclough 2018). Using the framework of CDA, this examination of a gendered (fictional) public organization demonstrates that actors move from positions of little agency to more active roles in response to social inequity. The next section reviews CDA and the tradition of pop culture as an artifact for analysis.

Discourse analysis affords public administration scholarship a tool of inquiry because the study of language provides a basis for understanding knowledge construction (Wallmeier, Helmig, & Feeney 2019). Through discourse, people understand events, interactions, and sensations (Evans-Agnew et al. 2016). Foucault maintains that discourses arise from (Habermasian) "truth claims" against which people decide the appropriateness of actions, thoughts, and emotions (Evans-Agnew et al. 2016). However, critical examination reveals language, not as a neutral vehicle, but rather as a (re)producer of structures of power and dominance at the individual and structural or societal levels. Dominance, in this context, refers to the use of social power by elites, institutions, or groups

that results in social inequities (van Dijk 1993). Evan-Agnew et al (2016) find that discourse can benefit society by advancing diversity and inclusion; equally, discourse can be detrimental when used to dominate others—either knowingly or innocently. Studying discourse as a social practice exposes power dynamics creating social inequities related to distinctions based on politics, culture, class, race, ethnicity, or gender (van Dijk 1993).

In the tradition of critical social analysis advanced by Marx, viewing social reality can only be accomplished through mediated representation (Fairclough 2013); that is, social reality is represented by symbols and language. Jessop (2004) describes the objects of critical-social analysis as "material-semiotic": discourse, substance, and the dialectic relationship between the two (Fairclough 2013, 178). Three kinds of discourse Fairclough (2013, 179) identifies for analysis are 1) *semiosis*—meaning making within social processes—recalling the visually interpretative notion of discourse; 2) the *language* of a given field can be regarded as discourse, for example, "political discourse"; and 3) *social construction* determined by a particular perspective, as in "neoliberal discourse of globalization." Semiosis dialectically relates to the other two in that one can analyze a structure, an organization, or a practice as a semiotic object; however, that object is not purely semiotic, and the relationships between the semiotic and other social elements form the crux of Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis.

Popular culture offers artifacts for critical discourse analysis. Writing in 1968, Waldo found that novels and fiction could inform the study of public administration, and scholars have since explored popular culture's contribution (via movies, television, novels, and other forms) to public administration's image (Lee 2010). As the "culture of the masses," pop culture provides entertainment accessible to all and reflects the taste of a diverse audience (Inciardi & Dee 1987, 85). With the ubiquity of social media technology, the creation and distribution of popular culture include an ever-expanding array of genres and artifacts to research (McCandless and Elias 2020).

Popular culture provides a lens through which society can examine public administration's ethical obligations to foster social equity, and CDA can be used as a framing device to illuminate the language underpinning this process (McCandless and Elias 2020). CDA scholars study language as artifacts producing and produced by discourse and social-cultural behaviors (McCandless and Elias 2020). Unlike other forms of discourse analysis, CDA's sociopolitical motivation examines elite power structures maintaining, legitimizing, justifying, or failing to acknowledge social inequity or injustice (van Dijk 1993, 252). CDA assumes an explanatory and normative stance (Fairclough 2013).

Television, as a ubiquitous medium of culture, can assist in understanding gendered organizational processes. Analyses of gender roles in television stretch back to the mid-seventies, and fictional female public servants on television became especially visible in 2014-2016 (Morgan 1982; Kilkenny 2019). Shows such as *Madam Secretary*, *The Good Wife*, and *Scandal* gained popularity and attention as rare examples of female leadership in politics, providing an opportunity for scholarship (Hoewe & Sherrill 2019). This discussion will use CDA to examine a popular Netflix series, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, to illustrate gendered power dynamics, strategies, and outcomes threatening a theocracy.

Proposed Framework

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as defined by Fairclough and Fairclough (2018, 179) provides a four-step framework to move from a normative critique to an advocatory mode: 1) normative critique of discourse, 2) explanation of existing social reality, 3) explanatory critique of the existing state of affairs, and 4) advocating action to affect positive change. Up to this point, the discussion provided a normative critique of discourse within organizations as gendered entities. This section proposes an explanation of gendered processes.

As noted above, dominance refers to the use of social power that results in social inequities (van Dijk 1993). Focusing on the reproduction of dominance reveals various "modes" of discourse; that is, power may be expressed and co-produced along multiple continua including indirect-direct, overt-covert, enactment-representation, legitimation-denial (van Dijk 1993, 250). Van Dijk's modes suggest a spectrum of behaviors proposed in the following framework, ranging from role performance to the carnivalesque to guerrilla government (Figure 1).

Figure 1

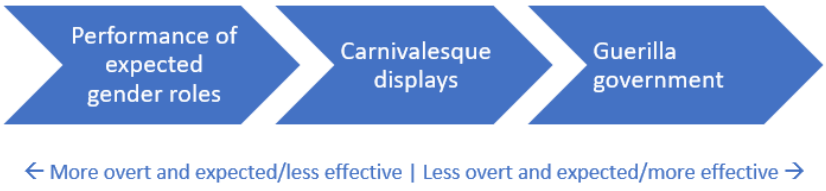

Figure 1 Role progression in the gendered organization

The left end of the behavioral spectrum represents more overt, more expected behaviors that are less effective at expressing agency. The right side shows increasingly less overt, less expected behaviors that may be more effective at claiming agency. The discussion will demonstrate how the organization moves from status quo to destabilization as individuals move from more demonstrative to more efficient disruption. How do actors prescribe or reject gender behaviors? How do public agencies encourage carnivalesque displays? When does guerrilla government emerge? The discussion continues by investigating a cultural artifact.

Sabrina Setting Overview, and Gender Roles

Among current television shows, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (CAOS)* (2018-) rates as more popular than 89.8% of all series in the horror genre and above average among all shows (Parrot Analytics, n.d.). *CAOS* reboots an Archie Comics character also featured in a 1990s sitcom, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (Sabrina Spellman, n.d.), although the contemporary series is a lot darker (Robinson 2018).

Protagonist Sabrina and her family belong to the Church of Night, a shadow theocracy with absolute authority over its members. Can the Church of Night be considered a local government? While the U.S. Constitution specifies a separation of church and state, scholars contest this

dichotomy (Wilson & Drakeman 2019; Pryzbylkowski 2019; Geier 2020). The fictional Church of Night makes no such claim. The church functions as a government, "a system of social control under which the right to make laws and the right to enforce them is vested in a particular group in society" (Government 2012). In this society, people reaching the age of 16 must pledge fealty by signing the Book of the Beast (Chapter 1, "October Country"), agreeing to control by the ruling group. The Church of Night defines itself as a mirror of Catholicism, embracing practices such as the "black baptism" (Chapter 1, "October Country") and ex-communication (Chapter 3, "The Trial of Sabrina Spellman"). The traditional gender inequality inherent in the Catholic Church (Schleifer and Miller 2017) aligns as well. The plot revolves around Sabrina's opposition to organizational gender norms established by church law, making *CAOS* an ideal artifact to illustrate the gendered organization and non-conforming actors.

CAOS has two main lessons for public organizations. First, *CAOS* demonstrates how gendered power disparity results in behaviors supporting the hegemony. Furthermore, the hegemony prospers through organization-sanctioned carnivalesque displays. However, *CAOS* also dramatizes participants' progression from role acceptance and exhibition to subversive guerrilla government (Table 1). Second, *CAOS* depicts a range of organizational outcomes from business-as-usual to destabilization as individuals move from more demonstrative to more efficient disruption.

CAOS demonstrates an organizational progression from perpetuation to disruption (Figure 1). At the series' outset, most characters act within the rules of their society until the heroine, reaching adulthood, challenges such limitations and rejects subjugation to the patriarchy. When the church demands attendance at the witch academy instead of conventional high school, she suggests the adoption of the revolutionary creed proposed by her father before his death. His "Manifesto" promotes relationships with mortals and equality between the sexes (Chapter 16, "Blackwood"). As a result, Sabrina's family is at odds with the Blackwoods, whose patriarch leads the Church of Night. Sabrina rejects that patriarchal construct, ironically in favor of her own father's worldview.

Powerful people control outcomes, influence others, and wield potential power (Fiske & Berdahl 2007). Power represents the ability to influence (Fiske & Berdahl 2007) and as such, may be subtle and gendered (Acker 1990) or act overtly through outcome control (Fiske & Berdahl 2007). Sabrina's two aunties demonstrate formidable power—both magical and personal—in a range of ways, with a mix of acceptance and refusal of traditional gender roles. They lead their household as father and mother figures to the orphaned Sabrina and disenfranchised cousin Ambrose. Although in the early episodes, Aunt Zelda pressures Sabrina to sign the Devil's book supporting the patriarchy, Zelda also reinforces the idea that the Spellman family, and in particular the Spellman women, are a powerful force in their own right. Furthermore, physically attractive Zelda uses her sexual currency to seduce and persuade High Priest Blackwood, gaining political currency. At home, Zelda acts overtly by killing her sister on a regular basis to keep her in line; fortunately, Hilda resurrects each time. Later in the series, Zelda marries Blackwood, and he bewitches her into subservience but, assisted by Hilda, she escapes the spell.

By contrast, Hilda fills a traditionally maternal role, performing the emotional labor (described below) of health and human services—patching everyone up when they are physically or emotionally hurt. Yet she enjoys neither elevated social status as a medical/social work professional nor compensation for this work; in fact, the organization excommunicates her. In gendered

organizations, the expected caregiver role (listening, nurturing, bridging) can result in uncompensated labor (Meier, Mastracci, & Wilson 2006). Often women assume such functions in organizations that seek to devalue or eliminate such roles (Ferguson 1984; Stivers 1995, 2002).

Table 1. Characters arranged along a vertical spectrum of normative gender conformity from high to low conformity – corresponds with spectrum of guerrilla activity from most covert to most overt

		Responses to the Gendered Organization			
	Character/ Gendered Role	**Phase 1 Gendered behaviors**	**Phase 2 Carnivalesque Displays Demonstrative Resistance**	**Phase 3 Guerrilla Government Subversive Resistance**	
Gender Conforming to Non-conforming	Prudence Blackwood Father Blackwood's illegitimate daughter	heterosexual female Supports patriarchy: Seeks approval from father	Ultimate sacrifice to organization: Seeks martyrdom	Performs illegal activity: Joins the fight overthrowing Father Blackwood	**Carnivalesque Display from most spectacular to transformative and Guerrilla Activity from Covert to Overt**
	Hilda Spellman Sabrina's aunt – accepts traditional maternal role	heterosexual female Performs uncompensated emotional labor: Comforts and consoles	Demonstrated rejection: Excommunicated	Performs illegal activity: Bakes a truth cake Murders covertly	
	Ms. Wardwell/Lilith Sabrina's teacher/ Devil's handmaiden	heterosexual female Performs uncompensated emotional labor: Pressured to support Sabrina	Assumes leadership: Becomes Queen of the Underworld	Performs illegal activity: Assists Sabrina's resistance of the Devil	
	Zelda Spellman Sabrina's aunt – maternal role rejected Bewitched to submit to Father Blackwood	heterosexual female Leverages feminist power: Grooms Sabrina for leadership Leverages sexual power: Seduces Father Blackwood	Demonstrated submission: Weds the widowed Father Blackwood	Disrupts patriarchy: Kidnaps Blackwood baby Promotes resistance: Urges Prudence to defy Father Blackwell's wishes	
	Sabrina Spellman main character	heterosexual female Rejects the masculine hegemony: Initial refusal of engagement, Leverages sexual power: Chooses romantic partners	Externalizes resistance: Wears a crown of thorns Assumes authority: Crowned as Queen of the Underworld	Occupies sanctioned and unsanctioned spaces: Attends mortal school and witch academy Assumes ultimate authority: Resurrects a mortal Abdicates Power: Gives up the crown to Lilith	
	Ambrose Spellman Sabrina's cousin	bisexual Seeks/denied approval from hegemony	Forced to be scapegoat: Bewitched to murder the Anti-Pope	Performs illegal activity: Supports Sabrina's rogue magic	
	Susie/Theo Sabrina's friend	transgender Pressured to fulfill a female role	Assumes a male appearance Joins the boys' basketball team	Performs illegal activity: Supports Sabrina's rogue magic	

An unacknowledged public servant performing emotional labor might benefit from emotional resiliency training to combat side effects such as burnout or low morale (Miller-Fox 2018). Alas, Hilda receives no such support. Another powerful witch performs involuntary emotional labor with negative outcomes. Ms. Wardwell poses as Sabrina's teacher and ally at Baxter High while mentoring Sabrina. However, Wardwell, revealed as the Devil's handmaid Lilith, becomes jealous when the Devil favors Sabrina to rule with him. Emotional labor invested in Sabrina leads to a devaluation of Wardwell's role and demotion. Outraged, Wardwell eventually wrests control of the organization from the Devil.

The data above demonstrate how actors within a gendered public organization expect, assume, and reject gender roles along a spectrum of behaviors from performance to carnivalesque displays to guerrilla government. Each of these behaviors and outcomes will be further explored below.

Role Performance

Organizations influence actors' identity roles, and actors choose organizations based, at least in part, on opportunities to define themselves. Superiors wield positional power (Van den Brink and Steffen 2008; Meier, Mastracci & Wilson 2014). As such they determine organizational values. If traditionally male domains favor perceived male power (Fiske & Berdahl 2007), other identities perform roles in response to the dominant actors' position, as supported by the following empirical studies. For identity-secure individuals outside the dominant group, the presentation of male dominant stereotypes may spark a challenge to pursue leadership roles; meanwhile, threatened, risk-averse actors and those with limited success as leaders may be more likely to complement and legitimize stereotypes (Casad & Bryant 2016, 5). Swail and Marlowe (2017) make the connection between identity construction and legitimacy as parallel processes to establish females' roles in a gendered marketplace. Further, they demonstrate that the feminine persona may not support an entrepreneurship role, which in turn damages females' entrepreneurship legitimacy (270). Within organizations, women may tend to "lead in place," performing leadership functions without formal promotion to leadership positions (O' Leary & Hilton 2020, 409). Empirical data suggests that increasing the number of women in visible positions of leadership depends equally on restructuring roles and operative leadership prototypes (O' Leary & Hilton 2020). People identifying as LGBT may choose careers based on internalized gender roles and heterosexuality, tending to emphasize "altruism" as a work value (Ng & Schweitzer 2012, 334, referencing Gedro 2009, 346). It stands to reason that persons in marginalized gender categories who favor altruism over competition may fail to reach leadership roles, possibly by choice.

Acker (1990, 146-147) observes ways in which organizations' gendered processes result in gendered products: organizations construct gendered divisions: of labor, acceptable behaviors, spaces, and power; and organizations construct symbols and images representing, reinforcing, or even contradicting the divisions. Occupations traditionally dominated by women—in health and human services, education, administrative support, and other service roles—depend on soft skills processes known as emotional labor (Meier, Mastracci & Wilson 2014). Although emotional labor facilitates interpersonal interactions in any organization and therefore supports efficiency, emotional labor often remains undervalued in pay and status (Meier, Mastracci & Wilson 2014). Similarly, LBGT individuals are more likely than heterosexuals to align careers in non-profit sectors,

perhaps because they are more likely to "espouse altruistic work values" (Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons 2012, 332).

Acker (1990, 146-147) makes further observations on the products of gendered processes. Gendered social structures, including organizations, enact patterns of dominance and submission (expressions of power) between genders. Organizations produce gendered identities reliant on language usage, choice of work, clothing, and presentation of self. Gender frames the underlying logic of other social structures—benefits and detriments, utilization and subjugation, action and emotion, meaning and identity cohere through a dichotomy defined by the personification and attributes of male and female within the organization.

When superiors wield positional power, they determine organizational values. Occupations traditionally dominated by women are dependent on soft skills processes known as emotional labor (Meier, Mastracci & Wilson 2014). Although emotional labor facilitates interpersonal interactions in any organization and therefore supports efficiency, it often remains undervalued in pay and status (Meier, Mastracci & Wilson 2014). Similarly, LBGT individuals are more likely than heterosexuals to align careers in non-profit sectors, perhaps because they are more likely to "espouse altruistic work values" (Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons 2012, 332). Although Zelda, Hilda, and Lilith keep up appearances of submission, none of them bow to the will of church leader Faustus Blackwood, who tries to lead the coven back to misogynist, leader-worshipping "old ways" (Chapter 16, "Blackwood"). In a placative gesture, Zelda is invited to an administrative position in the church. She eventually marries Blackwood but balks at her husband's insistence that she submit to him in all things. When the Spellmans are threatened and excommunicated, Hilda engages via the occasional poisoning or beheading. And Lilith eventually assumes leadership of the Church and Hell (Chapter 20, "Mephisto Waltz").

Two characters focus explicitly on gender-bending with uneven results. Homosexual males do not fit the classic masculine hegemony (King 2009). Cousin Ambrose, on house arrest at the Spellman residence, seeks approval within the patriarchy and release from his sentence. Yet his homosexual preferences guarantee continued subjugation and the role of scapegoat in Blackwood's murderous scheme to assume greater political power (Chapter 16, "Blackwood"). Ambrose begins with covert illegal activities to support Sabrina, later graduating to outright battle against Blackwood. Although outside the theocracy, another character bears mention. Susie is one of Sabrina's Baxter High (mortal) friends who transitions to the male persona of Theo. In changing hairstyle, dress, name and pronouns, Theo suffers mental and physical bullying. However, Theo persists and joins the boys' basketball team. Theo's story serves as an example of successful emancipation from expected roles.

Gendered institutions not only create a glass ceiling, but they also complicate relationships among women as well as between men and women (Connell 2006). Prudence, Blackwood's illegitimate daughter, seeks her father's approval and namesake; yet Blackwood fosters a complex, abusive relationship. He favors the young men in the church, thus manipulating Prudence (like Ambrose) into proving herself. She elevates bullying Sabrina to more forceful and strategic attacks, even against her onetime friend, Ambrose. Eventually, Blackwood proves himself a disloyal narcissist, and Prudence turns on him and realigns with Ambrose. Given the negative stereotypes, women and LGBT individuals must endure, they may turn to other ways of expressing dissatisfaction,

including grassroots protest via carnivalesque displays.

Carnivalesque Displays in the Public Sector

Political demonstrations and parades exemplify elements of the carnivalesque. Although confronting social equity issues, their effectiveness may be limited. The Women's March in January 2018, advocating for human rights, gender, and other social equality issues, employed offensive political humor (Graefer et al. 2019). Although a useful valve for frustration and a useful mobilization tactic, critics find that divisive humor may prove ineffective or counterproductive to the goals of the movement (Graefer et al. 2019). So too, Gay Pride parades, a celebration of LGBT+ identities aimed at raising social consciousness to create a more socially equitable society, intend more than a temporary suspension of social norms; yet the phenomenon has been likened to Halloween, a carnivalesque festival, for its imagery and brevity (Santino 2011).

Carnival uses spectacle and orchestrated performance to mock and disarm and thus challenge and solidify the establishment (Bakhtin 1997). Carnival's frivolity and humor can unite a community even as its marginalized groups criticize or ridicule the community's oppressors (Mason 2000, 104). Carnivalesque performances may be thought of as "culturally specific 'dialogues' which…contribute to the making and unmaking of ideas about gender, sexuality, self and society" (Mason 2000, 109). Carnivalesque displays control the masses, even as citizens participate; the people are both the subject and the object of the discourse (Boje 2011). King (2009) argues carnival perpetuates and destabilizes organizations. The power of carnival, however, is in becoming rather than merely presenting (Boje 2001).

Bakhtin (1997, 250) poses carnival as syncretic pageantry—a fusion of concepts both pagan and religious, with no distinction between audience and artist, not merely performed but lived. His idea of carnival, therefore, is participation in the spectacle. In this way, roles of hierarchy are abandoned, distance between people disappears with the lowly and mighty mixing, switching places, and reveling in the suspension of ordinary rules and structure (Bakhtin 1997). In the space in which convention is deferred, so, too, are judgement and inequality due to social constructs such as race or gender, socioeconomic status, rank, or age (Bakhtin 1997). Carnival is the arena where other roles can be donned like costumes, encouraging, like Halloween, the alter ego to shine (Bakhtin 1997).

Important to this discussion, the carnivalesque mocks institutions such as religion and politics; one sees masks of familiar politicians and faith leaders in Carnival and Mardi Gras parades. In this setting, rules are suspended, and judgement is withheld. King (2016) explores earlier work by Lucaites and McDaniel on the paradox of carnival hegemony—carnival signals the potential annihilation of systems and assures their perpetuity, while hegemony must always expect the contradiction; in fact, maintaining social order relies on it. Postmodern public administration calls for listening to the marginalized voices of "minorities, women, policed sexualities, and the economically colonized" (Boje 2001, 435). However, Boje cautions against what Habermas labeled inauthentic discourse, which "degrades the public sphere" (Boje 2001, 436).

The recent political upheaval regarding transgender people lends itself to the degradation Habermas warned against, complete with all the drama, role-playing and violence of the carnival. Coping

behaviors among LGBT individuals in the workplace such as "passing" can lead to feelings of isolation, while "revealing" risks prejudicial treatment (Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons 2012). These behaviors and others may be considered carnivalesque as they center around the embodiment of an identity that challenges and maintains the establishment. Sweeping away the previous identity, carnival has the power to transform, even if temporarily. Boje (2001, 441) promises that citizens can "reinvent carnivalesque resistance to regain voice" although results from increased protest may fall short of expectations. Aching (2020) remains skeptical, finding that carnival represents state-engineered "moments of freedom" (417).

Boje (2001) postulates that spectacle is more dominant than carnival. Spectacle is meaning-making and spin (Boje, 2001), whereas carnival is lived (Bakhtin 1997). Spectacle is doing while carnival is being. Spectacle may involve political protest, while carnival means, to borrow from the quote sometimes attributed to M. K. Ghandi, being the change you wish to see. Paraphrasing his grandfather, Arun Ghandi's (1913) quote parallels carnival more closely:

> If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. This is the divine mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and the source of our happiness.

Spectacle versus Carnival

Citing Foucault, Boje reminds us that "resistance accompanies power…and the spectacle is an increasingly orchestrated performance" (Boje 2001, 432). Whereas *CAOS* season one relies mainly on spectacle, season two embraces the true transformation of carnival. Season one shocks and titillates with spectacle; season two ends in new coalitions and triumph through destruction.

Women undertake identity work to compensate for their devalued female personas (Swail and Marlowe 2017), and crowning occupies important space in the carnivalesque, according to Bakhtin (1997). Carnival disguises and legitimizes violent intentions (Boje 2001). The concepts come together in *CAOS* as a gory spectacle (Chapter 7, "The Feast of Feasts"). Only women may offer themselves as tribute for the misogynist celebration, and Prudence is thrilled to be chosen as the cannibalistic sacrifice. Horrified, Sabrina blackmails Father Blackwood to cancel the feast and spare Prudence. Nevertheless, the coven will not be denied their feast. One of the faithful steps forward in a haze of religious passion and slits her own throat. In carnival, the division between spectators and performers dissolves (Bakhtin 1997). The rest of the witches fall on her and consume her.

Freed from everyday rules, carnival allows the assumption of an alternate identity (Bakhtin 1997). Two examples demonstrate the transformative power of carnival in *CAOS*. In the first, Sabrina's friend Susie embodies transformation by discarding a traditional gender role to become Theo (Chapter 13, "The Passion of Sabrina Spellman"). Preferring to actualize in his own way and time, Theo rejects an offer to become a boy through magic (Chapter 19, "The Mandrake"). The Theo character has been praised by advocates for role models in the LGBT community (Hagen 2019). Outside fiction, however, success stories for the LGBT community are not yet the norm (Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons 2012).

In a second example, Sabrina ascends in an elaborate coronation ceremony to sit on the throne beside the Devil, who assumes a human form (Chapter 20, "The Mephisto Waltz"). The crowning and uncrowning are central to the idea of carnival (Bakhtin 1997). Sabrina surrenders her crown to Lilith, who imprisons the Devil in the body of Sabrina's warlock boyfriend—again characters swap identities and appearances. In this way, Sabrina saves the mortal world from the Devil and the witches from the oppression of Father Blackwood. The cost of these actions is the destruction of their organization, the Church of Night. Lilith transforms herself from the Devil's handmaiden to the Queen of the Underworld. Her rise to power and crowning reflect the dual nature of construction and destruction in the carnival as she shatters the expectations and norms for her organization, and remakes the organization.

While spectacular and carnivalesque displays serve to visibly challenge the organization, guerrilla government represents another, generally more covert path.

Guerrilla Government

When individuals object to the actions of public organizations, their motivations and responses vary. Dissatisfaction may stem from a misalignment of personal and organizational values (Waldo 1988) combined with positional power differentials (Van den Brink and Steffen 2008) reflected in the gendered organization (Meier, Mastracci & Wilson 2014). Even in tightly-run organizations, administrators' behaviors depend on their "individual values, concepts and images" (Kaufman 1960, 223). Indeed, the values of administrators are complex and sometimes contradictory as illustrated by Waldo's (1988) wheel of ethical considerations of bureaucrats. For example, the ideal of public interest/general welfare may compete with organizational or bureaucratic norms; perceived obligations to humanity may conflict with the law; interests of self may contradict responsibilities to one's profession, and so on (Waldo 1988).

Disruption stems from individual goals and the unique struggles between members of the organization; members wielding more power have a greater impact on meaning-making because they control the organizational coding (Louw 2001). Struggles facing members of the organization result from the organizational power structure and decision-making mechanisms (Van den Brink & Steffen 2012), and for some organizations the power structure depends on stereotyped gender roles (Meier, Mastracci & Wilson 2014). So, in practice, gendered hierarchies persist, yet are regularly undermined by internal dissenters—a kind of disruption known as *guerrilla governmen*t in which insiders express disapproval of public organizations in covert and occasionally public ways (O'Leary 2017). Dissatisfaction within an organization may be expressed *actively* by quitting or voicing dissent, *passively* by enduring existing conditions while hoping for improvement (Hirschman 1970), *covertly and passively* via neglect of one's duties (Farrell 1983), or *actively covertly and occasionally openly* via guerrilla government (O'Leary 2017).

Guerrillas have diverse motivations for their actions ranging from noble to trivial, self-serving, or lifesaving (O'Leary 2017). Edward Snowden employed guerrilla tactics within his capacity as a contract employee of the National Security Administration—releasing classified data for reasons he defined as altruistic (O'Leary 2017). Characters in *CAOS* practice guerilla government often by acting covertly, and for their own reasons. Aunt Hilda acts covertly, baking a truth cake (Chapter

7, "The Feast of Feasts") and cleverly disguising a murder victim to protect her family at the expense of organizational values. Spanning the gamut of political affiliation and philosophy—liberal, conservative, and everything in between, guerrillas share a common desire to see ethical and fair decisions by public actors (O'Leary 2017). Guerrilla government serves as another outlet for remaining true to oneself despite the official policy (O'Leary 2010, 13). Sabrina acts both for selfish and altruistic reasons—she wants to remain true to herself and save lives in opposition to church leadership. The organizational culture and law of the Church of Night constitute a misalignment for Sabrina in her persona as a student and her identity as a church member. So, Sabrina leaves the witch school but later returns, enacting the multiple switching described by Casad and Bryant (2016).

Excommunication relegates Aunt Zelda to organizational obscurity. However, from the little-noticed vantage point a guerrilla actor can proceed relatively unhindered (O'Leary 2017). Prudence quietly joins the fight overthrowing the chief bureaucrat Father Blackwood, who has cruelly used and rejected her as a daughter. In early episodes, Ms. Wardwell surreptitiously assists Sabrina's resistance to the Devil because, after years of service to him, he leaves her for a younger witch. Over time, however, Wardwell acts boldly. As Lilith, she joins Sabrina's guerrilla activities when she disrupts the Devil's plans to take over the mortal world and blocks Father Blackwood's bid for power.

Protected minorities find their personal identities—for example, as women—incompatible with their professional identities (Casad and Bryant 2016). Negative mental health consequences may follow, and switching back and forth between identities can provoke negative job attitudes (Casad and Bryant 2016). Uncompensated labor and dissatisfaction with organizational leadership can push members into guerrilla government (O' Leary 2017). Aunt Zelda addresses the disconnect between her personal belief in equality between the sexes and organizational values. For her, women's rights trump moral concerns. In season one, small, visible actions satisfy her need for resistance. When Zelda fears for a female baby's safety at the hands of her misogynist father, she kidnaps the baby (Chapter 11, "A Midwinter's Tale"). Zelda encourages Prudence to act in defiance of her father's orders because Zelda knows Father Blackwood is instrumentalizing his daughter (Chapter 19, "The Mandrake"). As the series progresses, Zelda pursues more fundamental organizational change.

Conclusions and Future Research

To recap the spectrum of behaviors, spectacular displays depend on visible action, while carnivalesque displays represent transformative action. Guerrilla government manifests largely in covert but occasional overt methods to disrupt the organization. Graphed in two dimensions, characters in *CAOS* act along both axes to varying degrees. The extent to which characters exemplify these ideas is presented in Table 1. This paper proposes that the more gender-conforming characters (Prudence, Hilda, and initially, Ms. Wardwell) align with the more demonstrative, spectacular displays. Under the proposed framework, more gender-conforming means females and non-hegemonic masculine roles with less power, who perform uncompensated labor and uphold the patriarchy. Often performed within identity roles, their actions respond to and perpetuate organizational norms. On the other hand, gender-bending characters rely less on spectacular display, tending

toward transformative carnivalesque action and covert, organization-disruptive guerrilla actions. These characters act as public servants, recreating the church and school in their own image, thus reinventing government institutions.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as defined by Fairclough and Fairclough (2018, 179) provides a four-step framework to move from a normative critique to an advocatory mode: 1) normative critique of discourse, 2) explanation of existing social reality, 3) explanatory critique of the existing state of affairs, and 4) advocating action to affect positive change.

As a first step, this examination observes gendered power structures and processes within organizations. Here, a fictional organization has been taken to task. However, real-world gender wage gaps, unequal representation in leadership roles and careers, and dissatisfaction arising from gendered divisions all serve as examples of discourse deserving examination. The discussion also raises the question of race and ethnicity-based within public organizations as a topic for future research. As a second step, an explanation of the social reality discerns three non-exclusive modes of reaction. That is, actors may engage in any or all of the behaviors: expected gender performance, carnivalesque displays challenging yet perpetuating oppressive norms, and guerrilla government. Placing the three modalities along a continuum suggests that actors move from positions of small influence to greater agency and from more to less obvious action. As a third step, review of the scholarship offers potential critical explanations. If merely spectacular rather than transformative, carnivalesque displays serve mainly to perpetuate power disparity rather than equity. Organizations cannot change if people within them do not. Actors participate in small and large guerrilla actions every day. Examples include public obedience to superiors and disobedience in private; ghost-writing letters, testimony and studies to support interest groups antithetical to the organization's mission; failure to address superiors' missteps, allowing them to fall; leaking documents to the press; contacting or building secret partnerships with legislatures or public officials, among others (O'Leary 2017, 72-73). The actions undertaken may not relate to the disparity-inspiring guerrilla behaviors. Yet, left to fester, inequity breeds guerrilla action and organizational disruption. Finally, as a fourth step, like the characters in *CAOS*, this discussion advocates for change. Political actors (all citizens) and public institutions may examine power structures within gendered organizations, and some will act for change according to personal disposition and perceived agency. Frustrated by an inability to affect change withing the organization, a few turn to whistleblowing, but most do not; however, nurturing guerrilla employees is a viable option (O'Leary 2010). Recognizing the reality that actors work for change creates the possibility of collaboration toward positive outcomes. The alternative means a loss of individual satisfaction, institutional legitimacy, or effectiveness at the very least and disruption at the worst. Future research may seek empirical evidence for this model in local governments or public agencies.

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Title IX Policy and the Construction of Survivor Narratives

Hannah Liebreich

Introduction

Social media campaigns about gender-based violence such as #metoo have gone viral and have brought controversial issues such as sexual assault and harassment into the national discourse, in a narrative form (Me Too, n.d.). Thus, social media campaigns that highlight survivor[1] narratives have helped mainstream the issue of gender-based violence and related policies such as Title IX[2]. In 2011, the United States Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) sent out the "Dear Colleague Letter" urging universities across the country to take steps to streamline the implementation of procedures required under Title IX (Russlynn 2011). Essentially, the "Dear Colleague Letter" acted as a catalyst to reinvigorate a national dialogue regarding issues such as sexual assault and sexual harassment on college campuses.

Following this, in 2014, the Obama administration announced that hundreds of universities were under federal investigation for non-compliance with Title IX. This announcement served to further the national conversation on campus sexual assault, in that investigating schools, helps students hold campus administrators accountable. As the Trump Administration's Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos works to dismantle Title IX, the policy is increasing a public controversy and ethical dilemma for college administrators (Silva 2017). Administrators must grapple with "Dear Colleague guidelines," proposed Title IX changes made by the Trump Administration, and the experiences of their students.

While traditional quantitative methodologies, such as surveys, certainly tell part of a story, an examination of the lived experiences of students is critical to fully understand the issue of campus sexual assault as well as related Title IX policy. Mandated survey data from the OCR can address issues such as how many Title IX trainers are employed by a university, the number of training events that occur on campus, how many students are trained annually, and so forth. Moreover, while this information might be crucial to understanding sexual assault and the general climate regarding gender-based violence on college campuses, quantitative data alone cannot tell a complete story. Further, survey data by itself serves to quantify sexual assault, providing superficial

information at best and dehumanizing the survivor experience at worst. Furthermore, these numbers do little to help women who have experienced sexual assault.

Given the lack of knowledge surrounding the everyday lived experiences of students, in particular, students who have dealt with Title IX policy, the current analysis explores how students understand their experiences with campus sexual assault. I also examine how popular narratives from students help construct notions of "good" victims and "bad" victims[3]. These topics are best examined through the use of student narratives because the lived experiences of students cannot be excluded from university assessments. Further, narratives from students tell a different, often complementary story to the one told by traditional methodologies. As such, it is essential to examine popular literature about sexual assault and how popular discourse works to construct notions of campus sexual assault. Thus, I examine narratives in Jon Krakauer's case study at the University of Montana in his book *Missoula* (2016).

Literature and Methods

In this analysis, I think through narrative as methodology and the role of intersectionality within narratives. I employ Maria Tamboukou's (2016) concept of narrative as methodology and apply it to Jon Krakauer's (2016) study of campus sexual assaults at the University of Montana. Comparing these two texts illustrates how ideas of "good" and "bad" victims manifest in the telling of Krakauer's story, which in turn demonstrates how we, as a society, understand survivor narratives. Further, I argue that the perspective of students should be better represented in the media and at the forefront of the national conversation surrounding campus sexual assault in order to improve existing policy. After all, if the policy does not directly translate and resonate with the student experience, can it really serve to make students feel safer on campus?

Narrative as methodology is frequently used in public administration scholarship in several ways (Borins 2012; Luton 2015; Ospina and Dodge 2005). For example, Ospina and Dodge (2005) assess narrative as methodology in the field of public administration and apply the methodology to their study on social-change leadership in the United States. Borins (2012) furthers narrative as methodology in public administration by examining how the methodology can be used in more mainstream projects, by applying the methodology to an analysis of the Innovations in American Government Awards. In sum, narrative as methodology serves to advance the field of public administration in that the methodology provides scholars and practitioners with ways of addressing issues that fall under the purview of Title IX policy in non-traditional ways.

Campus sexual assault has significant implications for college women with approximately 20 percent of college women experiencing rape or attempted rape at some point during their academic career (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski 1987; Rapaport & Burkhart 1984; Schwartz & DeKeseredy 1997; Wechsler & Wuethrich 2002; Weiss 2013). Further, this number is likely conservative because rape is an under-reported crime, and studies suggest as many as 50 percent of college women will not report their rape or sexual assault to law enforcement (Koss 1987). Additionally, self-reported data regarding the sexual aggression of college men essentially matches the statistics regarding the experiences of college women. One study reports that as many as 20 percent of college

men admit to obtaining forceful intercourse when women displayed severe distress (Rapaport & Burkhart 1984).

The study by Koss and colleagues (1987) is significant in that the data included self-reported data from over 6,000 students across 32 campuses in the United States, to determine whether there were differences in students' experiences of campus sexual assault based on school type. Additionally, the authors focused on both men and women in terms of sexual aggression on college campuses. Findings from Koss and colleagues (1987) suggest that women at private colleges and major universities were twice as likely to report sexual assault or rape compared to women at religiously affiliated institutions. Additionally, women at schools in the Great Lakes and Plains States were also more likely to report. Meanwhile, college men's self-reported sexual aggression doubled in the Southeast and Plains States and tripled in the West. Essentially, this study suggests that students experience campus sexual assault differently based on campus type.

Despite the considerable scope of data from earlier research, there have been few studies that examine the everyday lived experiences of college women who experience sexual assault. However, one study by Kahn and colleagues (2003) suggests that while women who experience gender-based violence, including sexual assault, were able to identify various forms of gender-based violence experienced by their peers, the same women were incapable of accurately identifying their own experiences. The authors suggest that not labeling their personal experience as sexual assault is a way to cope with the trauma of gender-based violence (Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen 2003). So, although Kahn and colleagues do examine survivor narratives, they do not examine the policy or institutional implications of the narratives they examined.

More recently, there has been a handful of case studies of college campuses that examine gender norms and college student behavior, that provide some qualitative insight into the issue of campus sexual assault (Armstrong & Hamilton 2013; Kimmel 2008; Weiss 2013). However, these case studies lack a qualitative, humanized account of college women who experience sexual assault. Given this lack of depth, it is crucial to take an intersectional approach when analyzing qualitative data elicited from college students, in that this approach allows the researchers to understand better the intersection of identities that students experience.

Kimberlé Crenshaw first wrote about intersectionality in 1989 to better explain the way individuals experience multiple forms of oppression in their socio-political environment. According to Crenshaw, intersectionality explains how gender, race, class, and other identities serve to shape our everyday lives as well as social institutions in specific ways (Crenshaw 1989; 2006; 2011). Kathy Davis expands upon Crenshaw's work by explaining that race, class, and gender theory coupled with poststructuralism serve to explain the 'shifting' of identity categories (Davis 2008). Intersectionality allows scholars to understand better narratives of campus sexual assault in that survivors can be understood as complex beings with stories that are multi-faceted and possibly non-linear.

Intersectionality is what Kathy Davis calls, a buzzword. Consequently, it is often used without being defined, and perhaps this, in turn, results in the term's misuse. Despite the overuse (and perhaps misuse) of the word, intersectionality is vital to understanding campus sexual assault for several reasons. First, the term allows scholars to understand better how identity categories work together to shape the lived experiences of individual students. Second, intersectionality provides

new insight into ways of understanding power dynamics. Finally, the term holds critical implications for policy implementation (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2115; Davis 2008).

In his forward to the anthology, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle,* Cornel West suggests that intersectionality is something that can be embodied and enacted by the individual. West argues that Angela Davis, in her scholarly work and activism, "embodies and enacts 'intersectionality'" (Davis 2016, viii). Therefore, I argue that not only is intersectionality a powerful tool of analysis, as West suggests, but it is also something that can be embodied via the narrative. Thus, in this analysis, I make use of Maria Tamboukou's work on narrative as methodology and Jon Krakauer's case study of the University of Montana to explore how narratives embody intersectionality. I also examine how women make use of narratives to tell their stories within existing and available frameworks of sexual assault. Further, by employing narrative as methodology, the current analysis serves to demonstrate the critical role of narratives in studies of campus sexual assault and harassment.

In *Sewing, Fighting, and Writing: Radical Practices in Work, Politics, and Culture,* Maria Tamboukou understands narrative as a methodological practice in that, "archival documents should be conceptualized as events and the analytical interest should shift from structure to process and narrative force (as cited in Tamboukou 2016, 42). In other words, when analyzing documents and composing a narrative, it is essential to contextualize the document and to think about what the story tells the audience. It is also crucial to examine what is missing. Further, Tamboukou also cautions that narratives must be understood as incomplete and a form of processing making (Tamboukou 2016: 33). In terms of analyzing the stories from Krakauer's book, this advice is especially significant in that it is vital to be aware of dialogue the author presents between key players. Nevertheless, equally important is what Krakauer *does not* present to his audience, as well as how he chooses to interpret the information he writes about.

In my analysis of Maria Tamboukou's (2016) work on narrative as methodology and Jon Krakauer's (2016) study of campus sexual assault at the University of Montana, I searched for several themes. First, I summarized the survivor narratives depicted in Krakauer's work. Then, I analyzed these summaries to determine the nature of the assault regarding whether or not it was a stranger, acquaintance, friend, or significant other. I also examined other aspects of the narratives, such as how the survivor was described by Krakauer. In line with Tamboukou's work, this led me to restructure the narratives to determine which survivors were portrayed as "good" victims and which were portrayed as "bad" victims by Krakauer.

Many unique features of sexual assault make it a challenging crime to learn more about from the survivor's perspective. First, sexual assault is underreported (Koss et al. 1987; Rapaport & Burkhart 1984). Second, survivors often do not identify their experience as sexual assault (Kahn et al. 2003). Third, the topic is sensitive in nature. Additionally, gender-based violence and sexual assault research tends to focus on quantitative research, and when qualitative data are collected, the data often lack a rich and thorough narrative. However, Jon Krakauer's book *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town* does precisely this. Krakauer chronicles the story of five University of Montana women and their experiences of sexual assault.

What makes these case studies unique is that the author examines the perspective of many of the key players involved, including the survivors, the perpetrators, their families, the university administration, and lawyers. The author also (for better or worse) provides his understanding of events. In the following section, I make use of Maria Tamboukou's technique for analyzing narrative in order to understand better two of the main narratives from Krakauer's study. In this vein, I hope the following two sections provide a space "where memory and imagination are brought together in the study and understanding of documents" (Tamboukou 2016, 34).

Friend Turned Assailant

The first narrative presented by Krakauer tells the story of Allison Huguet and Beau Donaldson. Huguet and Donaldson were childhood friends who grew up near the University of Montana (UM). Donaldson stayed close to home for college to play football at UM, while Huguet decided to attend college out of state. While visiting family and friends over break, Huguet decided to attend a party on the University of Montana's campus. It was at this party that Donaldson, a childhood friend, brutally raped and physically threatened her.

The first part of Huguet's story that is presented to the reader (indeed the leading story presented to the reader on the first page) is when she learns that Donaldson has given a full confession to the police detective assigned to her case. The audience learns that Detective Baker arrives at the Christmas party for Allison Huguet's father's business to deliver the news. When Baker shows up to notify Allison, her father gets upset. Her father is concerned that she is in trouble with the police, assuming that she has done something illegal or "wrong." Below is a passage from Krakauer's text (2015) that depicts the Christmas party when Allison Huguet learns of Donaldson's confession. The passage starts with a dialogue between Huguet's father and detective Guy Baker:

> "Hey," Baker said to Allison in a warmer voice when they'd moved a short distance away. **They'd become acquainted four years earlier, during her final year of high school,** when she asked him to serve as her mentor for a school project. It had been a positive experience for both of them. Explaining why he'd shown up during the company Christmas party, he said, "I thought it was important to tell you in person as soon as possible: **About an hour ago, I arrested Beau Donaldson. I got a full confession from him, and he is in jail."**
>
> Allison's **eyes brimmed with tears of relief.**
>
> Over by the Chrysler, Kevin Huguet [Allison's father] grew impatient as he watched Allison and Baker conferring. "You know what?" he told Detective Blood after a few minutes. "I want to know what's going on here. **This is my daughter, and I want to know what's going on."** Kevin abruptly strode away and confronted Baker.
>
> "She didn't do anything bad," Baker said. "It's not like that." Then Baker turned to Allison and said, "I think you really need to talk to your dad and tell him."
>
> Allison faced her father and, in a shaky voice, declared, **"Beau raped me."** (2)

Had Krakauer used more traditional forms of data to tell Huguet's story, the audience would have learned only the empirical details that an assault took place. The reader might have learned that her assailant was a friend and that he gave a full confession to the police. However, it is very unlikely that we would have learned about the humiliating experience Allison had to endure when she found out about the confession at a Christmas Party for her father's work; that her father essentially accused her of committing a crime when the police detective showed up unannounced. It is also unlikely that we would have learned the details that serve to humanize Allison and turn her into a "good" victim. Through the use of dialogue, Allison's story is rendered "hearable."

This passage demonstrates how Allison Huguet represents a "good" victim in that both Detective Baker and her father act paternalistic toward her. Additionally, she is appropriately emotional. Not only does Allison have the protection of her father, who gets angry at her involvement with the police, but the detective handling her case also takes on a paternalistic role in the narrative. Consider how Krakauer emphasizes the mentor/mentee relationship that exists between Huguet and Detective Baker. Given her good standing in the community (her privilege), it is easy to portray Huguet as the "good" victim. She has the support of family, friends, and at least some community members (including Detective Baker).

In another passage that details Allison Huguet's story, readers learn more about how her life was transformed after Donaldson raped her:

> "I was overwhelmed," Allison remembered. Classes for her junior year at Eastern Oregon University were due to start in a few days, she said, "But I wasn't ready to leave the security of my home. I wanted to be near my family and feel protected by them." **She decided to remain in Missoula for the semester and take all her classes online.**
>
> ***[4]
>
> "That next year turned out to be weird for me," she said. "I can't remember if I thought much about the rape or didn't think about it during that period. **I can't remember if I was sleeping okay or having nightmares.** That whole period is kind of blank. I'm pretty sure I managed to just keep it out of my mind."
> ***
>
> "…I studied a lot and did well with my online classes…."
>
> ***
>
> **"I was drinking a lot more than usual that year,"** she said. "Drinking and partying. Having a good time. Looking back, I see that **I was making some bad decisions.** And looking back, now I know why I was making those bad decisions. But at the time, **I wasn't willing to accept the fact that Beau had changed me in that way. I wasn't willing to give that to him."** (29-31)

Again, it is likely that many of these consequences would not have been captured in more traditional data collection. Huguet would be another statistic, the fifth college woman who experiences

rape or attempted rape during her time in higher education[5]. However, it is in the details of her story that we, as readers, learn how drastically different her life became post-rape. She was not able to resume traditional face-to-face classes, she was experiencing irregular sleep, she was drinking heavily, and she was in denial about the sexual assault.

Despite experiencing many negative consequences as a direct result of being raped, from an institutional standpoint, Huguet was doing fine. After all, she was studying and doing well in her classes. It might be said that Allison's ability to receive an equal education was not in jeopardy, given her continued academic success. Currently, Title IX is interpreted nationally, where women who experience sexual assault may have to live in the dorms with, take a class with, or share other "communal" space with their alleged assailant –especially during the "fact-finding" process leading up to an institutional decision. In other words, the way universities interpret "doing fine" and "equal education" is quite liberal. Narratives like Allison's help to shed light on the negative consequences institutional practices have on survivors.

Further along in the same passage, we learn that Huguet did not initially want to file a police report and did not want to work within the framework of Title IX and the criminal system. However, eventually, Allison decided to press charges after a friend pointed out that Donaldson would be able to continue raping other women if she did not press charges. So, while we know that Allison was traumatized by the experience, ultimately, she was willing to relive that trauma in order to tell her story during court proceedings and work within the existing framework.

If one thinks in terms of intersectionality, one must look at how Huguet's privileged background led to a particular outcome that is manifested in the narrative recorded by Krakauer. Often intersectionality is used to examine disparities among marginalized individuals or groups. However, it is equally essential to use intersectionality as a tool for understanding how privilege operates. Readers know from Huguet's narrative that she is white, straight, and from a prominent family in the community. Given these overlapping privileges, Huguet felt comfortable disclosing her assault to Detective Baker, whom she knew personally, unlike many less privileged students for whom the police are not their friends. Huguet also had the support of her family, friends, and community, which likely led to her assault being taken seriously (think about how "believable" cases of rape are for sex workers). Allison was humanized by her status in the community and her friendship with the assailant, which likely led to sympathy and ultimately Donaldson's confession and conviction.

Acquaintance Turned Assailant

The second story from Krakauer's book that tells a narrative of campus sexual assault is the case of Cecilia Washburn and Jordan Johnson. Cecilia Washburn and Jordan Johnson were acquaintances who had been on a few casual dates. Although their relationship may have been romantic at one point, they were not dating at the time Johnson allegedly[6] assaulted Washburn. In fact, Johnson was seeing another woman when the alleged assault occurred.

One stark contrast between the Huguet/Donaldson case and the Washburn/Johnson case is that fewer members of the community believed Cecilia's story compared to Allison's story. Eventually,

Johnson was acquitted. One of the most damning pieces of evidence that served to discredit Cecilia, was a Facebook post she published about the assault. The below dialogue is between Cecilia and Johnson's attorney David Paoli while she is on the witness stand. During the examination, they discuss the Facebook post:

> DP[7]: "So in your reflections, you wrote that you thought this whole situation was your fault, right? …So, what were the **mixed signals** that you gave that **made you think this was all your fault?"**
>
> CW[8]: "Maybe it was the clothes I was wearing, us making out, or me taking off my shirt **that made Jordan think I wanted to have sex,"** Washburn answered.
>
> DP: "And then **you regret not having called to Stephen** [Green, her friend and housemate] **or done more to resist Jordan?"** Paoli continued.
>
> CW: **"I should have screamed** out to my roommate in the living room," she answered, "or **used more force to resist him**, yes."
>
> ***
>
> DP: "And you express again in this document that all you can think about is how you could have prevented it, right?" Paoli asked.
>
> "Yes," Washburn answered.
>
> ***
> Paoli conceded that there was a subsequent statement, in which Washburn said, **"It's all ridiculous because I know I didn't ask for this."** But Paoli immediately resumed asking questions intended to show that she was lying about being raped: "And then you say, 'It just seems like the more and more this drags on, **the more and more I feel guilty about it.'** Isn't that right?"
>
> CW: "Yes."
>
> DP: "And you express concern in here, **in your own words, that the whole situation makes you feel like you just lied?"**
> Washburn acknowledged, **"It makes me feel like I lied, yes."** (273- 274)

Throughout this passage, it is clear that Washburn has internalized victim-blaming rhetoric, even though anti-victim-blaming rhetoric runs deep on college campuses dating back to the second wave of feminism. There are events such as "Take Back the Night" and "Slut Walks" that provide college women with space to make clear that women are not "asking for it" through the clothes they wear, the way that they act, or because they did not resist. In many ways, victim-blaming might seem like a relic of the past, however, it is well demonstrated in the above passage. Likewise, victim-blaming rhetoric, especially internalized victim-blaming like what Washburn experienced on the witness stand, is much easier to capture in narratives rather than survey data. Thus, it is through

Cecilia's story that we, as readers, can see the very real implications victim-blaming still has on college campuses.

We learn from Krakauer's story that Cecilia Washburn was thoroughly investigated (and harassed) by Johnson's legal team. In fact, his attorney was reprimanded for having a private investigator interrogate her roommates and travel to her hometown in an attempt to collect "dirt" on Cecilia. Considering that Krakauer reports, "Washburn spent more than a day on the stand providing a detailed account of the events…" he could have analyzed more of her testimony than the parts where her experience is being contested (Krakauer 2015, 269). When Krakauer does provide dialogue from Cecilia's testimony, we do not get a sense of who she is as a person in the same way we do Allison Huguet.

Thus, we learn, that while much information was gathered about Cecilia, Krakauer does not use this information in the narrative of her assault. Perhaps this is because he is trying to protect her privacy; after all, Johnson's legal team clearly violated this during their investigation. Perhaps Krakauer was more careful in how he reported Washburn's narrative, given the fact that Johnson was legally acquitted. It is unclear how and why Krakauer constructed his novel the way that he did. However, what is clear is that Huguet is cast as the "good" or better victim, deserving of justice. Meanwhile, Washburn is constructed as a "bad" or less deserving victim, befitting an ambiguous outcome at best.

Discussion

There is no denying that much of Cecilia's story is incomplete. Moreover, a more complete story would have been possible with further use of narrative methodology. For example, Krakauer could have included more of her voice by talking to her one-on-one and providing readers with this dialogue. He could have also included more dialogue from her court transcripts. We do not see the same level of paternalistic attention given to Washburn as we do Huguet. The difference in these two narratives tells the audience a good deal about the importance of letting marginalized voices speak in that Krakauer presents more casual exchanges of dialogue when he tells Huguet's story. At the same time, he presents more institutionalized dialogue for Washburn. This allows readers to understand better who Huguet is as a person, thus humanizing her to the audience.

While the narratives of Huguet and Washburn both provide a detailed account of campus sexual assault, there are stark contrasts in these two stories. As previously mentioned, much is known about Huguet as a person, which serves to humanize her experience. However, much less is known about Washburn. It is unclear if this difference in narration is a result of the cases compiled by the university and the criminal system, or if it is a result of how Krakauer represents the cases in his story. It is likely both contributed to the final portrayal of these two women. What we do know is that despite both women's horrific experience with institutional practices specific to campus sexual assault, Huguet directly benefitted from her privileges while Washburn was further oppressed by her marginalized status.

We can also learn something about how privilege and power operate when we look at the perpetrators in both stories. Despite the overuse and perhaps misuse of the word intersectionality, this

term is crucial to understanding campus sexual assault in that it provides an innovative understanding of power dynamics. The term also holds implications for policy implementation and institutions of higher education (Collins 2015; Davis 2008). For example, while Donaldson and Johnson might potentially come from different backgrounds, both men were well protected by the institution due to their status as athletes. Consequently, they both had access to some of the best legal representation in Missoula.

Focusing on numbers rather than the stories of survivors lends itself to reactive prevention strategies that reduce the number of sexual assaults on college campuses. However, a thorough analysis of the lived experiences of survivors contributes to the proactive eradication of sexual assault. Narratives humanize the issue so that even one case of sexual assault becomes intolerable. In the process of telling the story of rape culture at the University of Montana, Jon Krakauer tells his audience something about the experiences of specific cases of sexual assault. In addition to this, he also tells his readers something about narratives and how they can be used to tell a story in a particular way. Thus, when examining student narratives, it is also essential to be mindful of how individuals are portrayed in terms of rhetorical devices and tropes that may render some narratives illegible or "bad."

The details revealed through the use of narrative in Krakauer's story demonstrate how, even when the implementation of gender-based violence policy such as Title IX is "successful," there are still many inherently flawed aspects. For example, even when there is a confession from the accused, and they are prosecuted at the university level (expelled) or through the criminal system (serving prison time), the survivor is often re-traumatized throughout this process when they have to rearticulate their assault.

When I first thought about studies on campus sexual assault that make use of narratives, I simply could not think of any. It was not until I thought outside of the ivory tower and considered less traditionally academic projects that I was able to find narratives to analyze and compare with Tamboukou's work. This is significant in and of itself because it suggests that there is a lack of narratives regarding college women's experiences of sexual assault. So, while there are some flaws in the narratives presented by Krakauer, he does provide readers with detailed stories from the perspective of sexual assault survivors on college campuses.

Even with missing parts to their stories, both Allison Huguet and Cecilia Washburn are presented to the reader as complex beings with non-linear stories. Krakauer's work demonstrates the intricacy of how they live their lives, especially post-rape. We, as readers, also learn about the complicated relationship both women had with their assailants (which serves to debunk the typical stereotype of stranger rape). Krakauer also describes the detailed process both women went through in telling their own stories of assault. Finally, the passages from Krakauer's work highlighted in this analysis show how Allison did not immediately decide to press charges, and how Cecilia's story had inconsistencies because of how she told her story.

Conclusion

In Tamboukou's (2016) work on narrative as methodology, the author suggests that narratives serve to demonstrate how individuals tell their story with whatever framework is available, even if it is not a framework that aligns with their everyday lived experiences. In this vein, college women who are struggling to tell their stories of sexual assault must often make use of whatever framework is available. Even when the existing framework or policy, in this case, Title IX, does not meet their needs as sexual assault survivors. Having analyzed Krakauer's case study of the University of Montana, it is clear that while narratives can serve to enhance the story informed by more traditional methodologies such as survey data, narratives from one university cannot tell a complete story of campus sexual assault. The University of Montana is known for its football program, and Krakauer makes clear the excessive level of institutional support both Donaldson and Johnson received in large part because of their athletic status.

Early quantitative studies on campus sexual assault suggest that the phenomenon manifests differently by campus type (Koss et al. 1987). It is, therefore, important to ask: What might narratives from college women who experience sexual assault on other types of campuses look like? What about small liberal arts schools or campuses such as Spelman University where there are no athletic programs to prioritize? Undoubtedly sexual assault still occurs on a variety of campus types. This also suggests that there is no "one size fits all" approach in terms of campus administrators enforcing Title IX policy.

The narratives of Allison Huguet and Cecilia Washburn demonstrate that lowering rates of sexual assault is simply not enough. University communities must learn from detailed narratives of sexual assault to improve policies and ensure the eradication of sexual assault on all campuses. The preliminary work in this analysis helps to further narrative as methodology, provides a new way of thinking about Title IX implementation, and also sheds light on the need to eradicate rape culture from college campuses. Further, examining survivor/perpetrator narratives can aid in eradicating notions of "good," and "bad" victims, which is particularly critical as survivors are real people; even one case of campus sexual assault is too many.

Finally, the current findings have implications for how college campus administrators can better serve students regarding campus sexual assault. When survivors report allegations of sexual assault on campus, they must tell their story to Title IX deputies. Thus, an institutional narrative of the experience is created. In the future, if campus administrators, in particular Title IX deputies, use these narratives to humanize the experiences of sexual assault survivors, administrators can better understand what types of resources survivors need from their school. This, in turn, will likely ensure survivors of sexual assault on college campuses have an improved experience dealing with the aftermath of their assault.

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Endnotes

[1] I use the term "survivor" to empower the experiences of individuals who have been harassed or assaulted.
[2] Title IX ensures gender equity for students attending public schools that receive federal funding.
[3] I use the term "victim" when referring to the construction of generic, "good" and "bad" narratives.
[4] The asterisks denote small gaps in the dialogue. Small portions were removed to save space.
[5] According to several studies, one in five college women will experience rape or attempted rape.
[6] I use the word allegedly because Johnson was never convicted.
[7] David Paoli is speaking.
[8] Cecilia Washburn is speaking.

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"Every day it eats at you." Empathy in Municipal Cemetery Management

Staci M. Zavattaro

Introduction

"It's a tough job. It's hard. I've had a lot of tears, but you've got to be there for people." This quote comes from a municipal cemetery manager (sometimes called a sexton) in Indiana. Municipal cemetery managers are front-line, street-level bureaucrats aiding people who might be having the worst day of their lives when burying a loved one. They also help the living find ways to stay connected with the departed. "I just like to do my best for the people at the time they need me," he explained.

The purpose of this paper is to use municipal cemetery managers to highlight how empathy emerges in a unique street-level position. While there are plenty of stories from cops, teachers, and counselors (Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2009), less is known about cemetery managers as public servants. This is an important gap given the prominent role cemeteries play in public and private life (Sloane 2018). As COVID-19 has shown, providing timely, humane death and memorial services in the light of national tragedy is a vital public service (Entress et al. 2020), so becoming better aware of cemetery managers as public officials sheds light on how this can be achieved despite trying circumstances. After analyzing interviews with 35 cemetery managers throughout the U.S. (conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic), the best way to capture the findings was through an empathy framework from Edlins (2019).

Edlins (2019) argues public administration theory and practice are still attempting to find footing when it comes to empathy. Zanetti and King (2013), through stories of street-level bureaucrats and other public servants, believe empathy is a core organizational value because it highlights our inherent connectivity as people. Empathy can then break down the barriers of expertise sometimes alienating people from their governments, from having meaningful state-citizen encounters. Empathy can help us connect with each other through an ethic of care and associating with people we think are like us is a key component of street-level bureaucracy (Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2009; Zanetti & King 2013).

This is an exploratory, descriptive study given the dearth of research available within public administration proper about cemeteries and cemetery management. Using Edlins' (2019) model of empathy for public administration, detailed later, I find when sextons "put themselves in another person's shoes" they exhibit more empathy. I also find the managers necessarily put up barriers when it comes to self-preservation in the job – though some people were a bit better at this than others. Finally, emotional labor, or hiding sometimes negative emotions, comes into play and intertwines with empathy in the cemetery. Some cemetery managers described needing to be stoic in front of people but then perhaps finding outlets for their own grief away from the cemetery.

The paper begins with a brief overview public administration and deathcare, showing why understanding more about street-level bureaucrats who deal with death are crucial for carrying out functions of government agencies. Next, I turn toward another overview of empathy in public administration before detailing Edlins' (2019) model. I then detail the research methods and findings before offering implications of this research. The emotion work (Mastracci, Newman & Guy 2006) that goes into cemetery management can be both taxing and fulfilling and understanding this broadens our application of empathy and emotional labor in public service.

Public Administration and Deathcare

After a tragedy, people often seek closure. Patterson (2018) deftly describes how closure is both a guiding myth for families and public administrators working in the deathcare capacity, but also something that remains important for those in mourning. Patterson (2018) found closure often comes up in varying contexts, including after: hate crimes, terror events, natural disasters, murder, assault, shooting, and during the criminal legal process, to name a few. As she notes, all of these draw upon some aspect of public service and public organizations. Perhaps the most visible of these is the coroner (or medical examiner) who investigates suspicious deaths and directly impacts a person's ability to mourn and cope (Biddle 2003). Put simply: public administrators play a role in deathcare and death administration.

The focus of this paper is on a particular actor in the administrative deathcare process: municipal cemetery managers. Cemeteries are often large open spaces that serve as public parks, living history, and tourism hotspots (Eggener 2010; Francaviglia 1971). Municipal cemetery managers in the United States provide core street-level services that often go overlooked, but these people require mass amounts of empathy given they deal with death daily.

Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts is often traced as the first official cemetery in the U.S. (Greenfield 2011). Mount Auburn gave people a central place to bury and mourn their dead when no such space existed prior; burials typically took place on family or church properties and were thus spread out (Eggener 2010). Cemeteries architecturally and pastorally had a significant impact of public spaces, given there was a need for different types of burials and maintenance operations (Eggener 2010). To quote Eggener (2010, para. 4):

> [Cemeteries] also speak of the hopes of the deceased. Because cemeteries are such patently liminal sites — poised between past and future, life and death, material and spiritual, earth and heaven — they more than any other designed landscapes communicate grand social

> and metaphysical ideas. They offer summations of lives lived and speak of community, the connection to place, mortality, afterlife, and eternity. Serving the needs of both the dead and the living, they are "the identifying sign of a culture.

Serving the needs of the living is another key function of municipal cemeteries. Cemeteries were and remain public spaces people visit not only to see buried loved ones but also for recreation activities. Cemeteries are inherently recognizable spaces given markers such as tombstones and columbaria (Francaviglia 1971). Mount Auburn's name is not an accident – often, early cemeteries in the U.S. were placed on hill tops to stave off disease spread (Francaviglia 1971) as well as give a good view in the afterlife (Eggener 2010).

While rural, small family cemeteries were the norm, we today are more familiar with the lawn-park style cemeteries as green spaces (Llewellyn 1998). Hubert Eaton in the early 1900s ushered in this movement within the U.S. when he developed Forest Lawn Cemetery in California after stumbling upon an old, rundown graveyard and deciding more grandeur was needed (McNamara 2002).

Once this change took place, cemeteries became bustling spaces. While cemeteries are usually thought about as places of death, mourning, and even spooky ghosts, they are also peaceful passive parks that encourage visitors, living history, and tourism (Sachs, 2010). For many families, visiting a cemetery was an all-day excursion, and Mount Auburn ushered in thanatourism, or visiting sites associated with death (Sachs 2010).

Since the 1950s, American cemeteries have changed function (Sloane 2018). Sloane (2018) lists key functionary shifts as: 1) changes in religious faith and beliefs; 2) shifts in our ideas about death and dying; 3) rise of sustainability and a focus on environmental preservation; 4) personalized memorials; and 5) digital media (12). To illustrate, early burial grounds in America were on family property and were relatively small until more space was needed to fend off disease. Sloane (2018) notes the medicalization in the country moved death from the home to a hospital or facility, relocating death physically away and making it taboo.

From a public management perspective, Sloane (2018) argues the cemetery is not dead but changing, so the managers must shift along with funeral and service demands. Like other public servants, cemetery managers are constrained by the same rules, regulations, policies, and ethics as other public servants. They still, for instance, have purchasing limitations. Are short staffed. Need more funding for maintenance and historical preservation. They also have unique rules and regulations such as what can take place inside the cemetery. They also interface with crying, devasted families. This is where empathy comes into focus.

Empathy and Emotional Labor in Public Administration

Patterson (2001) notes discussing emotions, especially related to disgust, morality, and fear, is not common in public administration scholarship. There is an appreciation for positive emotions and traits, but negative emotions have an important role to play for understanding the complexities and nuances of public servants (Patterson 2001). Public servants play myriad roles when it comes to

deathcare and closure in roles such as disaster relief, paramedics, police officers, and national security (Patterson 2018). Yet when it comes to cemetery managers, less is known when compared to these other, more-visible public servants dealing with deathcare. This section focuses on how empathy emerges as a core public value in the field, as empathy allows for putting people first rather than, say, technical rationality (Edlins & Dolamore 2018). Empathy fits with pro-social public values such as honesty, integrity, and humaneness (DeForest & McKeown 2012).

Cemetery managers need to know how to read a room. If a family comes in laughing and joking, that is a signal of their mourning style. The same holds true is a family is crying and in distress. Empathy is a trait that allows cemetery managers to handle delicate situations, as empathy often means understanding and responding to other peoples' feelings (Edlins & Dolamore 2018), though there is no agreed-upon definition, and the term and practice of empathy could get watered down as we seek more clarity (Coplan 2011). People view empathy as a positive emotion and set of pro-social, desirable behaviors for public servants (Edlins & Dolamore 2018), yet there is limited understanding of how to study it or put it into practice within the field (Edlins 2019).

Edlins (2019) notes some scholars view empathy as an acquired skill, while for others empathy and its associated actions are more nuanced. "While they share characteristics, these definitions do not wholly overlap; the passive ability to *see* and *appreciate* differs considerably from the requirement to *feel* or *act* upon someone else's emotional state. Thus, the references to empathy within the public administration literature suggest that it is a fuzzy concept whose meaning may shift from context to context" (Edlins 2019, 2, emphasis in original).

It is not enough to observe another's behavior; there ideally is a reactionary component where someone uses that observed information to change their behaviors to better include the other (Dolamore 2019). A care-centered public administration appreciates the labor needed to understand the other and make everyone feel included in the administrative state (Burnier 2003). Empathy in this approach is not only expected but moves public service beyond only reactionary and transactional (Burnier 2003), in that empathy is more than emotional contagion and mirroring behaviors (Copla 2011). To wit, street-level bureaucrats with high levels of empathy often exhibit more attention to clients' well-being when compared to low-empathy counterparts (Jensen & Pederson 2017).

Emotional Labor and Empathy

Empathy is often included as a component of emotional labor (Edlins 2019; Newman, Guy & Mastracci 2009), and a healthy administrative state makes visible this kind of labor (Burnier 2009). Empathetic ability and emotional contagion are vital parts of connecting with people but also take a lot of energy from the employee (Kruml & Geddes 2000). Emotional labor usually involves an organizational component, in that employees display the emotions believed required of them in the workplace via the associated organizational culture (Hsieh, Yang & Fu 2011; Morris & Feldman 1996). This congruence requires work – it requires labor, hence the active wording in the term (Morris & Feldman 1996), and burnout could occur if there is excessive emotional labor needed (Grandey 2000).

Emotional labor and the associated so-called "correct" displays of emotion are purposeful and deliberate, as opposed to a natural emotional reaction (Wharton & Erickson 1993). Wharton and

Erickson (1993) note there often is a tension between emotional labor at work and a balance with life situations. This is akin to public administrators being told to be neutral public servants, as perfect neutrality is a myth (Triantafillou 2015). Sextons are in roles that require much emotion management and constant attention to the emotional display of others (Wharton & Erickson 1993) given they deal with death daily. It is the supreme coordination of mind, body, and feeling, which is not all negative (Hochschild 1983).

Given emotions communicate information (Hochschild 1983), a cemetery manager needs to know how to read those emotions as information for service delivery. At the end of the day, the cemetery managers are providing a public service but need an extra layer of attentiveness given the situation. Even if not attending to a family or funeral, the manager is overseeing cemetery grounds given visitors can show at any time.

Edlins' Model of Empathy for Public Administration

For this research, I use Edlins' (2019) model of empathy for public administration to understand and frame my findings. Her framework has four components: opportunity, identify, connect, and communicate. The first step is opportunity, where opportunity for emotional connection presents itself either explicitly or implicitly. Working in a cemetery setting there is regularly opportunity for empathy. The next step is identify, whereby the public servant can choose to engage with the person or not. This step involves seeing the emotional clues and knowing the content. If a family at the cemetery is jovial during a funeral, that is a context clue. Third, the public servant can connect "to understand the other persons' emotions as *the other person experiences it*" (Edlins 2019, 9, emphasis in original). This requires the person to move from a self-oriented view (not connecting necessarily by saying "when this happened to me") but use that personal experience to realize how the other person feels. Finally, the public servant then communicates understanding based on the steps before. She notes empathy might not change the outcome of the state-citizen encounter, but it might alter the perceptions of the government.

Being able to relate to people through shared experiences is a key trait of empathy. There is a growing realization in public administration that empathy is a key part of being a public servant (Zanetti 2014). Another way to examine empathy is in conjunction with emotional labor and the toll it takes on employees who might need to surface act or deep act to maintain composure in the workplace (Guy, Newman & Mastracci 2014).

Findings: Empathy and Emotional Labor in Cemetery Management

Results presented herein are based on a content analysis of interview transcripts after speaking with 35 U.S.-based public cemetery managers. In sum, interviews yielded nearly 400 pages of transcribed notes. A convenience sample was done, targeting people who were publicly identified on city websites as cemetery managers and/or sextons (the title varied from city to city). Managers in the sample represent large cities (such as Orlando, Austin, and Boston) and smaller towns (such as Somerset and Paducah in Kentucky). Each person was contacted via email to participate in a telephone interview, each of which lasted approximately one hour and was recorded. Interviews were part of a larger project on cemetery management, and the findings presented herein reflect empathy as a core finding from that analysis. There were 17 men and 18 women cemetery

managers in the sample. There was varied years of experience, with the earliest being two weeks (promoted from another position to cemetery manager) and the top being 40 years working through various positions in the cemetery.

For this research, I followed coding protocols from Miles and Huberman (1994) to analyze the interview data. The first reading yielded clear patterns (such as records management, deed recording, empathy, and grounds maintenance). Second-level coding allowed me to refine the empathy codes (Miles & Huberman 1994) to a more nuanced understanding of how the emotion work manifests in cemetery management. Simply knowing about cemeteries leads one to realize there is a lot of emotional and care work needed, but this research sheds light on how that happens for the public servants involved. Findings add to existing emotional labor research in the field by highlighting an unsung public servant in the cemetery manager and applying the Edlins (2019) theoretical framework to a real-world situation. The findings show the tension Wharton and Erickson (1993) found between work and home life, as well as Guy and Mastracci's (2018) affective turn in public service.

Using the Edlins' (2019) framework allows for walking through respondents' empathy journeys with the people they serve. Table 1 reflects sample quotations in each of Edlins' steps.

Table 1.

Edlins' (2019) Steps	**Exemplar Quotes**
Opportunity	"I used to be so scared of death. I didn't want to talk about it. The first year, death creeped me out. Now I respect it and know that it's coming." "I like dealing with patrons of the cemetery. I really like helping people. That's my main goal is to help people. Helping people helps me."
Identify	"When I drive by and see how they're standing at the gravesite, I can usually tell if they need me to stop and ask how they're doing. It's taken me 11 years to get to that point." "I can tell you right now, if you come to me and you are trying to bury this or that, I take that emotion home and that's part of life. When you lose that, it's time to quit."
Connect	"In the time that I have worked here I have lost two grandparents and a parent myself. And those were the people who were the closest to me so that gave me a really big dose of being on the other side of the table and going through this." "Going through what I just went through with my mom I think it's given me a whole other level of that of, like, understanding and knowing what they're going through."
Communicate	"I still keep my composure because I still have my job to do." "If you need something and you need to talk to me, you call me. First of all, it doesn't matter that I'm asleep because I'm going to be more awake if something happens, and I could have helped you, you know?"

To be clear, the purpose of this descriptive research is a broad explanation and exploration of a certain phenomenon – in this case empathy and cemetery managers. The purpose of qualitative work like this meaning making and finding out more about an unexplored group of public servants (Polit & Beck 2010). My goal was to understand the people and services they provide, so a qualitative approach focusing on the target group was best suited so my concern was maximizing variation in the sample (small cities vs. large, for example) (Larsson 2009). We also need to remember Hummel's (1991) maxim that stories managers tell are valid as science, so narrative inquiry and studying stories gives a thick description (Dodge, Ospina & Foldy 2005) and gets at the heart of the field (Guy 2019).

As can be seen from the following description using Edlins' (2019) framework, there is natural overlap between her steps. Empathy is not an easy, linear process. Readers will see stories and quotes from the cemetery managers that could be classified as, for example, opportunity or identification. This is not problematic, as empathy is an active process "aimed at improving the experience of both the empathy-giver and empathy-receiver" (Edlins 2019, 5).

Opportunity – Finding Ways to Connect

Edlins (2019) indicates opportunity occurs when people give an emotional cue that a public servant can engage. In the cemetery, empathy is a key part of the job. Cemeteries are active homes for the deceased, usually with known physical features and boundaries that set them apart from the outside world (Rugg 2000; Sloane 2018). Cemeteries are not only physical spaces where the dead reside but can be a sense of community pride and help loved ones maintain a certain kinship with the departed (Rugg 2000). Cemetery managers are the front-line public servants, the face of the cemetery who execute the state-agent-citizen relationship (Yang & Guy 2015). Empathy begins when someone walks into the cemetery offices for services. In a pre-needs situation, there is usually less emotion compared to loved ones need immediate burial needs. For sextons, they need to look for clues (either implicit or explicit at Edlins notes) regarding how to interact with families.

The superintendent of cemeteries in the City of Evansville, Illinois, said death was something of a mystery before he took the position almost 12 years ago. "I used to be so scared of death. I didn't want to talk about it. The first year, death creeped me out. Now I respect it and know that it's coming. It's weird, but it's like I'm at peace with it, whereas when I first took the job I wasn't. I think that's just the lack of maturity I had." From his office, he can look out the window and see buried relatives, so he has deep connections not only to the cemetery but the city itself. Given this, I asked if he had concerns before taking the position, and he replied: "I said as long as I don't start talking to dead great grandparents I've never met, we're good."

When his father died, he explained being more able to integrate the personal and professional sides of his brain. "I realized through that process of trying to get better at work, I realized how I was still struggling. Through my own experience, it really started to click when I realized what I was dealing with and how to move forward with it."

He said he developed "what I call a sixth sense thing" to help know when and, more specifically, *how* people need help. "When I drive by and see how they're standing at the gravesite, I can usually tell if they need me to stop and ask how they're doing. It's taken me 11 years to get to that point." For example, a woman visits the cemetery regularly to change the flowers on her husband's

gravesite. She went into the superintendent's office one day and said she was ready to die. "I looked at her and she said nobody is going to take care of her grave when she dies, and that saddens her." Then, he pointed out the office windows and told her, "I can give you my word that I can walk my big ass from my family's spot to pay some respects to your family's spot when I'm out here paying respects to my family. That took a gut instinct."

The quote is an example of opportunity and identification combined. This makes sense, as Edlins' (2019) framework, while presented in a linear fashion, happens almost instantly. There is natural overlap between being given an opportunity to show empathy, identifying that opportunity, and communicating it. The quote also is an example of what Guy and Mastracci (2018) term the affective necessity of public servants. To quote them (2018, 284):

> Officials must sense the emotive state of the citizen, analyze what the desired state should be in order to have a successful encounter, determine what actions to take in order to achieve the desired state, and then modify their own behavior in order to achieve this. This instantaneous sensing and responding is emotional labor and contributes to how the citizen 'feels' during the encounter and how the citizen rates the encounter afterward.

This is not always easy, proving sometimes difficult and stressful for local government cemetery managers. The director of cemeteries and trees for Fall River, Massachusetts, said his biggest learning task was how to help families. "In this position you are literally dealing with people on the worst day of their lives. I have people come in here the day their loved one died to purchase a plot. You can see how sad and depressed they are. You have to really be friendly and be on your game and not take what is going on in your personal life when you come to work."

Cemetery managers are constantly interacting with families whether it be pre-need planning, during the funeral service, or after when loved ones visit the graves. Even as cemeteries change (Sloane 2018), there is still a need to be empathetic. Before joining the city, the cemetery manager in Charlotte, North Carolina worked for a private-sector funeral company, but municipal operations proved different and something he needed to learn. While there is a lot of training available for personnel issues and purchasing rules, he said he is developing a training for his crew regarding empathy. "My crew at the city has never been trained on handling a family for a death. They are more administrative people, which I'm trying to train them now. Not to teach empathy but to think about empathy. You have to get it on their minds." He is creating the idea that empathy matters so when an opportunity arises to show it, they can begin to follow the steps Edlins (2019) outlines.

He explained he sees the sexton job as having three related pillars: empathy, pride, and honor. "I think, and the way I put things is yes, we do have one shot at doing it right. The way I usually put it, and that's where sometimes like the funeral director and the cemetery won't get along very well at times, but I put it this way to the funeral director: you have them for a day and a half, I have them forever. And I think in the back of your mind, you're going to have this family forever. It doesn't happen often where you pull people out of the ground, and that's probably with empathy. Pride, you got one shot at it. The honor, you know, as a person that they may get mad at you because you're taking their loved one away. Then a few days later they understand. Those people actually chase us down to give us a hug."

Identify

The second part of the Edlins (2019) framework is identifying opportunities for an empathetic encounter. Once a person gives emotional cues (as in the story above about how someone stands at a grave), cemetery managers can choose how to respond. Said the cemetery manager in Rome, Georgia, who has been in his position more than 30 years: "It's something I've learned over the years. It's not always a pitiful situation. A lot of families will come in and be very lighthearted. If older people died, and they're ready to go to Heaven, they're lighthearted. They know their [person] is going to a better place… We try to help them all. Those guys are very good about just letting people kinda guide you on how to handle them. Every family comes in here different. Ain't no two families that comes in here that acts the same. And you just have to kind of feel them out and let them. You just have to kind of listen and let them tell you how they're handling it, maybe. You need to catch on to that. Then when you catch on to that, then you know."

A key here seems to be recognizing what people need or want when it comes to burial and mourning. For instance, the cemetery manager in Ruidoso, New Mexico said she lost her mother, aunt, two uncles and her husband's grandmother in the span of four months in 2019. "Going through what I just went through with my mom I think it's given me a whole other level of that of, like, understanding and knowing what they're going through… I mean, I can handle just about anything at this point." Putting yourself in another person's shoes is a classic, surface-level part of empathy (Guy, Newman & Mastracci 2014) and an example of identifying with those you might serve to better help them at the cemetery.

Emotional labor such as what the sextons exhibit is crucial in jobs where interacting with people is necessary (Mastracci & Adams 2019). Public servants, especially those in the cemetery, must balance their expertise with emotions in the moment. If such an encounter is positive, people could feel more connected to their government through the state-citizen interaction, while the opposite also holds true (Guy & Mastracci 2018).

Said the cemetery manager in Somerset, Kentucky: "I think people can have empathy easily, and I think some people can't. I think it's definitely helpful in this job if you can be that way, and I always have been. I cry at the drop of the hat. I don't say any of that to brag because it's actually a bit of a curse to be able to feel other peoples' pain. I've been the person who kind of feels for the other person a lot, who tries to understand what they're going through. That part did not come hard for me. I wish I didn't have to do it, but unfortunately it's part of this job."

Somerset, Kentucky is a small town with a population of about 11,200 people not too far from the Tennessee border. "In the time that I have worked here I have lost two grandparents and a parent myself. And those were the people who were the closest to me so that gave me a really big dose of being on the other side of the table and going through this. I think that helped me even more. Losing a parent is like, I mean you do not understand it until you've been through it, and then it's like you're part of this club you didn't want to be a part of. Everybody else is like, 'You get it now, don't you?' It's probably the same if you've lost a child or lost a spouse. When it's somebody that close to you, you don't get it until you've been through it."

Sometimes identifying empathy means bending the rules. Cemeteries have rules and regulations to follow just like any other municipal service. Many of those codes dictate what can and cannot

be placed on graves. Sometimes a sexton will use their discretion to ensure someone has a positive deathcare experience rather than stick closely to the rules. The retired City of Orlando sexton told a story of a man who lost his 17-year-old daughter in a car accident more than two decades ago. She and her father got into a fight the night she died about going to her brother's (the man's son's) wedding, for which she could not get time off work. "The guilt is unbelievable so he might have an extra stuffed animal (on the grave), but it gets him through the day." When the sexton retired, he said his replacement was a stickler for all the rules so began removing the extras from the daughter's grave. "He went apeshit. He did. It doesn't hurt a thing.

I mean every single person you deal with has a different story. They have a different need. If you treat a cemetery like a business, which it is, but if you don't know the backstory behind that person you'll never succeed. You never will. It makes them who they are. You don't hold that story against them."

This story reflects a prosocial rule breaking for the benefit of the citizen (Borry & Henderson 2020). Front-line public servants might break or bend rules to benefit others, and empathetic traits have shown to be a part of that decision to bend rules (Borry & Henderson 2020).

The cemetery manager in Queensbury, New York told a story also involving discretion and rule bending at the gravesite. In her role, she sees the rules as a comfort of sorts to grieving families. For instance, when she helps a family pick out a burial spot suited to their needs and what the deceased might have wanted, she sees pleasure in showing how the rules and regulations can also bring peace. Using her discretion, though, is another way of helping families through the grief process. She said she bends those rules especially when it comes to aiding families burying children. "We have a lot of tchotchke stuff in one section, and it's because there's a lot of young children up there. You know what, I am just glad I am not in their shoes, and we will work with them for them to keep doing what they're doing," which means knowing when to be a bit looser with some regulations regarding what can be on a gravesite.

Connect

The third step in Edlins' (2019) framework is an ability to take the cues from above and connect with people with a goal of understanding those emotions. In my data, this usually manifested when the sexton had a direct experience with personal death. As can be seen, the framework offers overlap, as this connection with death often is a foundation for finding an opportunity to connect with grieving families. It is how the sexton uses that opportunity – detaching or leaning in – that matters. While many sextons in the study seemed to lean into the grief, others undertook protective measures and treated the role as simply a job. Hearing the different ways connection manifested shows how deathcare can either be all consuming or is treated as another public service. This is not to say one is right or wrong; however, it should be noted there are different coping mechanism when it comes to connecting empathetically. Some of the quotes above already highlight this connectivity, given the Edlins (2019) framework is not directly linear. Other stories expand on the point here.

The woman who oversees cemetery operations for the Town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, summed it up thusly: "[I] put up a wall to where I could not show emotions." During funeral services, "I still keep my composure because I still have my job to do." While she might want to

cry (and she said she sometimes does), it is more important for her to exhibit stoicism during services. "I always had that experience in helping people. My faith had a lot to do with that, too. I know that their soul is somewhere better but just being there and listening to what they have to say about their loved ones, just listening not saying anything. I can only give so much comfort because I work for a municipality, so I have to watch what I say. It's just sad, but my belief is it's still a celebration, but I can see they're missing a loved one that is not here with us in body anymore."

Similarly, the cemetery manager in Bangor, Maine has been in the role 16 years, a job he took because he thought it would be "quiet out here." Humor helps him cope with the stresses of the job, but as illustrated by his quote, he tries not to bring the job home with him. "You've got to be able to still laugh at life, you know? You can't bring this home. You can't have your job 24/7. I try to do that when I leave work. I don't bring it home with me. Everybody's job, people do not realize until they're in that position that it can be stressful. If you can't do a job, you're going to get yourself out of it eventually because you say this just isn't for me. I like dealing with patrons of the cemetery. I really like helping people. That's my main goal is to help people. Helping people helps me."

Yet, after telling me stories of helping families and bending rules when needed, he seemed to contradict himself a bit:

> It's one of those positions that you worry about it. I don't know about you, but a lot of people when they clock out, they go home they don't think about work until they come back. As a cemetery sexton, you're constantly thinking about it – at night, at home on the weekend, everything. I had services over the weekend. I'm looking at my watch thinking diggings, procession, they should be about done. It's one of those things where you never stop thinking about it. I live less than five minutes from work. Ten, 11 o'clock at night, I'm getting ready for bed and think, 'Did I mark that on the right-hand side or left-hand side?' and I will drive over at 11:30 to check it. It takes a special person to do what we do, and I truly believe that. When it's 11:30 at night, and I'm getting dressed and my wife is saying, 'Where are you going?' I say, 'I have to check it.' I'm not going to sleep at all until I know this is right, until I go back over there and check this I'm not going to rest."

Similarly, the manager from Ruidoso, New Mexico exhibits empathy and emotional labor when helping families and taking the job home. Ruidoso is a tourist town, home to skiing and historical landscapes. For her, there is a difference between helping, say, an elderly person versus a parent who needs to bury a child. She recounted when a young man came to her office after his wife died during childbirth. "He is bawling at my table in my office. I'm bawling with him because I've read about her death in the newspaper. Or I know the people I just went to the cemetery to meet because their son just graduated with me son. I cry. I have goosebumps right this second. I call my husband, and I'm bawling. I didn't know that was going to be part of my job, and it's become more of my job since I've worked here."

Communicate

The last portion of Edlins' (2019) empathy framework is communicating empathy and empathetic responses. For instance, cemetery managers do not usually ask how people are doing because most of the time the answer is not good. That takes time to learn. Communication goes beyond only the

facts (Edlins 2019) so communicating understanding and help at the cemetery is vital for grieving families.

One superintendent in New York put it thusly:

> My phone rings, I give everybody my cell phone number, and I tell everybody, I say there's no clock at my house. If you need something and you need to talk to me, you call me. First of all, it doesn't matter that I'm asleep because I'm going to be more awake if something happens, and I could have helped you, you know? And I've always been that way. My husband's that way. If everybody could be just nicer to everybody. Think about it, a school bus driver is the first person to see a kid sometimes in their day. If they give them a hard time, it continues on. If that school bus drive is smart enough to say to that kid, 'Hey, how are you today?' or 'Hey, have a great day' or 'Hey, I'll see you this afternoon,' acknowledge to that kid that they're important to that kid's life. It's because we're too busy. We're going 90 miles an hour, and we haven't learned to stop and breathe.

The town clerk in Lincoln, Massachusetts who oversees cemetery operations and records, relayed a story of helping the family of a young man who committed suicide:

> You're privileged to be in the position to help them and assist them to make it runs as smooth as possible, but to feel their pain it was absolutely draining. It was just the worst pain to see how much pain they're in. The two of them sobbing and sobbing. Nothing would ever prepare you for that. I don't think any job in the world will prepare you for that. Probably the day you don't have that kind of intense grief and sadness and, I don't know what word, empathy and everything else. No words describe, it no words at all. You shouldn't be in the job if you can't feel that. That was a particularly difficult tragedy, and, I don't know, it was just harder. Even the other girls in the office said that, they said 'I didn't realize this job was so hard.'

For this woman, assisting families who are burying older people allows her to rationalize her grief, as she can tell herself the person had a full life. When it comes to handling families dealing with tragic deaths of young people, that is where learning empathy is crucial. She continued:

> You absorb their grief or something. It's like some kind of osmosis. I don't know what it is. There is something that is, and again I don't know the words, it's a great job but times like that it's very hard. All you can say is there for the grace of God go I, so it's a privilege to be able to assist people. I'm like, thank God that this didn't happen to me. It's not that it won't, but I don't know. It doesn't actually count for anything. It doesn't relieve anything… You're helping them bury their grief. There's something to it. You just deal with it as best you can. It's emotional, and it's more than you thought it would be.

The cemetery manager for the City of Anchorage, Alaska worked in a private funeral home before switching to municipal work. He recalled not realizing funeral directors for the private company would have to remove bodies from a home – a process he described as "brutal" – and when he was not traumatized by those experiences, he knew deathcare was the path for him. "When I was in school, I got a degree in journalism so part of that training is listening, picking up on things… So

part of my success as a funeral director was being able to sit down with families in a really tough spot for them but ease their fears a bit, listen to them… I would always just try to put my families as ease as quickly as you could… I don't take pain away. That's impossible. I try to make it easier for them to grieve in a healthy way."

The cemetery supervisor in the Town of Concord, Massachusetts, comes from a long line of public servants. Her father worked for the town light department, her uncle as a mechanic for the highway department, and her cousin in the highway department as well. When she was 17, she was looking for a summer job and asked her father for help. She told me she saw a girl out mowing medians and thought that could be a fun job, mowing and waving to her friends. "I started here thinking I was going to mow lawns downtown, and the very first day they said you're going to the cemetery with that guy. I was quite disappointed. The goal was to stick me in the cemetery so I would hate it and go to college. It backfired. I ended up loving it."

Growing up in the town, the job is personal. She has buried relatives and a boyfriend. "I don't do anything different for them than any other person. Every grave I dig, you want to make sure it's the best it can possibly be." When I asked what has made her stay at the cemetery for more than 30 years, she told me, "I think it's empathy. It's nothing I knew I had. I was 17. I didn't even know what empathy was when I started here." She sees her job as a vital public service that she can do with the utmost care. "Hopefully I'm making a difference in their life. For a short time, they can feel better. It's already bad, so I think it's a great opportunity we have as public employees to somehow make their day better. I always say I can't find a better word for good. I can't make it good. Hopefully we can give you a memory that's something that's comforting."

Concluding Remarks

There is a plethora of research examining front-line, street-level bureaucrats usually falling into categories such as police officers, fire fighters, social workers, teachers, and others. There is relatively little known about public servants working in municipal cemeteries, though cemeteries are part of our lives (Sloane 2018). Cemetery managers interact with death each day in some way, be it with families doing pre-need arrangements, funerals, or maintenance. Interacting with families goes beyond the service provision – families and loved ones come to visit and expect perfection at the gravesite. Therefore, the empathy and emotional labor sextons need and display goes beyond reactive and surface acting.

Through a content analysis of nearly 400 pages of interview transcripts with 35 cemetery managers throughout the United States, this paper applied Edlins' (2019) framework of empathy for public servants to the case of municipal cemetery management. Street-level bureaucrats such as police officers, firefighters, social workers, and others are studied, but cemetery management in public service goes largely unexamined. Shedding light on this crucial role highlights the ways empathy emerges in a position constantly surrounded by death – either maintaining graves or helping the living mourn.

We see similar traits of association take place in other street-level bureaucrats who go above and beyond standard job descriptions (Maynard-Moody & Musheno 2009). In this case, pure reliance

of professionalism might come across as uncaring, while a connected response shows an active empathy in action (Morse et al. 1992).

The study's limitations are a single coder and interviews with 35 sextons. Interviews stopped when I reached the point of saturation, though there is not agreement on exactly what that means and how it can be applied (Saunders et al. 2018). Saturation might not be an appropriate marker for all qualitative inquiry (O'Reilly & Parker 2012), but I stopped conducting interviews when I felt I was hearing similar responses from interviewees. Moreover, as a single coder, someone could take the same data and identify alternative codes. This is not a limitation so much as a strength given the interpretive nature of qualitative interview analysis.

Overall, this article shed light on how cemetery managers for local governments exhibit empathy and emotional labor on a job surrounded by death each day. This is important because in the face of global pandemics (which is taking place during this writing), the need for deathcare and death management is becoming increasingly vital. Cemetery trends are changing. Cremation is overtaking traditional burials. Families are seeking greener burial options. Sextons are constrained by tightening city budgets, also forced to do more with less. We should uncover more of these seemingly "disgusting" (Patterson 2008) jobs and learn more about the public servants providing critical services in times of great need.

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"No Damn Cat, and No Damn Cradle": *Cat's Cradle*, Science, and the Pitfalls of Evidence-Based Drug Policy

Ryan J. Lofaro

Evidence-based policy refers to the use of rigorously formulated evidence to aid in the creation of efficient and effective public policy (Lancaster, Treloar, & Ritter 2017). In the United States, the use of experts to inform policymaking through uncovering evidence can be traced back to the years following World War II, during which the Interdepartmental Committee on Scientific Research and Development (ICSRD) and Science Advisory Committee (SAC) were created to advise politicians and administrators on scientific matters (Weingart 1999). The use of expertise continued into the Cold War period as a means to enhance military technologies and further America's progress in the space race, resulting in the institutional wedding of science and policy (Weingart 1999). Social scientists were also called upon at this time to work with government agencies across different policy areas (Weiss, Murphy-Graham, Petrosino, & Gandhi 2008). Evaluators and analysts were commonly used to assess the efficacy of government programs and policies during the War on Poverty era of the 1960s and 1970s (Weiss et al. 2008). This preference for scientific evidence in the policy arena relies on the assumption that experts can objectively and neutrally evaluate social policies to improve government actions (Gauchat 2015). For this reason, expert scientists, evaluators, and analysts have been given an elite role in the policy arena without having to endure the political responsibility of decision-making (Weingart 1999).

Because of its ties to the fields of medicine and public health, drug policy has been heavily influenced by the call for scientific expertise and evidence-based practices (Lancaster 2014).[1] The quest for the accumulation of scientific evidence to determine *what works* aligns with the rationalist model of the policy sciences, in which the policy process is linear, and research provides the answers to a policy problem (Black & Donald 2001). Good policy decisions can only be reached through rational, rigorous, and systematic evaluations, according to evidence-based policy proponents (Lancaster, Treloar, et al. 2017). As such, the evidence-based policy endeavor is often associated with welfare economics (Nosyk & Wood 2012) and other rationalist approaches to policymaking (Kay 2011), and the field of drug policy has heavily relied upon these methods (Lancaster 2014).

It is difficult to assert that evidence is unnecessary in the formulation of effective public policy. Scientific evidence and expert analyses are undoubtedly needed to effectively address policy problems—especially in the health policy arena, wherein policy decisions can save lives. The unquestioned worship of experts and scientific evidence, however, has the potential to result in a lack of democratic participation in the drug policy arena (Ritter, Lancaster, & Diprose 2018). The reverence for experts allows politicians to selectively use evidence to lend authoritative support to a preferred policy (Weingart 1999), resulting in insufficient citizen participation and democratic dialogue (Ritter et al. 2018).

The current research uses Kurt Vonnegut's (1963) *Cat's Cradle* to critique evidence-based drug policy and assess the potential dangers of the privileging of scientific voices. The research applies Rhodes and Westwood's (2007) views on the conceptual value of pop culture in organization studies to the use of rationalist approaches to public policy. Pop culture provides a fruitful source of data that allows researchers to assess how dominant discourses are constituted and how they may be challenged (Weldes 2014). Through analyzing a work of popular fiction that itself offers a critique of science, a variety of challenges to the dominance of rationalist approaches are exposed (Rhodes & Westwood 2007). Exploring *Cat's Cradle,* placing it within the context in which it was written, and connecting it to the drug policy field aid in the discovery of the need for a critical attitude toward scientific elitism.

The aim here is not to discredit science or the use of expert-informed policy, as evidence is undoubtedly necessary in the drug policy field. In the era of "post-truth" and "alternative facts," it is important to note that the argument herein is not anti-science. Much like Ritter et al. (2018), the current article acknowledges "the limits of science for solving complex social problems" (2), confronting the politicized nature of evidence in the policy arena and highlighting the potential consequences of the evidence-based policy endeavor. The intention is to use the social constructionist literature to scrutinize evidence-based drug policy through a Vonnegutian lens, using themes from *Cat's Cradle* to elucidate the consequences of scientific elitism.

The current article relies on Bacchi's (2009) social constructionist concepts to show that when a problem is represented as evidence-based, certain voices are favored while others are marginalized. These marginalized voices should be added to the policy conversation. Findings from the social constructionist literature, together with Bacchi's (2009) model—titled *What's the Problem Represented to be? (WPR)*—are used to illuminate, question, and problematize the evidence-based drug policy movement. The WPR approach considers the following factors: how policy problems are represented, the underlying assumptions of such representations, the actors benefiting from and being marginalized by these representations, and the ways in which these representations can be questioned and replaced. The central assumption is that policy problems are constructed by the policy process, with policies representing and thus defining policy problems rather than solving pre-existing issues. Social constructionist approaches such as Bacchi's (2009) are suggested for future studies on specific drug policies in the United States, where such approaches are seldom used (Gstrein 2018).

This article proceeds by describing the plot of *Cat's Cradle,* the context in which it was written, and Vonnegut's reasons for writing the novel. Then, the themes in the book are discussed and applied to the drug policy arena in the United States. Specifically, rationalist approaches are

dogmatically favored due to their perceived objectivity, but complete objectivity is impossible in such a highly contentious field. Evidence is cherry-picked and given authoritative support by the actors involved, resulting in undemocratic practices when the voices of experts are favored while those of the citizenry are ignored. In future studies, social constructionist approaches are needed to discern how specific policy problems are represented, how evidence is used within this context, and how marginalized populations can be added to the conversation. The final section recapitulates the findings and discusses the need for a balance between rationalist and interpretive approaches to research.

Plot

Cat's Cradle is a science fiction novel about a man named Jonah who aims to write a book examining the day of the Hiroshima bombing. This inquiry leads him to contact family and associates of the late Felix Hoenikker, a fictitious physicist who helped create the atomic bomb, to determine what the day of the bombing was like for them. Eventually, the Hoenikker children and Jonah find themselves in the highly-impoverished nation of San Lorenzo, an island run by the dictatorial "Papa" Monzano. The island has outlawed the religion of Bokononism and threatens to punish anyone practicing the religion by hanging them on a hook for all to see, even though many on the island are practicing Bokononists. Bokononism is a religion built on lies—or rather, untruths known as *foma*—which was created to distract the people of San Lorenzo from their dismal economic circumstances. While on the island of San Lorenzo, Jonah discovers that Felix Hoenikker left his children a supply of a substance capable of turning any liquid it touches into a solid, a substance known as *ice-nine*. Already in ill-health, "Papa" Monzano commits suicide with ice-nine, thus beginning a chain of events ending in nearly every liquid on earth being transformed into solid form; only Jonah and a few of the Hoenikker children survive.

Context and Vonnegut's Views on Science

Vonnegut (1963) wrote *Cat's Cradle* at a time when attitudes toward science and technology were changing. After witnessing the devastation caused by the atomic bomb at the tail end of World War II, many physicists had been forced to reevaluate their sociological and philosophical positions regarding such potentially destructive inventions (Wilson 1996). Although some scientists still maintained their views on the morally neutral and value-free nature of science (Teller 1950), many had begun to question the logic in maintaining such a position. Following the dropping of the bomb, Robert Oppenheimer, a theoretical physicist who greatly contributed to the Manhattan Project, stated, "…the physicists have known sin; and this is a knowledge which they cannot lose" (Temperton 2017, para. 6). The fact that a scientific invention had helped end the lives of 66,000 to 150,000 people in Hiroshima (Stokes 2015), many of them innocent civilians, made it exceedingly difficult for science to hide behind the guise of neutrality.

It was against this backdrop, following the bombing of Hiroshima and amid the nuclear arms race of the Cold War, that Vonnegut wrote *Cat's Cradle*. Vonnegut served in World War II, becoming a prisoner of war and witnessing the firebombing and destruction of Dresden firsthand (el Diwani 2014). He had strong views on the use of the atomic bomb, stating, "I was a great believer in truth, scientific truth…then, truth was dropped on Hiroshima…I was hideously disillusioned, as that is

when I lost my innocence" (Finch 1983). Prior to writing *Cat's Cradle*, Vonnegut worked with Irving Langmuir at General Electric, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist who helped create artificial rain and snowfall (Kellner 2016). Langmuir was, according to Vonnegut, harmfully indifferent about what became of his inventions (Finch 1983). Vonnegut was startled by the scientist's ambivalence pertaining to the consequences of such dangerous inventions falling into the wrong hands (Finch 1983).

Science fiction is split into several stages, the last of which, the postmodern stage, grew out of a dissatisfaction with scientific enlightenment "…fed by fears of nuclear war and an increasing awareness of the role of technology in the destruction of the environment" (McCracken 1998, 108). Postmodern science fiction reflects a time "…in which the modernist dream of solving social problems through technology never holds" (McCracken 1998, 112). Due to Vonnegut's views on absolute truth and his criticisms of modernity, he is commonly known as a postmodern author (el Diwani 2014; D. D. Miller 2011). *Cat's Cradle* is considered a postmodern text because it parodies absolute truth and challenges the modernist assertion that progress is achievable only through knowledge gained from scientific methods (D. D. Miller 2011). Analyzing this postmodern text while placing it within the context in which it was written allows for the discovery of many of the same themes in the current drug policy arena. The critique of science seen in the novel is used in the current article to challenge the elite status given to experts in the quest for evidence-based drug policy. Much like Vonnegut's assertion that scientists should not be indifferent regarding how their inventions are utilized, policy analysts should be aware of how evidence is exploited and weaponized by the relevant actors in the drug policy arena—where evidence-based approaches dominate, and the target population (people who use drugs) carries a stigma (Lancaster 2014). The dominant discourse that progress is only achievable through rationalist approaches must be questioned.

Themes

An analysis of *Cat's Cradle* as applied to drug policy uncovered four themes. The *scientific elitism* theme addresses the elite status given to scientific experts in the quest for evidence-based drug policy. *The illusory nature of truth and knowledge* refers to the lack of neutrality and objectivity in the highly political drug policy arena. *The dangers of science* theme confronts the lack of democratic participation and deliberation due to the elite view of experts. And *recognizing the human element* entails using social constructionist research approaches to enhance democratic practices by examining how the policy-relevant actors utilize evidence and who is harmed throughout the process.

Scientific Elitism

In his scathing commentary on the dangers of science, Vonnegut highlights the elite status science holds in society. The scientists in the novel see science as the only way to achieve progress, with one character recalling a Felix Hoenikker quote on how a lack of science causes problems in the world: "The trouble with the world was…that people were still superstitious instead of scientific. [Hoenikker] said if everybody would study science more, there wouldn't be all the trouble there was" (Vonnegut 1963, 24). The laypeople in the story are constantly depicted as inferior to the mighty scientific minds of individuals such as Dr. Asa Breed, vice president at the research laboratory at which Felix Hoenikker once worked. A receptionist at the laboratory, Miss Pefko,

describes scientific jargon as akin to a foreign language, and she receives a reprimand from Dr. Breed for referring to exhibits in the laboratory as "magic." According to Dr. Breed, the exhibits are "…the very antithesis of magic," so there is no reason to use this "…brackish, medieval word" (Vonnegut 1963, 36). Miss Pefko does not even know the meaning of the word antithesis. The whole conversation peeves Dr. Breed.

To highlight the religious-like worship for the scientific, Vonnegut places science and Bokononism side-by-side to help the reader see the irrationality in such an elite view of science. Although Bokononists are the religious zealots in the story, the deification of truth and knowledge by the scientists renders science on par with Bokononism in terms of religiosity. The constant collocation of the two contrasting concepts throughout the book invites the reader to scrutinize the religious-like worship and elite status of science in society.

The social sciences have defended the traditional scientific approach to inquiry with a religious-like zeal due to its alleged objectivity and superiority compared to other methods (Maxwell 2020). The field of public policy in the United States has traditionally relied upon the epistemological foundations of economics, resulting in a surfeit of rationalist policy analyses and a concomitant lack of attention paid to interpretive approaches (Smith & Larimer 2017). The goal of formulating public policy with rational, scientific methods, coined the *rationality project*, has long been a part of American culture and has dominated the policy sciences in the country (Stone 2012).

While rationalist approaches are commonly used in general in the policy arena, the drug policy field has been especially prone to adopting these methods due to its ties to the technical rationality of medicine (Lin 2003). The public health field has often called for systematic and evidence-based approaches to the formulation of policy, leading the field of drug policy to attempt to determine *what works* with more evidence piled on (Brownson, Chriqui, & Stamatakis 2009; Lancaster 2014; Ritter et al. 2018). The Trump administration, for example, has commonly cited evidence-based measures as part of its national drug control strategy (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2019), and the Obama administration mentioned the importance of cost-effective, evidence-based approaches to drug policy (Office of National Drug Control Policy, n.d.). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (n.d.) supports the use of expertise and evidence-based practices as part of a "…comprehensive approach to identifying and disseminating clinically sound and scientifically based policies, practices and programs," with the hope of turning "...science into action" (para. 4).

In a report on how to improve data practices in the United States, the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking (2017) defines evidence as "…information produced by 'statistical activities' with a 'statistical purpose' that is potentially useful when evaluating government programs and policies" (8). The United States created the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking in 2016 to enhance government programs through the use of performance metrics to monitor policy outputs, implementation studies to assess whether goals are being reached, and impact studies to examine efficiency and effectiveness (Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking 2017). The evidence-based drug policy endeavor has been dominated by these rationalist methods—e.g., using welfare economics to assess the costs and benefits of a policy (Nosyk & Wood 2012)—at the expense of other approaches (Lancaster 2014). The Dr. Breeds and Felix Hoenikkers of the world have been given an elite status in the drug policy arena.

The Illusory Nature of Truth and Knowledge

One of the major themes throughout *Cat's Cradle* is the illusory nature of truth and knowledge. At the beginning of the book, Dr. Breed states, "new knowledge is the most valuable commodity on earth. The more truth we have to work with, the richer we become" (Vonnegut 1963, 42). He views the role of the scientist as crucial in accruing this commodity. On the opposite end of the spectrum is Bokononism, a religion with a holy book beginning with the phrase, "all of the true things I am about to tell you are shameless lies" (Vonnegut 1963, 5). In juxtaposing the viewpoints of scientists and a fictitious religion based on lies, Vonnegut invites the reader to consider the absurdity of believing in the scientific method's claim to absolute objectivity and neutrality, and he questions if truth, in and of itself, is attainable. Newt Hoenikker, the son of Felix, finds that parents have been dangling strings in front of children for years while claiming the image to be a cat's cradle. Newt seems perplexed by this deception, stating, "no damn cat, and no damn cradle" (Vonnegut 1963, 166). Vonnegut uses the metaphor of the cat's cradle to point out that from a young age, we are fed illusions disguised as facts. Essentially, any type of knowledge is based on "untruths," so a healthy skepticism is necessary to navigate the world.

Much like Dr. Breed, rationalist policy analysts assume that knowledge pertaining to policy decisions can be objectively and neutrally collected from the social world to help rational policymakers decide how to proceed based on the costs and benefits of a policy (Smith & Larimer 2017; Stone 2012). This assumption, however, does not consider the political nature of knowledge in the policy arena. Take, for example, two rationalist policy analyses of the effectiveness of laws expanding access to naloxone (an opioid overdose reversal drug) in the United States—one which found the laws were associated with a decrease in opioid overdose deaths (Rees, Sabia, Argys, Latshaw & Dave 2017) and one which found an increase in deaths in some areas of the country and no overall reduction (Doleac & Mukherjee 2018). In addition to coming to dissimilar conclusions on the issue of overdose deaths, the two studies looked at different outcome variables. Whereas Rees et al. (2017) looked at the number of lives saved by increased naloxone access, Doleac and Mukherjee (2018) found that Naloxone Access Laws (NALs) increased crime rates. The simple act of including crime as an outcome variable caused a stir in the medical community, as many physicians expressed dismay for assessing the possible downside of a life-saving drug (Greene 2018). Several physicians stated they had been contacted by policymakers asking if they should rethink their stance on naloxone (Greene 2018).

In this case, there is a disagreement over values. The study by Rees et al. (2017) was not criticized like the study by Doleac and Mukherjee (2018) because the policy-relevant actors were not offended by the conclusions. Physicians were not overly concerned with the crime aspect of NALs since it is not within their jurisdiction; they aim to save lives. But even on the outcome variable of overdose deaths, the two analyses looked at the same laws and target populations, yet they came to two completely different conclusions because of the disparate methods used—Doleac and Mukherjee (2018) used county- and city-level monthly data to exploit the staggered timing of the implementation of the laws, whereas Rees et al. (2017) examined the issue on an annual basis at the state level. Both studies controlled for different potentially confounding factors as well.

Claims of scientific objectivity and neutrality should be questioned when two studies can reach different conclusions based on the methods employed and the outcome variables chosen. The

research design of an analysis defines how a policy problem is viewed and influences the possible solutions, thus creating a particular view of the world rather than uncovering knowledge existing independently of the research (Bacchi 2009; Ritter 2015). The same holds true for other areas of drug policy. Consider a cost-benefit analysis on whether to legalize cannabis. The possible outcome variables for such a study include criminal activity, criminal records, tax dollars, enforcement costs, prices of the drug, consumption rates, personal wellbeing, productivity and educational attainment of drug users, and traffic accidents, among other things (Shanahan & Ritter 2013). It is simply not plausible to expect an analyst to address each of these outcomes, and to complicate matters, there is a degree of difficulty in measuring some outcomes, while others are easily quantifiable. An analyst must pick and choose the outcomes deemed to be significant and measurable (Shanahan & Ritter 2013).

The influence the analyses of NALs had on policymakers (Greene 2018) highlights the inherently political nature of policy analysis. In public administration and public policy, rationalist researchers often try to create a gap between the analyst and the policymaker; the former claims neutrality and objectivity and thus wipes their hands clean of the topic after the analysis, and the latter makes inherently political decisions (Smith & Larimer 2017). However, it is exceptionally difficult to separate the human world of politics from the scientific world of rationalist policy analysis. Numbers and "facts" serve a metaphorical function in the policy arena, in which meaning is contested (Stone 2012). Problems are defined in different ways by the various political actors (Bacchi 2009; Stone 2012), making knowledge claims more dependent upon the views of those in power than they are illustrative of objective reality (McCann 2008). "If scientific knowledge can be used to legitimate different political positions and decisions, it is obviously not the one-dimensional, 'hard' and objective truth which only relates to one particular solution" (Weingart 1999, 156). Evidence and "facts" in the drug policy arena lack the ultimate truth sought by rationalist analysts and the likes of Dr. Breed and Felix Hoenikker. Dr. Breed's receptionist echoes this assertion: "I just have trouble understanding how truth, all by itself, could be enough for a person" (Vonnegut 1963, 54). In the highly contentious drug policy arena, wherein analytical results and their interpretations differ based on various political factors, "truth" is often not enough.

The Dangers of Science

A third major theme throughout *Cat's Cradle* is the danger involved in allowing science to operate without questioning its limitations. The creation of the atomic bomb and ice-nine are prime examples of the adverse effects of science. While talking to Jonah, Marvin Breed, tombstone salesman and brother of Dr. Asa Breed, states, "…I know all about how harmless and gentle and dreamy [Felix Hoenikker] was supposed to be, how he'd never hurt a fly…how he wasn't like the rest of us, how he was better than the rest of us…but how the hell innocent is a man who helps make a thing like the atomic bomb?" (Vonnegut 1963, 67-68). Throughout the novel, Felix Hoenikker is painted as a man with an inability to relate to other human beings, lacking social skills but having a childlike wonder for the scientific—he is objective science personified. The scientific world is removed from the human condition, with one character stating, "I am a very bad scientist. I will do anything to make a human being feel better, even if it's unscientific. No scientist worthy of the name could say such a thing" (Vonnegut 1963, 223). Although the Bokononists on San Lorenzo live in destitution and lack the ability to progress, Vonnegut invites the reader to ask what the point of progress is if the ends are the obliteration of the world.

The problem with the evidence-based drug policy endeavor is that there is a disconnect between the scientific and the social; the assumptions do not align with the realities of the political world. The central tenet of evidence-based policy is "…that good policy decisions should be based on rational assessments of effectiveness," whether through randomized controlled trials or systematic, rigorous evaluations (Lancaster, Treloar, et al. 2017, 289). The assumption is that rational policymakers simply need access to evidence on *what works* to solve policy problems (Ritter et al. 2018). But this is not how the policy arena operates. Rather than acting rationally based on complete information, policymakers must operate within a political arena rife with spin, skewed information, human emotions, political contestation, and irrational actors (Stone 2012). The catchphrase *what matters is what works* has been used by government officials to expand research staff and budgets to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs (Solesbury 2001), but evidence is only one part of a dynamic policy system (Ritter 2015). Instead of using evidence to neutrally construct drug policy, knowledge and information are validated by suppressing and privileging certain voices (Lancaster 2014). The use of expertise is manipulated and employed strategically by those in power (McCann 2008). Coherence and consensus are seldom reached in the highly contentious drug policy arena, so evidence may be overutilized or underutilized depending on the policy actors (Gstrein 2018; Ritter & Bammer 2010).

The unintended consequence of giving science such an elite role in an irrational and highly contentious political arena is the selective use of certain types of evidence and knowledge. A wide array of public and private stakeholders influence the creation of drug policies, and these policies affect a wide variety of individuals and organizations (Houborg & Frank 2014). Moreover, the evidence presented to formulate policy is not reached based on mutual consensus since the research community is not a homogenous entity. Scientific advisors and research can be cherry-picked from this diverse group to give authoritative and "objective" support to a legislator's preferred policy (Weingart 1999), resulting in the use of evidence to confirm preferred positions rather than to offer new alternatives (Head 2013).

The importance of evidence in the drug policy arena has been repeated ad nauseam, but it is often employed as a political strategy (Tieberghien & Decorte 2013). Regarding marijuana policy in the United States, Holden (2018) found that public officials in the Trump administration have actively sought evidence portraying marijuana legalization in a negative light to push the narrative that the drug is a threat to the country, thus countering widespread public support for legalization. Advocates on all sides of this debate commonly cherry-pick studies that agree with their viewpoints while ignoring research that challenges these stances (Hudak & Stenglein 2018).

The "evidence-based" label and its associated privileging and selective use of expert knowledge have created a policy arena wherein the voices of experts are favored while others are marginalized (Lancaster, Treloar, et al. 2017). The result is insufficient democratic dialogue and citizen participation (Ritter et al. 2018). Although the policy-relevant actors do not always utilize evidence, the favoring of expert knowledge determines which type of knowledge is considered relevant, thus limiting the voices heard on salient issues (Lancaster 2014; Lancaster, Seear, Treloar, & Ritter 2017). The political actors have the power to validate truth claims with scientific evidence, even though these claims to truth are themselves the result of political debate (McCann 2008). Privileging scientific voices in the policy arena aligns with viewing citizens as scientifically illiterate and consequently unfit to participate in policy debates (Ritter 2015). Because drug policies impact the

already marginalized and stigmatized target population of illicit drug users (Ti, Tzemis, & Buxton 2012), this suppression of voices is especially deleterious.

The failure to see evidence as a political narrative imbued with values has resulted in a lack of consideration for the wide variety of stakeholder perspectives (Ritter 2015). While this harmful result may not be the functional equivalent of every liquid on earth turning into a solid via a dose of ice-nine, the worship for the scientific has resulted in a lack of democratic participation for the sake of technical rationality, an outcome of grave consequence for democracy (Ritter et al. 2018). In a highly controversial policy field such as that pertaining to the legislation of illegal drugs, wherein rationalist studies do not reach a consensus and proposals are diverse, politicians can handpick studies to give scientific backing to a preferred policy rather than giving a voice to the citizenry. Marginalized groups have been left out of the policy conversation (Lancaster 2014; Ritter et al. 2018). In this way, science is not neutral but rather contributes to political agendas and a reduction of democratic participation. To quote a scientist in *Cat's Cradle* after the successful testing of the atomic bomb at Alamogordo: "Science has now known sin" (Vonnegut 1963, 17).

Recognizing the Human Element

Throughout the entire novel, Vonnegut begs for an injection of compassion and humanity into the indifferent world of the scientists. The lack of the human element in the scientific process is highlighted in a conversation between Jonah and a bartender on how science has discovered the secret to life: "What *is* the secret of life," Jonah asks, "protein…they found out something about protein," responds the bartender (Vonnegut 1963, 24). This passage emphasizes the tendency of science to reduce the human condition to biological processes. Rather than seeing humanity as complex and nuanced, the scientists in the novel treat life as a laboratory experiment. This attitude ultimately leads to the destruction of the world when Felix Hoenikker is unconcerned with what becomes of ice-nine. The daughter of Felix Hoenikker, left to police the family due to Felix's childish disposition, could only escape from the scientific world of her childhood by going into her room to play the clarinet. Vonnegut often references the arts, an expression of humanity, as the only escape from the uncaring scientific realm. The point here is that the scientific community must be aware of how their inventions are utilized by recognizing the human element as an essential part of any scientific invention or study. Scientific knowledge should not be used without consideration for its consequences.

In the quest for rationalism, drug policy research in the United States has suffered from a lack of consideration for how the policy-relevant actors utilize evidence and who is harmed throughout the process. To remedy this problem, researchers should embrace social constructionist approaches to drug policy research. In the drug policy literature, such approaches have typically utilized Bacchi's (2009) WPR model (Gstrein 2018). This interpretive approach to policy analysis holds that policies represent problems in a specific manner, with assumptions and values undergirding problem representations, and these representations influence what can be done and who has a voice throughout the policy process. This does not imply that policy problems do not exist but rather that governments represent and define problems during the policy process; policies do not resolve objective issues (Bacchi 2009).

Power plays a role in determining what is considered to be a problem and how problems are framed (Bacchi 2009). The WPR approach "presumes that some problem representations benefit the

members of some groups at the expense of others… The goal is to intervene to challenge problem representations that have these deleterious effects" (Bacchi 2009, 44). It is the researcher's role to analyze problem representations, uncover their underlying assumptions and power disparities, elucidate their effects, and offer possible alternatives. By evaluating problem representation, researchers reach beneath the surface to elucidate the political processes at work, assessing how certain types of knowledge come to be privileged over others and examining who is harmed by particular problem definitions rather than aiming to "solve" pre-existing policy issues with more evidence piled on (Bacchi 2009; Lancaster 2014; Ritter et al. 2018). In this way, researchers can recognize the politicized nature of knowledge and evidence in the policy arena, assess which voices have been marginalized throughout the policy process, and see where democratic participation needs enhancing (Bacchi 2009; Gstrein 2018; Ritter et al. 2018).

In past research, Bacchi's (2009) approach has been successful in providing "…a means of unpacking the underlying assumptions of drug policy, helping to shed light on limitations of current approaches and opening up the possibility of reform" (Gstrein 2018, 15), as well as offering "a robust critique of the evidence-based policy paradigm by challenging the validity and authority of evidence in the policymaking process" (Gstrein 2018, 16). Bacchi's (2009) concepts are applied in the current article to conclude that certain types of knowledge have been privileged over others in the drug policy arena due to the field's evidence-based representation. Evidence is employed as a political strategy while certain voices are marginalized (Ritter 2018; Tieberghien & Decorte, 2013). Few researchers have used these social constructionist concepts to analyze specific policies in the United States. Of the 48 studies identified in a meta-analysis as taking a social constructionist or ideational approach to drug policy research, only 15% were from the United States (Gstrein, 2018).[2] The roles of the myriad stakeholders in the United States, including the public and people who use drugs, should be considered in future studies. The human element of the policy process must be acknowledged.

To recognize the human element, it would behoove policy analysts to learn some Vonnegutian vocabulary. According to Bokononism, *foma* are harmless untruths that can be helpful if utilized correctly; humanity is organized into teams, with each team representing a *karass*—i.e., a group of people linked together; a *wampeter* is the central pivot of a *karass*, around which members orbit spiritually; and *busy, busy, busy* is what Bokononists say when it becomes apparent how unpredictable and complicated the machinery of life is. Further highlighting the complex nature of human processes is Bokonon's "Fifty-Third Calypso":

> Oh, a sleeping drunkard up in Central Park,
> And a lion-hunter in the jungle dark,
> And a Chinese dentist, and a British queen—
> All fit together in the same machine.
> Nice, nice, very nice; nice, nice, very nice;
> Nice, nice, very nice—so many different people
> In the same device. (Vonnegut 1963, 3)

In the policy arena, policy-relevant actors form alliances around belief systems and values (Schmidt, 2014), and policy advocates often rely on narratives and storytelling techniques to frame the policy problem in a certain way (H. T. Miller 2019; Schön & Rein 1994; Stevens 2007). Stated

in Vonnegutian terms, policy *karasses* form around *wampeters*, and policy advocates often rely on *foma* to frame policy problems. These policy actors interact within a complex battlefield rife with political contestation and competing *foma*, an environment that is *busy, busy, busy*. "Facts," knowledge, and evidence are highly contested within this arena, in which the various viewpoints involved support sundry policy solutions (Schmidt 2014; Stone 2012)—i.e., many different perspectives interact within the same device.

Rather than viewing scientific evidence as a superior voice, the pluralistic and complex nature of the drug policy arena should be acknowledged to enhance democratic practices. Though there is an inherent tension between democratic decision-making and technical rational decision-making, especially when decision-makers consider complex and highly contentious issues (Walters, Aydelotte, & Miller 2000), it is possible for different ways of knowing to cohabit within drug policy (Lancaster, Treloar, et al. 2017). The voices of citizens (including those who use drugs) and experts can both be heard throughout the policy process; the two should coexist (Ritter 2015). Evidence should be considered as held by many different stakeholders—not only by scientific experts (Black & Donald 2001). A consideration of how evidence is utilized and who is harmed can help future researchers discover how to increase democratic deliberation and citizen participation (Ritter et al. 2018).[3]

This is not to say that evidence-based methods should be avoided in the drug policy arena but rather that an examination of how scientific knowledge is utilized is necessary to safeguard democratic principles. Research should consider how problems are defined and constructed by policy "solutions" (Bacchi 2009; Stone 2012) to challenge the underlying assumptions of the evidence-based drug policy endeavor in the United States. As Fraser and Moore (2011) stated, there is a "need…to understand the problem as both factual and political, and policy as a site in which the politics and materiality of drugs are made" (500). The human element of the policy process must not be forgotten for the sake of technical rationality.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

What is needed in the field of drug policy in the United States is a consideration of how evidence is utilized and how this influences democratic practices. This is not a call, however, for eschewing all rationalist methods in the policy arena. Regarding the previously mentioned Naloxone Access Laws (NALs), scientific methods are needed to determine if the laws prevent overdose deaths, increase crime, increase costs to taxpayers, and incentivize drug use, as well as to assess the efficacy of various regulatory designs. Rationalist research and scientific evidence are unquestionably necessary in the drug policy arena, but researchers must be cognizant of who is utilizing this evidence and to what end. If the use of evidence leads to the suppression of the voices of vital stakeholders—e.g., citizens, people who use drugs, or people in recovery from drugs—then the process should be reassessed. There are helpful conclusions that can be drawn from both rationalist and interpretive approaches which lead to findings that would be impossible to reach when using only one method, so it is necessary to expand the approaches used to enhance the breadth of knowledge in the drug policy literature in the United States.

The current research used the social constructionist literature to scrutinize and problematize the evidence-based drug policy endeavor. Bacchi's (2009) conceptual lens was employed to assess problem representation, the underlying assumptions present, who has benefited and who has been harmed, and whether alternative representations are possible. The representation of drug policy as evidence-based assumes that policymakers have the ability to rationally apply neutrally constructed expert-knowledge to create effective policies; thus, experts are given an elite role (*scientific elitism*). But this fails to consider the contested and political nature of evidence in the drug policy arena (*the illusory nature of truth and knowledge*). The "evidence-based" label has created an arena wherein the voices of experts are favored over the inclusion of others, politicians can lend authoritative support to preferred policies, and the target population is further marginalized/harmed (*the dangers of science*). Future studies should employ social constructionist approaches (specifically, Bacchi 2009) to analyze specific drug policies in the United States, where such approaches are seldom used. In this way, researchers can understand how specific policy problems are constructed, examine how evidence is used throughout the process, assess the effects, and offer alternatives. People who use drugs and other citizens should be included in policy conversations (*recognizing the human element*).

This does not mean evidence should be ignored throughout the policy process, only that what is viewed as valid evidence should be questioned, with alternative forms of knowledge offered (Lancaster, Treloar, et al. 2017). Researchers should be aware of how the policy problem is represented rather than viewing policies as solutions to pre-existing issues (Bacchi 2009). Social constructionist approaches can help researchers, policymakers, and policy advocates understand the politicized nature of the policy process to identify where evidence fits within this framework (Bacchi 2009). Moreover, such approaches promote the coexistence of citizens and experts within drug policy (Ritter 2015).

Ceding the ultimate authority to scientific evidence in an attempt to rid the policy process of partiality only serves to ignore the practical wisdom and lived experiences of essential stakeholders (Lancaster 2014; Ritter et al. 2018). Recognizing the limits and potential consequences of this quest for scientific evidence allows researchers to arrive at solutions that have not been apparent heretofore. Although it is difficult to include the marginalized populations of people who use drugs and people in recovery from drugs in policy formulation because of their distrust of service providers, need for confidentiality, and lack of involvement in government meetings, it is vital an attempt is made for all voices to be heard if democratic governance is to be achieved (Froonjian & Garnett 2013).

The use of Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* allowed for a novel assessment of the drug policy field in the United States. Art and pop culture provide subtle critiques of the context of which they are a part and product (Rhodes & Westwood 2007; Weldes 2014). Vonnegut's incisive critique of the dangers of a dehumanized science reflects an emerging discourse at the time the novel was written, one which challenged the idea that progress is only achievable through scientific means. The skeptical view of science present during the post-World War II era should be employed in the current drug policy arena in the United States to prevent the voices of the citizenry from being ignored. And although the current research may be criticized for its unconventional methods, this is precisely the type of attitude this research attempts to combat. Overdoses from opioid painkillers have reached record proportions in the United States, with deaths involving opioids rising from 21,088

in 2010 to 47,600 in 2017 (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2020). The exigent nature of the issue and ineffectiveness of current policies display the need for unconventional methods to arrive at innovative solutions. If new approaches are ignored because of their lack of conventionality, then the solutions offered will be more of the same.

Scientists and rationalist researchers, while undoubtedly needed in the policy arena, should attempt to keep an open mind by recognizing that science is not the be-all and end-all of existence in the social world. Science has the potential to both help and harm; to create and destroy; to progress and stymie. This should be recognized in the drug policy arena to prevent the further ostracization of an already marginalized population in the policy process. New ideas and methodologies must be embraced if we seek a destination different from those reached in the past. "As Bokonon says: 'Peculiar travel suggestions are dancing lessons from God'" (Vonnegut 1963, 63).

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Endnotes

1 The current article defines drug policy as the process of policymaking in relation to illicit drugs (or drugs operating in a legal gray area—such is the case with marijuana laws in the United States) and the target populations using these drugs (Gstrein, 2018).

2 Ideational and social constructionist approaches differ in that the former is concerned with the role of beliefs and ideas, while the latter focuses on how problems are constructed by the policy process (Gstrein, 2018). There is an overlap between the two since "ideas are…at the heart of social constructionist approaches to exploring policy making…" (Gstrein, 2018, p. 76). Both approaches are useful in critiquing the evidence-based policy endeavor.

3 Social constructionist approaches have been used in past studies to analyze instances of decision-makers relying too heavily on expertise at the expense of others (see, for example, Lancaster, Treloar, et al., 2017) and occasions when weak and/or anecdotal evidence was used to justify a position—e.g., during the drug war of the 1980s, when public officials relied on weak evidence to rationalize harsh punishments for crack cocaine use (Everett, 1998). Such approaches can aid future researchers in tracing the path of evidence (whether it has or has not been used), examining the consequences of its use, and seeing where marginalized voices can be added to the conversation.

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Societal Dissolution and the Failure of Government in Dystopian Climate Fiction

David A. Rochefort

The date often cited as marking the origins of global warming as a public issue is June 23, 1988. On that day, Dr. James Hansen, director of NASA's Institute for Space Studies, came before the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to testify that "Global warming has reached a level such that we can ascribe with a high degree of confidence a cause-and-effect relationship between the greenhouse effect and observed warming" (Brulle 2018). More than three decades later, the issue of global warming has changed enormously with widespread media coverage, a comprehensive program of scientific investigation, official attention from a host of governmental entities on the national and international scene, and political mobilization from the grassroots level to corporate board rooms. The issue has also undergone a name change with "climate change" commonly replacing the less scientifically precise, and more provocative, term that had preceded it. This new designation has done little, however, to facilitate meaningful policy development. Currently, in the United States, the topic of climate change is arguably at its highest point of controversy ever, with a degree of partisan polarization in opinion polls, election campaigns, and legislative agendas that confounds even the most moderate attempts at government action (Millman 2013; Jaffe 2018).

In the face of a political stalemate that is unlikely to end soon, one sign of the times is the spillover of climate change activism into the domain of culture. While the products of this movement range across diverse media and venues—from poetry, to film, to theatre, to painting, to photography (Johns-Putra 2016; Tugend 2019)—the focus of this present analysis is on political fiction, where a dominant trend of recent years has been the plethora of dystopian works portraying the phenomenon of climate change as a looming global catastrophe. More than 100 books are listed by the website eco-fiction.com under its "dystopian" label, and new titles are added regularly. Writing in *The New Yorker Magazine*, Harvard historian Jill Lepore (2017) has called ours "a golden age for dystopian fiction."

The dystopian novel constitutes an important type of cultural discourse having much in common with other narratives that "construct the political spectacle" by interpreting its controversies, actors, symbols, and trajectory. Political scientist Murray Edelman (1988) went so far as to write,

"It is language about political events, not the developments in any other sense, that people experience; even events that are close by take their meaning from the language that depicts them" (104). The endeavor of fiction is distinctively advantaged to compete in this meaning-making enterprise by virtue of its well-honed linguistic tools and by its ability to embed an audience—psychologically and emotionally—in circumstances contrived to engage and instruct.

One of the thorniest problems faced by the polity is planning for uncertain risk. On the one hand, the future possibility of "a significantly hazardous, if not disastrous, culminating event" (DeLeo 2016, 20) calls out for pre-emption. On the other hand, insufficient knowledge about the time, place, and ultimate character of any speculative scenario saps the political will for response. Climate change is the premier example of an "anticipatory issue" with its fateful warnings of planetary degradation entangled in debates over relative urgency, justice across the generations, and the role of science in government. How the dystopian novel seeks to overcome the forces of inattention and awaken the polity to its environmental responsibilities offers a fascinating insight into the intersection between policy advocacy and aesthetic invention.

For scholars of the policy process, culture is an "exogenous variable" factoring into the rise of social movements as well as the meaning of new public issues (Berezin 1997). The value of film and television as source material for teaching leadership, ethics, and bureaucratic function has received considerable scholarly attention, including, recently, the utility of such popular shows as "Game of Thrones" (Yu and Campbell 2020), "The Good Place" (Meyer 2020), and "Parks and Recreation" (Borry 2018) within the public administration curriculum. The publication of fiction on climate change qualifies as both a cultural event and a form of personal education/entertainment that ushers readers, individually, into a space of systemic political controversy. The proliferation of eco-dystopian writing is now at the point where this genre has attained a secure niche in the general conversation surrounding climate change by virtue of its foregrounding of "scientifically substantiated predictions" and its dramatization of "the bigness, the unknowability, of the looming transformations" that face human society and the planet *in extremis* (Waldman 2018). As will be discussed in the closing section of this article, quasi-realist fiction of this sort is relevant to the concerns of public administration in a number of areas, including its negative portrayal of government performance for a large cultural audience, the use of fiction as a kind of "scenario-writing" that extrapolates current climate trends and their societal fallout, and the presentation of an expanded *affective* understanding of the experience of global warming.

Three Futuristic Case Studies of Climate Change

Three novels provide the "data" for this analysis: Meg Little Reilly's *We Are Unprepared* (2016); Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* (2015); and Marcel Theroux's *Far North* (2009). Selected to represent the diversity of content in eco-dystopian writing, the works transport us, respectively, to the near-, intermediate-, and long-term future. The first book focuses on community conflict in the state of Vermont, the second examines violent regional competition in the American southwest, and the third describes post-apocalyptic disorder in a stateless northern hinterland beyond the United States. The last-named title is generally taken to be part of the first wave of contemporary fiction on climate change; the others are more recent additions to this literary

movement. All have received generally strong reviews from the critics (see, e.g., Elliott 2016, Delamaide 2016, Kennedy 2017, Hamilton 2015, Heller 2015, Kellogg 2009, Martin 2009), including *Far North*'s choice as a National Book Award Finalist.

Consistent with treatment of these works as fact-inspired case studies that "thickly describe" a bounded field of action—to repurpose a term from anthropological observation (Dawson, 2010)—it is necessary to review the main characters, events, social relationships, and psychological underpinnings of behavior within each (Dawson, 2010). Given limitations of space, this summarization will be narrowed by concentrating on a set of narrative ingredients holding special interest for the present study:

- Reification, or the use of narrative to create a palpable sense of future calamity by means of story features such as setting, the lived experience of the main characters, and an intruding sense of spiritual desolation, as concerns surrounding the fate of the species, connection with the divine, suffering, redemption, and punishment increasingly haunt human consciousness.
- Issue Framing, or the definition of climate change in terms of such descriptive attributes as its severity, proximity, causation, and the identification of heroes and villains on the field of social and political action.
- Governance, or the impact of climate change on government's role in society—what it once was, what it has become, and where it is heading in an increasingly disordered world.

The Collapse of Local Government in Rural New England

The two principal characters in Reilly's *We Are Unprepared* are Ash, a graphic designer, and Pia, his beautiful blonde wife, a talented but unemployed artist. The story is told from the point of view of Ash, who describes himself at the outset as a happy thirty-five-year-old. The couple uprooted from Brooklyn to the idyllic town of Isole (pop. 6,481) in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom sometime after the economic recession and housing market collapse of 2008. Building a new "dream life" together was the objective, complete with a rustic setting, a healthy lifestyle, and closeness to nature's vital reality. Inspiring this "romantic vision" was Ash's own upbringing in the Green Mountain State. Not merely a dystopic rendering of the climate issue, *We Are Unprepared* seeks to capture that precise moment at which innocent utopia is lost.

Early in the novel, Pia discovers that, due to a hormonal imbalance, the assistance of a fertility specialist will be required if she and her husband are going to have a baby. The difficulties surrounding this pregnancy foreshadow that Ash and Pia's well-tended marriage is about to fall apart as Mother Nature enters the scene to threaten disruption on a large scale. During their drive home from the doctor's office on a sunny September day, NPR breaks the news that a season of unprecedented extreme weather events is predicted to hit the east coast of the United States. Included is the frightening possibility of a superstorm resulting from multiple weather systems. The federal government's advisory makes no mention of "global warming" but, as narrator Ash dryly observes, "by then no one needed our reluctant government to confirm what we knew to be true" (18). *We Are Unprepared* is part apocalyptic saga, as members of the Isole community brace for approaching destruction, and part dystopian lament, as awareness dawns that a whole

way of life is giving way to something sadder and diminished.

The day after this initial radio story, supplies are flying off the shelves of the local hardware store, with nervous shoppers anticipating largely unknowable contingencies. In this way gnawing uncertainty surfaces as the star ingredient of anxiety in this drama.

Eventually, Pia succumbs and abandons all desire for a baby, telling Ash angrily, "We can't have children! How can we bring children into this world? It's poisoned. The air, the water, the soil, the fucking weather. How can you not see that?" (197). Nor is she willing to consider becoming a foster parent for an exceptional seven-year-old boy being removed from the custody of neighbors who are unfit parents, a stance that alienates her husband. Pia's rashly discarded plan for children heightens the proximity, and the severity, of climate change as a public issue in this story, a reality that invades the most intimate compartments of private life. Ash detects signs of mental instability in his wife's new obsession with worm composting kits, hand-crank fertilizers, and other morbid hedges against the end of functioning society.

Paralleling Pia's unsettled state is restiveness among the community at large as fearful speculation about the weather becomes topic #1 everywhere from grocery checkout lines to the weekly farmers' market, to talk radio, to social media. Reilly portrays this rising gut-level fear in serious terms, although an element of satire creeps in given some of the questionable behavior described, such as rattled shoppers in the hardware store "looking for creative uses for seemingly useless items" (37). This situation of everyday settings and social activity turning darkly frantic reifies the threat concealed by the bland term "climate change," helping readers to understand what it looks like when a global calamity manifests itself in seemingly small ways at first.

Government at all levels fumbles its responsibilities badly in Reilly's story. A village elder who is a natural sciences professor at a nearby college explains to Ash why government's interest lies in understating climate change and its consequences, "Governments are conservative about such things. They have reason to be—every storm report has the potential to move markets and set into motion a series of events at a global level. It's not willful deception, exactly. It's more like a compulsory downplaying. If the US government panics, everyone panics" (89). More cynically, members of Congress representing the West Coast, an area safe from menace by this storm series, fight to limit disaster relief funding to the East.

After concealing information about the emerging storm pattern for more than a year, officials in Washington, D.C., launch an amateurish public service campaign for preparedness. Likewise, the response of the Vermont state government is halting, inadequately funded, and hampered by bureaucracy.

Local community, however, is the epicenter of political dysfunction in this novel. Contrary to the image of New England town meetings as deliberative democracy in action, Isole becomes torn when survivalists denounce town administrators as authoritarian and begin strategizing their own path to self-reliance. Ash is stunned to witness the fierce conflicts that seethe beneath the surface of village life: "[I]t seemed unbelievable that this group of people whom I had been regarding as a monolithic demographic saw such dramatic divides among themselves. In that small gymnasium, there were rule makers and rule followers, the untrusting and the marginalized" (109). Unable

either to mollify the anti-government faction or to deal efficiently with contentious details like snow-plowing priorities, a small clique of community insiders presumes to form a subcommittee to take over emergency planning for Isole. When Ash is asked to join the secretive group, it drives a wedge between him and Pia, who favors the "prepper" alternative. Once more, the reader is led to appreciate how social conflict translates into interpersonal conflict in the most intimate way. In fact, the establishment and the extremists alike disdain proper legal process. Ultimately, when it comes to the critical challenge of implementing a flood runoff plan, a communitywide effort proves elusive, leading to a tragic loss of lives and property. To be clear, the governance problem in *We Are Unprepared* is not fascism, a collapse of the economy, kleptocracy, or any other spectacular public malaise. No, it's just political "business-as-usual," and the vulnerability to which this exposes all of us.

An outside spiritual agitator arrives in Isole spouting a nondenominational message that combines reconciliation with God and pragmatic readiness for earthly misfortune. Fulfilling an endorsement contract with a company that produces disaster preparedness kits, the preacher is an "evangelical meteorologist" whose sales pitch is transparent enough, but many community members fall for his emotional government-versus-God performance. Ash considers public gullibility to be another indirect sign of government weakness and inaction: "I think people were starved for more information about the future. We were getting almost nothing from the federal government in the useless weekly storm reports and we were desperate to do something that would make us feel in control again. It wasn't just our little town or state or region; it was everywhere" (128- 129).

The first storm comes in early December and deposits ten inches of snow, a manageable amount by Vermont standards. Much more serious is the second storm that trails soon after, a brutal nor'easter affecting Pennsylvania to Maine, including areas as far inland as western New York. The skies dump seven feet of snow on Isole over four days bringing life to a standstill.

Reports in the media downplay the risk of another major weather event, showing the inadequacy of existing mechanisms to protect the public through effective monitoring and notification. Eventually, a superstorm does form when a category five hurricane in the mid-Atlantic region converges with cold fronts coming in from the west and north. Millions lose power, cell phone lines overload, population centers are evacuated, and tens of thousands go homeless and missing. Economic damages total hundreds of billions. In Isole, "The Storm" quickly transitions from howling rain to "a wall of whirling black." Ash and Pia attempt to ride it out, hazarding several days without electricity, running water, or adequate food supplies, but flooding forces them, like many others in the community, to abandon their home and relocate to an emergency shelter. Later Ash can see that survivalists and non-survivalists alike have been battered by the storm, leaving no obvious lessons to learn. Throughout, Reilly constructs a self-restrained narrative without epic heroes and villains. In this respect, it is a tale of the mundane, except, that is, for the otherworldly violence of which Nature herself proves capable. For readers, however, one disturbing question hangs in the air after all storms have passed: If Vermont's culture of participatory decision making, pragmatism, and resilience would not be sufficient to generate an apt local response to the dangers of climate change, what community, anywhere, is prepared for that which may be coming?

Federalism Gone to Pieces in the American Southwest

Once again typical of the dystopian genre, the temporal setting of Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* is not specified, although 20-25 years from now seems a fair estimate. Characters within the novel are still able to recall when an established international border separated the United States and Mexico. They have also witnessed Texas's recent unraveling, including a mass exodus of population owing to intolerable environmental conditions compounded by a deadly water shortage. The action of this book is concentrated in the triangle where Nevada, Arizona, and California meet, as well as the cities of Las Vegas and Phoenix. Common to all three states is a desire to avoid Texas's ominous fate.

Daytime temperatures in this arid locale hover around 120° or are hot enough to "roast" the flesh of someone who lingers too long in the sun. Choking dust storms "a mile high" are a common occurrence, the assault so bad as to drive people indoors to flee the stinging swirls of stony particles. Drivers pull their vehicles off the road due to poor visibility and engine failure. In such a hostile environment eye goggles and sophisticated air masks constitute standard personal gear for those able to afford them. The smoky fumes of distant forest fires waft into densely populated areas rendering the air all but unbreathable. These are not the passing torments of a bad spell of drought or an unusually hot summer, but the new normal, and resisting its constant depredations is futile. One protagonist in this novel reflects that she had once been "religious about using her dust mask and changing its filter, religious about shielding her lungs against wildfire smoke and dust and valley fever. But after a while, it was hard to care about invisible airborne *Coccidioides* fungi anymore. She lived here. This was her life. A dry hacking cough was simply part of that" (68). In *The Water Knife*, climate change is reified through the precise examination of place and the barrage of sensory assaults that mark each passing hour. This means readers learn what it's like, physically and psychologically, to move through an environment grown so hostile to human presence.

The Water Knife depicts a society that has devolved into a simpler state. Deprived of employment by a broken economy, the extremely poor scramble to find the means of subsistence while the extremely rich dwell in oases of privilege. The form taken by America's new gated communities is an innovative hybrid of architecture and ecology termed an "arcology." (For a review of this architectural concept, including the contributions of the visionary figure Paolo Soleri that seem to have influenced this novel's fictional rendition, see Broderick 2015; Levy 2017, 201-203.) Bacigalupi presents these marvels as elaborate high-rise structures set astride urban decay, "looming half-alive monsters" that serve their residents through sophisticated methods of recycling and filtration to eliminate water waste while supporting artificial environments of lush plant life, cooled ambient temperatures, and luxurious accommodations. The author's notion projects where today's super-priced condos in cities like Los Angeles, New York City, Miami, and Chicago might well take us in the face of climate catastrophe. And, just in case a reader should miss the similarities, the Chinese have arrived as homeowners and major investors in this real-estate opportunity as well: "The Taiyang Arcology was built…with deep tunnels down into cool earth for air exchange, and numerous atriums for greenery, and water processing that also allowed natural light to penetrate into the complex's residences" (201). Of necessity, a large part of the expense of operating these worlds within a world is not only making them sustainable as exterior conditions go downhill but also safeguarding them from unwelcome incursions: "It was almost as hard to get into Taiyang as it was to get into California. Security guards, swipe cards,

fingerprints" (89).

Pivotal to the atmospherics of this book is a sense of end-time spirituality. A Christian fringe group known as the Merry Perrys keeps popping up with their tent settlements and revivals, praying "to the same God that was hammering them with drought to give them some luck as they attempted their runs across the river" (83). Even more revealing is the recurrent presence of La Santa Muerte, the popular Mexican saint associated with death and destruction, whether in characters' somber thoughts or as ubiquitous skeletal graffiti and other folk art. In one grisly scene, a goon makes ready to torture his victim and removes his jacket: "He was wearing a wife-beater that showed tattoos running up his arms: a dragon coiled up one arm, and on the other, an image of La Santa Muerte, Lady Death, displayed in intricate glory" (208). For this author, it is Santa Muerte more than Jesus who promises to excite religious fervor when our future lurches into chaos. It is a substitution that sums up, and poignantly expresses, the spiritual crisis of this historical moment.

The Water Knife forecasts a nightmarish version of American federalism with the progress of global warming. Compared to the more localized focus in *We Are Unprepared*, the scale of breakdown it describes is more profound and institutional. The national government remains intact but has retreated from meaningful regulation of the behavior of the states. Moreover, by approving The State Independence and Sovereignty Act, the federal government has ceded to the states control over all movement across their borders. This gives Nevada, Arizona, and California ample room to proceed as they see fit in their pursuit of water. Prior agreements regarding access rights, river diversion, pumping, and damming are undergoing drastic revision by means lawful and not. The most powerful figures in this novel are state water authorities and their administrators, not governors or state legislatures. Pre-eminent among all is Nevada's Catherine Case, who uses her position to recruit an unruly armed force for border patrol while commandeering the National Guard as a personal air strike unit to implement her decisions over water flow inside and beyond her home state. For special assignments, Case has also assembled her own team of thugs, spies, and informants. In this violent habitat, the most systematic and vicious acts are carried out on behalf of government officials whose only touchstone is a greedy blueprint for remaking the political economy of H_2O inside the region. Here is that element of human villainy that was absent from the plight of rural Vermonters let down by inept local officials.

The book's three principal characters exist on the margins of society, surviving by their wits but just barely. Angel Velasquez is a "water knife." One of the most talented members of Catherine Case's inner circle of covert field operators, he has been plucked from state prison to serve organizational needs ranging from physical intimidation to undercover investigation. Angel is unable to trust his boss and must walk a dangerous tightrope between loyalty and self-protection. Lucy Monroe is a serious journalist in a profession obsessed with "collapse porn," that is, the recording of human wreckage for the "blood rags" as one community after another enters its death throes. Lucy's attempt to shine a light on the hidden politics of water policy represents the rare exception to media sensationalism in these times, and it is making her well-placed enemies. Last is Maria, a teenager who fled from Texas to Phoenix. Now on her own following her father's death, she squirms under the thumb of a local crime lord. An unlikely threesome they may be, yet common to all of these characters is their status as outsiders in a world sharply divided between

a corrupt and powerful elite, on the one hand, and the defenseless masses, on the other.

Angel, Lucy, and Maria collide in the search for a long-lost document that will determine water rights affecting tens of millions of people. The political masters ensconced in Nevada, Arizona, and California are well aware of the stakes. Liberated from the strictures of true democratic process and an ethical commitment to the public interest, the task of governance reduces to a competition between ruthless elites. Ultimately, an unjust resolution takes place, although one cannot say the "good guys" lose because that facile label retains little meaning in this compromised moral universe. Bacigalupi takes pains to underscore that external forces ultimately dictate events, not human virtue or free will. Filling the vacuum created by an indifferent deity, climate change materializes as the great necessary and sufficient cause, an external stimulus of misery and fear formidable enough to degrade all social institutions and the people they were once meant to serve.

Government's Absence in the Northern Hinterlands

Consider a time and place in which virtually every aspect of civilized society has disintegrated or been perverted. Neither government nor the economic marketplace functions as it should, having dissolved into lawlessness and privation. Once-promising communities either no longer exist or endure merely as withered remnants of themselves. The population consists of scattered outposts and wandering tribes. Culture is gone, mass communication has ended. In this "broken age," the only role for women is as wives or property. Within the bounds set by an increasingly extreme set of conditions, Nature is busy reclaiming the Earth, the four seasons telescoped into one long hot summer and a brief, but brutal, winter. Absolute immersion in a believable hellscape is key to this novel's act of hypnosis, the psychological entrapment of readers within social and environmental circumstances that are hardly imaginable from the vantage point of the early 21st century, but perhaps they need to be.

The hero of *Far North* is Makepeace Hathaway. The name is a paradox since Makepeace is a ferocious fighter, possessing the disposition and the skills to defend herself despite a childhood steeped in the Quaker faith. Her character presents other contradictions as well. Although Makepeace is a woman, she dresses like a man and her behavior is macho enough to deceive most people about her sexual identity. A self-sufficient and solitary individual, she nonetheless yearns for human connection. She is, according to her only friend, a Muslim doctor from Bokhara named Shamsudin whom she meets in a prison gang, a "savage" with scant exposure to civilized ways. At one point, Makepeace offers the observation that "it took only three days before desperation and hunger overturned all civilized instinct in a person" (128). Her violent actions show Makepeace to be far from immune from the pressure of dire circumstances, although somehow no amount of malevolence or mistreatment can eradicate her own dormant capacities for compassion.

One reason the reader remains in the fog about how, exactly, this dystopia came to be, let alone the broader status of world affairs in this era, is that we know only as much as Makepeace's isolated perspective can disclose, and basic ignorance is a defining condition of her reality. The story of her own personal background comes out piecemeal. Makepeace was a young child when she headed northward with her family from the United States. Religious vision and an instinct for self-preservation guided this migration after the Quaker church in Chicago dispatched her father to Siberia to investigate the possibility of settlement. Depressed by the ugly fact of an overheating,

overpopulating world descending into inequality and aggression, her father found the empty terrain beyond Irkutsk enticing. On his recommendation, families from his congregation leased a large tract of land from the Russian government but without gaining rights of citizenship.

Books in the dystopian genre often concern themselves with the struggle against totalitarianism. *Far North*, however, lacks any kind of despotic centralized government. Militaristic control of the population, mass propaganda, and surveillance do not take place. Instead, the central problems are those of isolation, disorder, and social ruin. Within political theory, the concept of political authority has always been Janus-faced (Huemer 2012). On the one hand, effective government seems to require the consolidation of state power to coerce the citizenry—through taxation, crime control, military conscription, and other means—on behalf of legitimate social ends. On the other hand, the level of coercion must be justified by the amount and character of threat to which it responds, as well as support from an informed populace. Whether the absence of political authority or its unconstrained opposite constitutes greater misfortune cannot easily be answered if one believes that democracy depends on a balance point to guard against the two conditions. Where *We Are Unprepared* presents an example of a government too anemic and divided to guarantee public safety, and *The Water Knife* depicts government corruption on a frightening scale, *Far North* is concerned with the stateless society and its iniquities. Any kind of governance, even a deeply flawed state if it were one that supplied the survival requirements of a dwindling population, would seem preferable to this vacuum of power and instability.

At first, the American settlers' new Canaan thrived, with seventy thousand people arriving in three waves over a decade. With growth, however, came strain as a diverse and fractious population undermined the Quakers' peaceful ethic. Other destabilizing forces included Russia's involvement in an unnamed war, which led it to cut supplies to the settlement, and an overwhelming influx of refugees due to environmental calamity and military hostilities in the south. The level of turmoil proved too much for this community to remain intact, but not before a teenaged Makepeace is raped and vengefully disfigured with lye by enemies of her father, who then takes his own life out of grief. This is the juncture at which Makepeace chooses to cultivate her masculine persona while aligning herself with partisans for an organized militia.

When Makepeace is first introduced to the reader, she is approximately thirty years old and living on her own. She is technically a constable, but few law enforcement duties remain in her ghost town of Evangeline. Hope amid desolation is a transcendent theme of this novel. When circumstances lead Makepeace to take in a pregnant Chinese girl who has slipped away from a passing caravan of prisoners, she finds joy in ministering to the needs of her charge and awaiting the arrival of a newborn. Incalculable sadness results when both mother and child die in childbirth. Later, when Makepeace spots an airplane overhead, the aching impulse to seek more of her kind brings her to the ragtag theocratic community of Horeb, named after the mountain on which God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. Here she falls under the control of a religious authority, Reverend Boathwaite, so depraved that he scapegoats her as a treacherous conspirator to feed his flock's paranoid dependency on his rule. In *Far North* religion takes the form of neither a traveling sales operation, as in *We Are Unprepared*, nor popular loyalty to an ambivalent god of doom, as in *The Water Knife*. It is instead part of the tattered fabric of this dysfunctional society and its surrender to evil. Makepeace finally escapes from Horeb with her life, but only at the price of transfer to the prison encampment run by the Reverend's even more amoral brother. She spends

the next five years at hard labor as a farm hand supporting the privileged lifestyle of those who run this detention center.

Prisoners in the camp vie for the chance to go on periodic expeditions to a mysterious territory called "The Zone" that is believed to offer the path to a better life as a factory worker. When she finally gets chosen as a guard to accompany fellow inmates on one of these forays, Makepeace learns the bizarre truth of the matter. The Zone is an abandoned science city of unbelievably advanced technology that once functioned as a hidden hive of research and development for the Russians. Prisoners are, in fact, used for scavenger hunts to strip the city of its resources while searching for the most valuable but elusive prize of all, a wondrously energized concoction dubbed "Daniel's Fire" with rumored healing powers. Here the reference apparently recalls a passage from the Book of Daniel in which those blessed and protected by God can walk in the fire unharmed. Yet a dark catch-22 complicates this effort to plunder the fruits of civilization. No prisoner sent across the bridge into this city on a gathering mission can be permitted to live and return to the prison camp. The Zone is a toxic place that was abandoned once war arrived and then poisoned with anthrax by the Russians to keep its secrets. This subplot of *Far North* invokes Andrei Tarkovsky's classic film "Stalker," a production released in 1979 whose artistic influence subsequently touched a broad spectrum of works in music, literature, film, and video games (Martin 2009). Apocalypse is the overriding theme, along with bleakness, spiritual hunger, and an uneasy juxtaposition of human glory and depravity.

The narrative of The Zone sounds themes not only Biblical but fabulist in nature, echoing the myth of humankind's irretrievable loss of prior societal progress with the disappearance of Atlantis and other legendary utopias. Tarkovsky's "Stalker" meme (Coulthart 2006) advances Theroux's peripatetic structure well enough, although it is important that Makepeace's story not end here abruptly, and it does not. Her trips to the deserted Zone prove fortuitous by yielding the unexpected opportunity to settle a score with the villain who had scarred her years earlier. When Makepeace manages to return home to her quiet former life in Evangeline, she is no longer alone, having been impregnated by Shamsudin before he perished from anthrax exposure.

The text of *Far North* turns out to be Makepeaces's memoir of how "Since I was fifteen years old, I've been watching the world I knew go to hell" (312). This is a story recollected solely for her own benefit. She does not plan to share it with her child, and she expects to die alone when that moment comes. It is difficult to gauge the passage of time in this novel, or even to know who might still be keeping calendars in this world adrift. As the novel closes, Makepeace stands on the verge of old age, lacking interest and knowledge about what would await if she tried to go south and return to the states. All that remains is the feeling of impending annihilation, "the end of everything," accompanied by a small abstract hope that something better could still be in the cards. In the mode of a true post-apocalyptic novel, the question asked by this book is the ultimate one: "Will humanity survive?" (Babb 2018; Kaplan 2015).

Dystopian Fiction as Social Criticism and as Prophecy

Dystopian novels offer images of the future refracted through the lens of the past. Sometimes an author makes this connection explicitly. When Angel, the water knife, visits the home of journalist

Lucy in Bacigalupi's novel, he browses the books on her shelf and selects an old, well-used copy of the title *Cadillac Desert* (1993) for perusing. As students of environmental science will know, Marc Reisner's book is a classic in its field that details the irrational and corrupt history of the quest for easy water access in America's southwest.

Angel himself is familiar with the book and comments: "Lot of people knew this was a stupid place to grow a city, from long way back, but Phoenix just stuck its head in the sand and pretended disaster wasn't coming" (Bacigalupi 165). Later Bacigalupi amuses himself by making a copy of *Cadillac Desert* the place where another character has hidden the invaluable water rights document on which hinges the resolution of this novel's plot. Dystopian fiction resembles effective satire in this respect. Both genres depend on easily recognizable points of departure in the known world if their flights of fancy are to resonate as intended.

The works discussed in this essay all harp on the nagging social ills of our present time—interwoven with their focus on climate change—in revealing how things could turn out in the future. This list of current problems includes growing inequality, rampant materialism, social and political violence, government ineptitude and corruption, and increasing marginality of the public good. In days to come, these issues apparently not only linger but also become worse than ever, impoverishing life on a grand scale. The farther out the prognostication, the more profound the doom-saying. In his study *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature* (1994), M. Keith Booker notes that "dystopian fictions are typically set in places or times far distant from the author's own, but it is usually clear that the real referents…are generally quite concrete and near-at-hand" (19). If one hallmark of dystopian writing is defamiliarization, then, the paradoxical goal is to direct attention to the here and now, to "provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable" (19).

In his study of the tradition of prophecy in American political discourse, Shulman (2008) calls it "a genre of speech and a form of action that people at once live, problematize, and revise—to address the demands of their day" (3). Prophecy can encompass multiple formats and purposes. *Messages of truth* broadcast those facets of communal existence that, if denied, will endanger survival. *Jeremiads* call attention to a decline in conduct, including a community's broken commitment to the ideals and sacrifices that sustain harmonious living under effective governance. *Lamentation* expresses the pain of a people that is exiled or adrift. And *prophetic song* invokes the psychology of group identity, a perspective of "the whole," to summon the community to recognize its own condition of degeneracy and take action against it.

For Shulman, social criticism qualifies as a type of "secular prophecy," and the dystopian novel is, in fact, prophetic in all the ways he has conceived—as truth-telling about the consequences of exploiting the ecosystem, moral condemnation of the willful degradation of democratic process, an utterance of existential pain by a society under siege from nature as well as its own perverted institutions, and a community-wide call to reform. Within this framework, the futuristic trappings of dystopia are not only a kind of literary legerdemain to showcase the flawed present, they provoke long-term retrospection for the sake of disentangling the fault lines of a society headed on a crash course with its own history.

Dystopian novels are careful concoctions of omission as well as inclusion. Often, the details

illuminating how society has gone from the known present to an imagined future are not dwelled upon. Far from a weakness of the genre, this is part of its aesthetic and political device. By presenting gap-filled and fragmentary histories, the author effectively lures readers into completing the blanks by relying on their anxiety-driven expectations as much as logic and fact. "The contents of dystopian future histories are partially hidden from view," writes Stock (2016). "Under the guise of contested historical knowledge, unknown elements of the future-as-past hide as if redacted in black marker. As with any redaction, the very act of hiding foregrounds the created space as an anomaly in the text. Unknown elements are thereby invested with the mystery and power of taboo" (439). There is "empty space" of this kind in all three works examined here, although most blatantly in *Far North* given the degree of extrapolation that it undertakes.

Dystopian Climate Fiction and Its Relevance for Public Administration

Negative depiction of public administrators, bureaucracy, and government generally has a rich tradition in literature, going back to classic novels by the likes of Dickens, Kafka, and Orwell (Waldo 1968; Holzer, Morris, and Ludwin 1979). A quarter-century ago, McCurdy (1995) concluded that "Attacks on governmental authority have proved to be a certain method for enlisting audience sympathy in the United States" (504). Works like *We Are Unprepared*, *The Water Knife*, and *Far North* update such disparagement while embedding it in a context of maximum significance, that is, the destiny of the planet. To be sure, the character and behavior of government vary substantially across these three novels, from incompetence to corruption and greed, to the brutal de-civilization of humanity, respectively. No matter, once circumstances turn life-threatening and the world divides into those seen either as part of the problem or part of the solution, there is little doubt about how government is classified in the world of dystopian fiction. Particularly for characters in two of these books, *The Water Knife* and *Far North*, a hopelessness about the irreversibility of climate change converges with a comparable hopelessness about the unresponsiveness of government institutions and their representatives.

What value do works from the realm of imagination hold for practical-minded administrators? Waldo (1968, 6) has described it as the view of public organizations and their agents "from the outsider," an outsider who participates in producing—and, at the same time, reflecting—the powerful currents of culture. It falls to the public administration community to decide how to come to terms with this censorious message and, further, how to respond as those speaking "from the inside" of organizations that are often visibly conflicted in their policy and political agendas on the climate change question. Already, public administrators are in a difficult period of "critical self-reflection" prompted by a wealth of evidence of popular estrangement from public institutions (Ventriss et al. 2019; Durant and Ali 2013). That said, the dystopian novel with its scornful anti-government attitude conveys a poorly concealed faux fatalism (von Mossner 2017). In a country like ours where distrust of public authority is rampant, expectations persist that government can, and should, be doing more to counter the existential threat of climate change. These books get that point across, if in their own idiosyncratically coded fashion (Book Reporter 2016; Peterson 2016; Kellogg, 2009).

Reflecting on America's failure to mount an effective response to the coronavirus pandemic—a debacle marked by unnecessary death, organizational dysfunction, supply shortages, and

widespread public misinformation (Abutaleb et al. 2020)—one columnist has mused how much better things might have gone if only the "covid-19 Cassandras," those dissenters who forecasted the worst versions of disease threat and management strain, had been heard (McCardle 2020). Might this not have galvanized federal and state actors to seize the advantage of timely action, a massive commitment of resources, and stronger reliance on medicine and public health, galvanized them to act, in other words, on a scale commensurate with the problem at hand? Dystopian novelists are the Cassandras of the climate crisis, the outspoken critics whose message of alarm falls outside the usually accepted bounds of public debate. Like those dissenting from the cautious path of intervention in the pandemic, they advance hard truths needing to be heard within the citadels of power in our society.

Here a well-known concept among policy analysts and managers in the public administration field bears mention. "Scenario-writing" refers to a process of critical examination, a "thought experiment" of sorts, in which the dynamics of a social problem and government's potential responses to it, are scrutinized for the sake of "mapping" both desired outcomes and pitfalls (Bardach and Patashnik 2020, 60-61; Weimer and Vining 2017, 290-293). Central to this activity is the inclusion of "worst-case scenarios" lest the exercise be weakened by failure of imagination. One inherent difficulty, however, is that professional analysts may self-censor, confining their projections to modest extensions of current reality and scenarios for which existing data and cause-effect relationships are available. By contrast, the dystopian novelist is a policy analyst operating without constraint, an unapologetic seer of the shape of things to come whose orientation is, by job description, dark and doubting.

From this vantage point springs the fixation on social conflict, bureaucratic corruption, and the corrosion of democratic principles and institutions. Significantly, these ills are not imposed from above in dystopian novels like the ones showcased here, at least not at first. They arise as forms of maladaptation when government proves unequal to a situation of crisis, to the failure of public authorities to deal with practicalities like snow removal, access to fresh water, and population migration. In conjecturing what occurs next after government has failed crucial tests of social welfare provision and the maintenance of justice, these novels offer a version of scenario writing that echoes, but also enlarges, the narrow practice of this skill. And when these novels not merely reify the conditions of advanced climate change but link them causally to an upsurge of inequality, the normalization of crime, and widespread health and mental health problems, the insight is at once imperative and pragmatic. As the environment becomes more damaging to individuals and the social structure, it makes little sense to react to the emerging complex of disorder with our habitual remedy of siloed bureaucracies. A more holistic and preventive mindset is necessary, and the time to embrace it has begun.

In the broadest sense, the successful dystopian novel is a lesson in visualization where other forms of information and education have missed the mark. One specialist in the study of environmental culture writes:

> When we try to envision climate change, most of us rather swiftly reach the limits of our imaginary abilities. It is a phenomenon that is too abstract and too vast in its spatial and temporal dimensions to allow for easy visualization. It exists in scientific graphs and numbers and is encapsulated in iconic images such as receding glaciers, devastating storms,

> and drowning polar bears. While the inhabitants of coastal regions and low-lying islands are already subject to its negative effects, for many people in the industrialized West, climate change is still a phenomenon that can be personally experienced only in slightly changed weather patterns, invasive animal and plant species, and occasional weather extremes. (von Mossner 2017, 139)

The solution lies in a novel(!) method of narrating the experience of climate change, one that decentralizes its technocratic and quantifiable properties to make room for an affective reality. Dystopian novels about climate change engage in a discourse of emotion to lodge their arguments more deeply than the place where reason abides. And, as the conversation over climate change increasingly comes to encompass its psychological impacts (Cianconi, Betrò, and Janiri 2020), including the lasting emotional damage of trauma, environmental policy analysts and administrators must accustom themselves to communicating across the rational/emotive divide by learning from the affectively sophisticated discourse of other disciplines and groups, including storytellers.

In her book *Ecosickness in Contemporary U.S. Fiction* (2014), Houser formulates a subtle understanding of the dependent relationship between negative and positive "ethicopolitical" emotions. If discouragement remains part and parcel of the wisdom of the age, it also serves as a pre-requisite for efforts at reform. For the courting of despair is a calculated risk taken by dystopian writers, one outweighed by the rewards when individual pain translates into mindfulness of "the macro-scale of institutions, nations, and the planet" (223). From the depths comes not just awareness, but potential activism. Much like Ebeneezer Scrooge at the end of his visit with the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come, the reader is left pleading for the chance to alter the bleak future that has been foretold.

Conclusion

Contemporary concerns about pending environmental disaster have generated new ways of talking about humanity and its connection to the natural world, so report Mühlhäusler and Peace (2006) in the *Annual Review of Anthropology*. These devices of communication span scientific, economic, political, moral, and aesthetic categories, each with its own purposes, audiences, and linguistic styles and norms. Enriched by the tools of creative narrative, the dystopian novel is a valuable form of environmental discourse that demonstrates exceptional power for highlighting and framing climate risks. As seen in the books discussed here, a fundamental dimension of such discourse is its integrative character, namely, the way that rational and emotional perspectives are married with ethical consciousness in auguring the yet-to-be-enacted story of our future. While it can be unpleasant to dwell on a nightmarish tale in which government's higher levels of utilitarian, ethical, and representative functioning crumble before us on the page, until such time as reality and dark fantasy become one it remains our historical responsibility to hope, and to work, for the avoidance of this fate.

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Post-Truth, Mal-Trinity, and Government-in-Context

Ricardo Schmukler

Introduction

This article reflects upon David Farmer's invitation to think about how public administration (PA) can help government to govern fundamentally better in terms of policy. This article is indeed autoethnographic, qualitative research involving self-observation and reflexive investigation. Farmer believes that nudging government enhancement is not only desirable, in the moral order of democratic public life, but also possible, no matter how difficult to achieve, in the practical order of public agency and commitments. Nudging is a term associated with Nobel Prize winner Richard Thaler and Behavioral Economics. It is an aspect of choice architecture that alters people's behavior in a predictable way; getting people to do what you want them to do. After defining government-in-context, or government-in-totality, as integrated by the public sector plus parts of the private sector associated with its purposes, he also asks how critical PA contemplation is and nudges to government-in-context. In *Beyond Public Administration: Contemplating and Nudging Government-in-Context*, Farmer (2020) offers plenty of arguments and methodical illustrations toward that end. In line with those arguments, this article will focus on the singular and complex condition that post-truth, along with infiltration and exfiltration, bears in the configuration of the mal-trinity of government-in-context.

The first group of Farmer's recommendations is a four-stage tentative plan for P.A. leadership in upgrading government-in-context. The strategy begins with individuals focusing on contemplation and nudging (in conferences and in writings) on the nature of a "better marriage of content and context within the concept of government-in-context, teaching how to contemplate and emphasizing the defects of infiltration, exfiltration and post-truth" (Farmer 2020, 9-10). The second stage implies engaging macro government-in-context specialists, along with specialists in Public Policy, Economics, and Political Science, working in alliances towards the same end, yet contributing to the improvement of the theoretical basis for a pluralist approach to governing (Farmer 2020, 11). The third stage presupposes the establishment of teams of macro government-in-context specialists, from P.A. and other disciplines, plus elected officials. Their focus would still be on infiltration,

exfiltration, and post-truth, but giving special attention to future government-in-context. Finally, the fourth stage would mean establishing an Interdisciplinary (or Epistemic Pluralist) Team to Enhance Democracy, at universities or even at the governmental level, to develop long-term theoretical and public policy issues (2020, 12-13).

P.A. thinkers and managers should focus on contemplation, rather than on myths, beliefs, and non-consented assumptions, especially those furthering the financial interests of the rich and people in positions of power satisfying corporate interests. Contemplation, or "deep thinking" (Farmer 2020, 19), is the strict initial operation in the epistemic and methodical order of theory construction and effective practice, accompanied by reflexive interpretation (and imaginative reflection) and explanation. The whole modulation of the process, within which "the contemplator should recognize both the theoretical and the practical" (Farmer 2020, 40), should lead to a better practical understanding of government-in-context. Contemplation recognizes the nature and relevance of government-in-context, beginning with the recognition of governing as not only comprised of institutions called "government" but also involving a complex web of public and private participants. By the 1990s, for instance, 61,000 full-time lobbyists worked in Washington D.C. (Loomis & Stremph 2003). This means that governing is not limited to the governance (promotion, regulation, control and correlated operations) of political and other actions through the activities of public agencies but also includes activities of the private sector, from business-oriented to not-for-profit organizations.

Farmer construed his notion of constricting contextual features of government-in-context as a mal-trinity. Recognizing that infiltration, exfiltration and post-truth operate by implicating each other in the unitary dynamic of the mal-trinity, this article discusses the meaning, relevance and utility of post-truth in the perspective of government-in-context. Nudging post-truth implies reflecting within a poetic, integrative understanding of government-in-totality. The imaginative reflection evokes other trinities and their influence over public life and allows us to think about the forms of post-beauty and post-goodness that affect it. In particular, this article is a reflection on gross disproportion, and the myths associated with post-truth, from congenial (for example) to self-congratulation, indolence, voluptuousness and neglect.

Truth, Reliability, Post-Truth

According to Farmer, for public administration to becomes able to help government to govern better in terms of policy, a requisite initial step is to meditate/contemplate what this subject matter is about. So, following his advice and our own persuasion (Schmukler 2016, 86-88), I meditated and contemplated the question while preparing for this discussion.

In renovated dark times, dominated by uncertainty, anxiety and urgencies, paying attention to what authoritative voices say is a prudent move. Cam Stivers' (2000) notion of *conscious pariah* still resonates when thinking about a theorist's methodical endeavor. After all, theorizing PA is *Odysseusizing*: a long, unwarranted journey across known and unknown territories and legacies, representations of the provinces of knowledge that Waldo prefigured, memories not always clear, unfulfilled expectations, incomplete mental maps; persevering, in love, self-displacing not to get misplaced. However, it was Erasmus's meditation-in-journey, anticipating his encounter with

Thomas More, that imposed over my thoughts, and drove my musing on post-truth to his ironic praise of folly, turned into a prospective praise of the unmeasured, crude and careless disproportion so frequent in contemporary public affairs.

Erasmus thought that the extended preference that folly enjoyed among ordinary people over calm, pondered judgment signified the maladies of his time (early XVI century). Folly and callous disproportion, to some extent, share the qualities of insanity, delusion, deceit, irresponsibility, and neglect, which are noticeable aspects of the worst governmental and administrative practices of our time. Yet those who embrace folly could eventually be rewarded with a presumption of innocence that those who gloat over gross disproportion cannot claim, beyond considering that the presumption of innocence might make a difference in the order of causes that the order of consequences may not recognize.

We are said to be living in a post-truth era, meaning that the dominant condition is that opinion, however formed and based, is favored regardless of its correspondence with verifiable facts. A condition, besides, that may even be biologically founded, as Farmer recalls, according to findings in neuroscience. In coincidence with his analysis of the implications of post-truth for Government-in-totality, let me add some indications of regrettable current practices: to stand by and reiterate unfounded claims, neglecting demands of proof to support them; to manipulate data in order to match promises or anticipated standards, and justify improbable or non-existent accomplishments; to despise methodical measurement and evaluation of conditions whose terms may contradict governmental policies or decisions; to persistently reject counterclaims as ill-intentioned, distracting or perverse; to represent reality according to a favored theory and ideology; to equally ignore and despise rigorously founded pronunciations (from courts of justice, the academy or any other authorized tribunal or opinion) based on personal beliefs, religious values or any other biased political interest.

Falling into and staying in a state of post-truth partially derives from a tacit and extended understanding that largely sustained beliefs, including prejudices, errors and obstinacies—all conspicuous features of traditions—do not require logical nor empirical validation. Post-truth may partially derive also from the speculative acceptance that habits thus informed constitute a form of requisite knowledge for prosperous participation in social life. A kind of knowledge that clearly fits into the category of opinion, absolved from the methodical scrutiny of the highest court of reason, and, needless to say, freed from any irrevocable bond to truth. Despite the Kantian calling, the question should not be confused with adhering or being reluctant to adhere to a Modernist mind-frame, the mythical tradition, or the post-traditional persuasion. A process theorist speaking from the borderline of conflicting interpretations, bearing dilemmas and paradoxes, knows that there are no definite answers to the quest, yet she must persist in the primordial seeking.

Knowledge and truth are problematic notions on their own and relate to each other in highly complex forms to be taken for granted. Some say that knowledge implies truth, and it is best represented as a set of true propositions a person believes. For others, this is a non-consensual assumption that should be abandoned, since people do not sustain belief states with truth conditions or desire states with satisfaction conditions (Tolliver 1989). Public servants cannot avoid dealing with complexity or with dilemmas like this, even if they do not question the possibility of being always compliant and truthful at the same time. Truth can be interpreted as correspondence and mirror, as

significative relationship, as undisputable certainty, and none of these answers or simplifies the question. Truth is rather edgy for those who understood Foucault's description of "the activity of power in shaping what counts as truth (little *t* truth)" (Farmer 2012, 181), and singularly uneasy for the less concerned with truth (or the "truly real") than with democracy and the pursuit of justice. Yet, given the case, an inevitable paradox is that genuine paths to equity, solidarity in diversity and every other contributing dimension of justice cannot be fully accessed if the interpretive congruence that the notion of truth imposes upon human understanding, behaving and valuing, is ignored or, in other words, if its terms of certitude or significative correspondence of sense and conformity of experience with one's own processes of thought, action and judgment are neglected. Which is to neglect the sensible self-recognition of the relational condition of truth, or better said, *truth-in-context,* whose verbal character, as opposed to the presumptive substantive character of truth, manifests itself as conjugated with other values, conversing, integrating with co-occurring values recognizable in the process, in more or less evident or hidden yet equally indelible forms. You can blame Plato, or not, for the bonding of truth with beauty and goodness, but the co-occurrence, like the dinosaur after the awakening, is still there (Schmukler 2018).

The distinction between reliable knowledge and non-reliable presumption is never an abstract subject when it affects government and public administration. The same can be said about the distinction between myths that are constructive and helpful and mal-myths. Governments and public administrations are supposed to be reliable, and the majority of public servants surely perform their duties accordingly, or at least sincerely convinced that they do so. However, lying, fabricating causes and justifications, or accommodating falsehoods for personal, political or tactical purposes are common features in the processes of governing since the origins of civilized societies. These practices are associated with the background function of PA in the top-down approach for ruling civilized societies, that Farmer (2021, 129) aptly identified as the *cloacal* perspective, which shows PA carrying out what is socially constructed as civilized. That is, the disposal of residues, excrements and dirt produced by its own process, especially if twisted into post-truths, along with what is desired by the established power elites, or—I may add—temporary hegemonic power coalitions.

Eventually, some degree of secrecy has to be granted for the responsible exercise of the functions of government, but without losing sight of the difference. The ancient Greeks who invented the language and the forms of reason still underlying our own in the public domain, used the word *kosmos* to designate an ordered, seemingly purposeful universe. Its meaning covered the processes necessary to order it, including organizing and ruling political life. Since then, *cosmology* refers to forms of contemplation and reflection that make a path to generative theories about the world, its structures and processes, while *cosmetics*, on the other hand, refers to forms of embellishment and disguise, simulation, façade, from where self-congratulatory opinion and gloating derive. The former implies uncovering, and reflexive interpretation within searching is an effective method to do it; the latter implies covering, through makeup, duplicity and deceit. Public agents may eventually claim that it is not always clear whose interest they serve by obeying the law and performing consequently, but they should not be exempted, nonetheless, from distinguishing the significant difference between truthfulness and deceit.

By serving private or concealed interests in the public domain, post-truth has become an interpretive malady akin to the folly praised by Erasmus as a means intended to liberate human souls from all anxieties, and whose closest partners could be equated to narcissism, self-adulation, indolence,

intemperance, hypocrisy, dishonesty and thoughtlessness. The extended, open and not rarely belligerent forms of mistrust and rejection that ordinary citizens manifest today toward public authorities, in different parts of the world, could be signaling that the presumptuous benefits of unreliable postures are rather misleading.

Trinities, Mal-Trinities

Farmer speaks of a mal-trinity of government-in-context, defining pernicious conjunction of three distinct elements bonded together, not just three deplorable singularities. Government-in-context means government-in-totality, which means a system structured by the relationships between its constitutive elements. In this sense, bonding infiltration, exfiltration and post-truth into a triad has specific consequences, both for its comprehension and for the challenges of dealing with them. Discussing post-truth becomes fully consequential once considered for reciprocally affecting government-in-context with infiltration and exfiltration, as the same implication stands for the other concepts too.

Trinities have been long used to define basic structuring elements of idiosyncratic ways of living in diverse human societies. A way of living is a way of creating and re-creating social life; a form of *languaging*, of understanding, conserving and transforming life, conceptualized by Nelson Goodman (1978) as *worldmaking:* that is, ways of generating meanings and purposes for any phenomena in the world, especially beliefs and systems of beliefs, which are no less critical to government-in-context than any other material or symbolic subject. "If there is but one world" –Goodman (1978, 1) says— "it embraces a multiplicity of contrasting aspects; if there are many worlds, the collection of them all is one. The one world may be taken as many, or the many worlds taken as one; whether one or many depends on the way of taking." World, Gods and Goddesses, truth, myths, theory and praxis: "we are confined to ways of describing whatever is described. Our universe, so to speak, consists of these ways rather than of a world or of worlds" (Goodman 1978, 2). Being the way of taking is the key to the argument; here the notion matches coherently Wittgenstein's concept of *language games*, that Farmer pertinently brought to the discussion (Farmer 2021, 72). The idea of language games, or effective actions whose meaning arises from the rules applied to their making—rules that have no independent existence from the process within which they emerge—puts the interpretation of social interactions in the integrative perspective that Farmer proposes.

Wittgenstein's early writings focused on the relationship of world and language, and, by closing the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) with the statement, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must remain silent," he declared the existence of mutually unbreakable limits between the two. The notion of limit is crucial here: it means where every term encounters its specific difference. Making distinctions –which is the first epistemological operation, according to Spencer-Brown's *Laws of the Form* (Schiltz 2007)—implies delimiting. It has been argued that Wittgenstein's effort at that point attempted to balance the logical requirements of coherence between world and language with the critical analysis of the expression of meanings that represented those logical forms. Yet what Farmer brings into the discussion, however, is not the conjecture or the event of a realistic/virtual closure of conversations imposed by the limits of silence but the poetic (constructive), generative possibility that Wittgenstein opened after the *Tractatus*, with his

Philosophical Investigations (1953)**,** that gave path to the notion of *language games*. This precise concept transcended the limits of an inaccessible silence and replaced it with the prefiguration of a silence kept, not possessed yet not ignored nor forgotten, as an agonal condition for conversation. Silence opens the mind and sensibility to listening, which is a precondition for contemplation and then for reflexive interpretation and explanation. Silence operates within the most basic human traits of languaging, organizing and musicking just the same, and its attributes do not reside in silence itself but in the intelligible and sensible appreciation that contemplation/meditation brings about to the listener.

Closer to our practical concerns, Mary Parker Follett adhered to the comprehension here involved, stressing that the *law of the situation* is determined through specific ways of knowing, understanding, and finding agreement, within the social process which is constantly co-created and re-created among the participants (Stout & Love 2015). Again, the crucial question—and hopefully public servants may give some thought to it—is the way of reflecting.

Worldmaking/languaging are activities/games *embedded* –as Farmer (2012, 180-181) highlights— or underlying content of the basically unitarian, integrative processes of thinking, emoting, acting and judging in public life. There is an inescapable coincidence with Wittgenstein's anticipation in Goodman's notion of worldmaking as happening in what Maturana conceptualized as languaging, emerging in Follett's co-created processes, as a domain of an acceptable way of looking at the world and an acceptable way of doing things, as Farmer said (2021, 114). Coincidences among these gifted authors are relevant to stressing the importance of the subject for PA, which increases the significance of Farmer's warning (2012, 185) about paying attention to the possibility that the brain may unconsciously shape the idea that *the familiar and commonsense information is probably true.*

Back to triads. The basis of ancient and perdurable cosmologies, archetypes, unmovable religious beliefs, or principled political strategies, the reunion of three bonded elements that constitute an encompassing, compelling totality, configures an authoritative pattern of thought, behavior and judgment still present in conscious and unconscious social behavior. Examples abound: Father, Son and the Holy Ghost in the Christian faith; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in Hinduism; Osiris, Isis and Horus in Ancient Egypt. The vast mythical and philosophical traditions offer other examples. There is Plato's characterization of man as constituted by *soma*/body, *psyche*/soul, and *nous*/mind, or the transcendental properties of being previously noted: *truth*/logic, *beauty*/aesthetics, and *goodness*/ethics. Many others adopted triads to expose the structuring concepts of their thought, like Kant's relational categories, and Hegel's subjective, objective and absolute spirits. Maybe the consequential capacity of triads was the motive for the French revolutionaries to adopt the slogan *Freedom, Equality,* and *Fraternity*. Maybe a similar impulse made the American revolutionaries adopt *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness* as cardinal, authoritative, bonded principles for structuring the nascent republic. These trinities still operate at a conscious and unconscious level, patterning social behavior. Maybe it is not by chance that Freud spoke of *Id, Ego* and *Superego,* and Lacan structured his own theory as the *Real*, the *Symbolic* and the *Imaginary*.

Nudging Post-Truth by Means of Explanation

Suppose that we agree that PA should help government to govern better in terms of policy. Suppose that we agree that PA is important and should do better. Given the assumption, the argument here is that if the pursuit of justice, or another sensible public aspiration, is a noble procurement, truth is compelled by its own goodness and beauty in the process of seeking it. The mutual implication of the terms of the triad operates as a subjacent content of acting, thinking and valuing, naturalized in the human phylogeny, generation after generation. So, we-the-people, driven by conscious motives and unconscious dispositions, *naturally* tend to assume that whatever is good is simultaneously beautiful and true, making this assumption an almost obliging reference for the comprehension of behaviors and accomplishments.

The correspondence of these values is not only generally expected; noticeable discrepancies usually are the cause of at least surprise, if not perplexity and annoyance. Farmer declared himself fascinated by a sentence in James Joyce's *Ulysses*: "It was a nun they say invented barbed wire" (2005, 170). Naturally, she could have been a beautiful woman, like the seemingly beautiful sky that provoked the non-resigned protest of a poet who regretted that it was neither sky nor blue (Schmukler 2016, 87). This disappointment is not a claim of intellect alone, but of sensibility also, even as a condition of appreciation.

Being aware that the context of PA is made of truths and post-truths, and that eventually, it contains the making and unmaking of ignorance (Farmer 2020, 77) should give public servants a better perspective of their own productions and responsibilities, which is to say a better understanding of the *situations-in-totality* in which they involve. Contemplation is necessary to make distinctions and appreciate forms, which, in turn, enables the appreciation of everything that comes into being, including contexts, specific situations and possibilities for responsible action. Mastering Wittgenstein's thought or being well aware of the capacities of neuroscience is not a precondition for public servants for contributing to making PA better. Yet, in any case, they are implicitly or explicitly obliged to articulate proper explanations of their own *ways of worldmaking*/*language games*, and looking for methodical support beyond the deaf requirements of bureaucratic operational procedures may be an effective means to do so.

Satisfactory explanations require proper re-descriptions of the processes by which any phenomena examined result as such, and emerge as such, due to the generative relationships of their constitutive elements. Explanations are all framed within the process of revealing, making clear and intelligible, and interpreting the truth in the idea or situation explained, which is a sensible way of confronting agnotology. Unmasking post-truths is implicit in that condition. So, it should also be recognized that people deliberately lying, in the path of intentional deceit, also follow this predicament in order to legitimize their cheating. This has led to attempts to argue for clear ideas (e.g., Pierce, Cohen & Dewey 2017), but many philosophers and others remain hard to read.

P.A. thinkers hoping to influence economic thinking cannot assume that evaluating current arrangements is straightforward, any more than an economist can assume that P.A. thinking is straightforward. For example, many branches of economics require mathematical thinking. That is fine for P.A. people with one of their doctorates in Economics, such as Farmer. But many economists are unwilling to admit any real possibility that non-economists can possess adequate

knowledge of the subject. Farmer's analyses of P.A. thinking are discussed in *Post-Traditional Public Administration Theory: For Better Governmental Praxis* (2021). His view is that searching for better approaches (for all subjects) should always continue.

The more precise the explanation should be, the more precise the theory and the language supporting it. So far, and appealing to efficacy more than to certitude, it has been argued that only mathematics is apt to provide the requisite language for the absolute formulation characteristic of scientific knowledge, necessary to avoid subjectivity and randomness in the process of comprehension. On its own merit, it can also be said that mathematics is both an art and science, and that it participates in both fields without being completely correspondent to any of them. Yet the point is that much of science—or art, for that matter—does not require the final dictum of mathematics, nor receives any guarantee from it. Nonetheless, the opinion that favors the highest certitude of mathematical explanations is a standing tradition.

The claim goes back to Pythagoras. He believed that the universe and everything in it is a number, is constituted by numbers, and is comprehensible as a number and by numbers. This belief inspired the assumption that power ultimately consists in being in control of numbers (quantities and magnitudes), present in the modernist obsession with measurement and calculation—which Weber identified as the rationalizing force behind the dynamics of Western civilization—and the dominance of the hierarchical, bureaucratic form of organization for structuring social life. Pythagoras —all the men and women that had been and still are Pythagoras—believed that the number was the sacred and secret key of the world and its knowledge, form and substance, dark and luminous, hidden and manifest, intelligible through demonstrations, still mysterious. However, mathematical explanations, despite their pretense of excellence and absoluteness beyond circumstances, are not free of temporal succession. It is the process in which their formulation happens (their terms of *becoming*) that gives mathematical explanations their condition of possibility. There is always context to a text, and mathematical texts are no exception.

In 1993, Andrew Wiles solved Pierre de Fermat's theorem, three hundred and sixty years after it was stated. Wiles succeeded after many others during that period failed, and he did it while following an insecure path, basically made of intuitions. Contrary to a methodically rational procurement, he based his work on a debatable conjecture of the Japanese mathematician Yutaka Taniyama, revised by his colleague Goro Shimura. Taniyama's hypotheses lacked empirical foundation –something he knew, and deeply regretted—yet this flaw never stopped Shimura from believing in the promise of his tormented friend's ideas. Shimura's intuition, and not the evidence detached from his work, made him realize that there was goodness involved in his quest. He clearly stated it: *"it feels that something is correct because it is good"* (Lynch 1997, 17).

The idea that it is possible, if not obliged, to feel the correctness of an argument from its content of goodness was not scandalous for his well-trained, logically framed mind, as it was not for Wiles either, and neuroscience may support their understanding and behavior. Farmer (2020, 67) recalls comments by Robert Burton that put in perspective the feeling of correctness declared by Shimura, and appreciate it as arising from brain mechanisms that, "like love or anger, function independently of reason" (Burton 2008, 21).

The relationship of mathematics with beauty is equally prominent. Bertrand Russell spoke of truth and "supreme beauty", and Godfrey Hardy said that there was no place in this world for ugly mathematics. Gian Carlo Rota (1996) argued that mathematical appreciation depends on the historical progress of the discipline, which is to say that mathematical appreciation –as any other kind of appreciation—is a function of time. In this perspective, progress in knowledge is possible not by ignoring the paradoxical tension but by virtue of it, assuming that the absolute character that mathematical truth claims is subjected to its historical context, in the inevitability of the process of its emergence and drift in the world, strictly and fatally temporal.

A missing point or a disturbing uncertainty ingrained in a theoretical corpus should not always be considered a disqualifying imperfection to continue a search or an administrative activity, for that matter, because defective forms and their conceptualization are subjected to emoting and imagining. The path generated and followed by Fermat, Taniyama, Shimura and Wiles illustrates that truth may not be fully established without the intervention of intuition and the ethical and aesthetical dispositions that make beauty and goodness concurrent.

Farmer (2005) suggested that we should take PA practice as a form of art, along with thinking as playing and justice as seeking. Practicing PA implies translation of ideals and purposes into goals and activities, and so is definitely an art related to explanations and intellectual and moral integrity. Crucial to government-in-context, in this sense, is that being in post-truth is being in post-beauty and post-goodness altogether. Relevance, honesty, sincerity, solidarity, and gratitude are all dispositions associated with genuine personal understanding/feeling of truth, which is to say with beauty and goodness, not as abstract and eternal substances but as sensible and intelligible dispositions not to be confused with their distorted, simulated and misplaced characterizations.

Thinking, Acting, and Valuing: Why Farmer?

Again, let's suppose that it is really good that PA should help government to govern better in terms of policy. It probably would not be feasible for public servants to do so without commitment, effort, perseverance and reiterated failures. For the last thirty years, David Farmer has been providing relevant thought and guidance to persevere. In 1995 he produced a comprehensive study of the relationship between the world and language in PA, and anticipated *reflexive interpretation* as a method, consequent with the practice of contemplation/meditation. Later he invited us to consider *thinking as playing*, *practice as art*, and pursuing *justice as a primordial seeking.* A triadic approach, naturally. In 2010 he justified the necessity of multiple lenses to genuinely access the perspectives that *epistemic pluralism* opens to the work in the field. Now he has expanded the comprehensive horizon of PA theory and praxis with the notion of government-in-context, the mal-trinity that affects it and ideas for confronting it. So, again, Farmer could normatively be seen as a methodologist, yet only if you and I do not blame that condition on him (Schmukler 2016).

Here I am only adding comments to Farmer's fertile arguments. He is clearly anticipating effective strategies for nudging public policy enhancement. In the first place, he proposes a four-stage tentative plan for P.A. leadership in upgrading government-in-context, starting at the individual level and reaching the establishment of interdisciplinary (or epistemic pluralist) teams to enhance democracy. Then he advances ideas for P.A. thinkers and managers to focus on contemplation –

which is to say to predispose to imaginative reflection conducive to effective practice—and to oppose the subjection to myths and beliefs that ultimately will conspire against genuine democratic, republican ways of governing. Thirdly, Farmer strongly recommends consolidating the comprehension of governing as such that is done not only by institutions called "government" but through a complex web of public and private participants. In this context, post-truth (like any other imposture, as Erasmus well knew) along with infiltration and exfiltration, contributes to the weakening of political institutions and, therefore, undermines the effectiveness of public policies and administrative practices. Corruption, in sum, translates into a systemic impoverishment of democracy, freedom and responsibility as they are based on an inalienable requirement of credibility.

Farmer (2020) suggested shoves/hammer blows to correct post-truth political, economic, educational and administrative nudges. I will only highlight here the importance for PA to go beyond its own disciplinary limits and explore the utility of epistemic pluralism. In doing so, one of the mal-myths to confront is the dogma of bureaucratic neutrality, which alienates public servants and eventually leads them to states of self-indulged indifference.

The notion of neutral competence of public servants is one of the most corrosive and sterilizing PA mal-myths to confront, at least to ruin the anesthetic sense of comfort of purportedly innocent bureaucrats. The mal-myth of neutrality suggests that public servants are not responsible for correcting post-truth in any of its pernicious forms. And post-truth, along with infiltration and exfiltration, deserves correction. It is incorrect to consider public servants as incapable of interpreting reflectively their own duties, desires and obligations to self and others. It implies that they are not the actual makers of the rules of the game that they actually play, as if incorporating themselves into operating instructions that translate into performance at work does not compromise their knowledge, sensibility and judgment, which constitutes their uncontestably personal agency, as Harmon (1995) clearly defined it. It implies that their ways of understanding, behaving, valuing, and consequently explaining and consenting, are not specific to the situations in which they put themselves. And this is simply not true. Thus, the theory and practice of neutral competence should be abandoned, as an illusionary ill-refuge for fear turned into alienation.

It is not for me to say what you may or may not do about the massive theoretical arsenal that David Farmer has provided, and continues to provide to our work, and I am not sure about what I could effectively do myself. Whatever your response may be, our *thinking as playing* will be in *method* because it is the idiosyncratically human way since falling in the world to become disgraced by knowledge. And our *practice as art* will be in *agony* because the knowledge and theoretical support involved in the evolving rules of the language games that we play will never exempt you and me from misinterpretations and errors, bad choices, mistakes, and even committing the acts of indifference and cruelty that we hate to admit we are also capable of. And it will be in *pretense* because even as members of a non-redemptive congregation convinced of the ultimate justice as seeking of own persuasion, you and I must act purposefully to nudge PA toward helping government to govern better in terms of policy (Farmer 2021). Method, agony and pretense constitute the triad of the *uneven combat* that delimits this discussion, and the post-traditional aim (Schmukler 2016). It may also define the eventual emergence of a new consciousness that the process of government-in-context is requiring. We have an opportunity to upgrade our governmental policies.

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Book Review

Time, Novelty, and Public Administration

Review of Goodsell, Charles T. 2022.
***Outlandish Perspectives on Public Administration*.**
Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Reviewed by *Arthur J. Sementelli*

The contemporary workforce has reached a nexus point. The phenomena that we have been discussing in public personnel administration for the past few decades are finally happening. There is a consistent knowledge drain being experienced across sectors as senior employees retire. However, these phenomena are not limited to the workplace but, instead, impact society as a whole. It has recently come to my attention, for example, that young people have begun to "rediscover" what they are often calling lost music or at least unknown music. This music (from Elvis Presley and The Righteous Brothers in particular) that is so familiar to those of us of a certain age and older, has been seen as novel, unfamiliar and surprising to younger generations. From a certain point of view, one might argue that such claims about music might even be defined as outlandish. So, we are left with the proposition that exposure and perspective can influence the perception of material, including its novelty.

My recent exposure to this phenomenon has elevated the importance of scholarly material being properly archived, cataloged, and *curated* for future use. This simple fact that scholarship is available does not mean that it will be read and considered. More generally, it has become apparent that simple availability is not enough to ensure that art, knowledge, and best practices are shared across generations. With that in mind, it is useful and important to curate perspectives on the theory and practices of public administration not simply for the historical record, but to also enable future scholars and practitioners to understand disciplinary perspectives, the evolution of practices, and mitigate the loss of knowledge in public organizations happening as baby boomers, in particular, leave the workforce. This brain drain has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent phenomenon called the great resignation. Within this context, I would argue that it has never been more important to understand points of contention, things defined as outlandish or even just a different, not mainstream, perspective in public administration. Briefly, we need a catalog of the outlandish perspectives on public administration, and Dr. Goodsell has provided that for us.

To understand what Dr. Goodsell is trying to do, the reader must first unpack the title. Mercifully, Dr. Goodsell presents the source material at the front of the monograph. The act of unpacking meaning tied to a title is more important than some might realize. We have already established that

classic perspectives are being rediscovered and seen as novel. This lack of reference makes it more important to ground the source material effectively prior to any theorizing. Increasingly, this is becoming a less common practice, and it is impacting the profession negatively. I often take this practice for granted, given my own background, but one could understand that this might sound a bit strange—perhaps even outlandish. Scholars from Virginia Tech in particular, and those trained by them, tend to purposively take word choices as being central to theorizing and essential for making careful decisions that impact the overall story. My own exposure to this happened as part of my doctoral training many years ago. It was directed by a Virginia Tech graduate, whose most prized possession appeared to be the Oxford English Dictionary given how much he used it. Briefly, it became a staple in my own theoretical work almost by osmosis. So, we are left with the propositions that word choices matter, timing matters, and that exposure is imperative.

This is not to say that other scholars are less careful, but some among them are unlikely to agonize over the purposive word choices one might make given such exposure. The word outlandish specifically refers to someone or something that is bizarre, unfamiliar, or possibly alien. In that sense, we can interpret the title of this monograph as indicating that it is comprised of previously published articles, a collection of thoughts that are not seen as mainstream. To certain groups, these thoughts might be familiar, recognized, and even contested in some cases, but to others, they might instead be seen as novel, particularly to new scholars and practitioners. It is also important to note that given the breadth of coverage over time, many of these perspectives might further be seen as bizarre, unfamiliar, or possibly even alien during the time it was originally published. In some cases, they become perceived as essentially contested concepts (Gallie 1955), which elevates the need for exposure. These observations set the tone for the entire monograph and are important to understand upfront.

Goodsell playfully attempts to connect a diverse cross-section of the scholarship he has produced over the last several decades. To some, this collection might be seen as outlandish by definition based solely on the breadth of coverage. To others, some of the ideas might appear to be quite mainstream, often because we have been exposed to them previously, making them more familiar. It is important to note that for many this exposure has been limited, supporting the claim for a set of outlandish perspectives. This disparity of exposure is a consequence of having a multi-decade sample of one body of scholarship to reflect upon. As stated above, when one is amalgamating themes across decades you cannot help but include essentially contested concepts (Gallie 1955). Essentially contested concepts refer to naming a problematic situation. Specifically, many people recognize the word itself, but there are a variety of meanings that lead to issues of dogmatism (Garver 1978), and there are many in the study and practices of public administration.

As an example of an essentially contested concept, multiple scholars, including Dr. Goodsell, have made the claim that political science is *the* "mother discipline." This was an especially controversial position in the 1970s. However, if we interrogate this as an essentially contested concept, one might argue that the source of the dispute is the use of the article "the." What I mean here is the issue or source of the dispute comes from a disagreement about political science being the only contributor to public administration (*the* mother discipline) rather than being a contributing discipline, among other contributing disciplines, that might include, but are not limited to, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and the other usual suspects. As such, the debate continued

well into the 1990s, achieving some degree of resolution through research published in PAR (Keller, Spicer, Whicker, Strickland, & Olshfski 1997).

That said, political science still can contribute meaningfully to the theories and practices of public administration, albeit not in the way people might have conceived in the 1970s before the Honey report. Post-structural thought, in particular, pairs well with political theory. The advent of visual memes, shifting narratives, and concept drift (Wang et al. 2011) elevates the need for both critical theory and political theory in public administration, effectively cementing the utility of Waldo (2017), alongside the theoretical contributions of Dr. Goodsell. However, the relative contributions of political science and other disciplines remain essentially contested. The side effect, of course, is that claims about disciplinary origins continue to remain, by definition, outlandish.

Continuing with our theme of extracting philosophical concepts from the monograph, we find in Chapter Five that some interesting characterizations of artisans and artisan behavior resonate particularly well among those who are currently engaged in critical management scholarship. Within the study of public administration, in particular, the concept of artisanal work clearly serves as a progenitor for the application of premodern concepts like the scholarly guild (Fox & Miller 1998). Simultaneously, it connects to the earlier work of Ostrom (1980), placing it in the middle of two sophisticated bodies of scholarship. With such noted scholars as company, can this truly be considered outlandish? Regrettably, the answer is "yes." As stated earlier, there is an increasing frequency with which new scholars appear to systematically not be exposed to primary sources. Consequently, such concepts remain unfamiliar even though they have been undertaken by some of the most noted scholars in public administration and some of the largest journals. Delving further, Goodsell begins a careful examination of aesthetics. Claiming a connection to aesthetic theory, he focuses on the art of administration (Tead 1951). Similar to the discussion of artisanship, we find this text situated between and among other treatments before and after it. One notable example is the work of Ingraham and Lynn (2004). If nothing else, this particular selection would be incredibly useful for doctoral students simply based on the references alone. I suspect there will always be a need to remind people of the importance of aesthetics and other philosophical concepts not directly tied to the "hard" sciences and related disciplines. The section about form, in particular, could be used as a starting point for discussions of ethics. As alluded to above, the discussion of artistic efforts, craftsmanship, and the medieval guild dovetails nicely with later work by Fox and Miller (1998), as well as others who focus on the craft of public administration such as Berkeley (1975) and Rhodes (2016).

The discussion of symbols and aesthetics grounded in the work of Edelman is quite good, as are the applications of Goffman. The discussion of talk, in particular, appearing in Chapter Six, *A Behavioral View*, has the potential to be quite impactful even today. Specifically, it foreshadows the development of public administration literature throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. Recognizing that this is, for the most part, a retrospective summary crafted from selected scholarship, the book's premise becomes challenging for senior scholars who have read, processed, and critiqued this body of work. However, for doctoral students, less experienced faculty, and those less exposed to the breadth of literature in public administration, this would definitely be seen as a collection of powerful, novel, and, yes, outlandish perspectives on public administration.

An under-explored theme, this monograph highlights some of the frustration that must have been experienced when the studies were undertaken initially. On one hand, you have Dr. Goodsell undertaking work in a similar vein as "later" scholars, such as Boje (1995), Morgan (1997), Fox and Miller (1998), and others in Chapter Seven, *Symbol Displays*. Most of Goodsell's work is happening prior to what I would affectionately call a renaissance of qualitative methods. To his credit, Goodsell does not over-model his analyses, demonstrating a nearly prescient understanding of the limitations of the tools he is using. The concepts being explored mostly appear to be about 5 to 10 years ahead of mainstream introductory scholarship. If Chapters Six and Seven were written 5 or 10 years later, with the benefit of more developed administrative thought and the emergence of qualitative methods, one might argue that many of these outlandish examples would instead be understood as groundbreaking seminal works. However, the problem with being a pioneer is that you are the first person or one of the first people attempting to do something. Said individuals rarely have access to the appropriate tools, developed theoretical perspectives, and conceptual frames to work with.

Chapter Eight, *Welfare Waiting Rooms*, is a bit peculiar. In the context of what we are covering, Dr. Goodsell finds himself alone in the wilderness yet again, but this time there are a few tools available that go unused. Specifically, in this time frame scholars might have access to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), though the communication of such work might have been delayed a year or more given the technology of the time. The arguments presented in Chapters Four and Five, in particular, would have been supported significantly better by encompassing more of the discussions on orientation and cultural coherence if those materials were available. In this specific chapter, Dr. Goodsell embodies the wide-eyed youth from the opening paragraph of this review, becoming the one who needs a bit of support.

Chapters Nine and Ten serve as mirror opposites to one another. Chapter Nine focuses on leadership and anti-administration, while Chapter Ten focuses on The New Deal and how it paralleled the coronavirus responses. I thought it was particularly interesting that Dr. Goodsell highlighted the concept of the self-organizing threat. The theoretical components to support this claim are starting to become available but have not yet coalesced into a truly coherent concept, making this clearly an "outlandish" claim. I would argue that there are some opportunities to pull at that thread a bit more, and anyone interested in this topic should give it further consideration using Goodsell's work as a basis.

Chapter Eleven, *Public Space*, looks about like what you would expect from something that is conceptualizing public spaces, particularly as a geographer or a planner. This is a chapter where the author truly benefits from being in close temporal proximity to the publication date. If you think off the top of your head, who would you expect to see used in a public space manuscript? Habermas, of course, is prominent throughout this theoretical discussion. Forester is noticeably absent, but Markus and others are used instead. Given his body of scholarship, particularly the elements advocating for a more "positive" presentation of the administrative state, it makes sense that he would draw from Habermas, Markus, and others who will present similar perspectives on urban and regional planning. Not everyone gets the interdisciplinary exposure that many of us, including our mentors, received in prior generations of academic preparedness. As such, our more inexperienced scholars and students would still benefit from greater exposure to different concepts, theories, and methods from different disciplines.

Chapter Twelve, *Public Action*, focuses on the concept of publicness, which might be the lost concept in public administration, making it both bold and unfamiliar. Substantively, this is a solid chapter. Many have viewed Bozeman's concept of publicness as being attached to the public-private debate. As such, it is tied to the work of Nutt and Backoff (1995), who have been looking at managing public environments since at least the 1970s. Additionally, if we go all the way back to Woodrow Wilson (1887), we find the roots of this concept of publicness. Does that prevent it from being outlandish? Not necessarily. Circling back to earlier chapters, as images of and narratives become weaponized for political gain, things relating to a professional public sector, or even basic governmental investment, can be lost. In such cases, administrators might become like the young people referenced at the opening of this book review. Without strong administrative training in public service that would provide exposure to concepts like publicness or even basic economic thought, public concepts might become recast as outlandish, novel, or even foreign. Without consistent repeated exposure to earlier research (especially primary sources), earlier problems, and earlier solutions, administrators become vulnerable to a resurgence in a demand to understand historical themes, emerging from robber baron tactics, neo-machine politics, and other long-dead artifacts of 19th-century administration.

So, what do we take away from this monograph? As a reminder, the underlying theme of this review is perspectives and exposure. These are simply my observations, from the points in time, experiences, and literature that I have encountered. The interesting thing about reflecting on a collection of previously published work involves thinking about what someone might do differently, what they would have added, what they would have attempted instead, and what elements became more solid over time.

Most of the selections demonstrate some foreshadowing of the possibilities that would emerge 5 to 10 years down the road. Is this necessarily outlandish? Though the term is appropriate, I would argue instead that many of these selections also could be seen as supporting a futurist perspective. Additionally, each sample of Dr. Goodsell's work presented in this monograph highlights the time, the experiences, and the exposure to specific bodies of literature as well as contemporary events. From that perspective, this collection becomes even more valuable because it provides a sort of curated synopsis that helps highlight the breadth of an academic career.

In many ways, these curated works serve to address the emerging problem highlighted in this review. Specifically, it helps us as scholars to pass existing knowledge to a new generation that often is not familiar with the depth of the literature. All too often, we find ourselves becoming increasingly herded into silos of knowledge where literature choices are driven by expediency rather than depth of coverage. Without curated works combined with the opportunity for reflection on much of the research, we often face the problem of "lost" knowledge. This is particularly problematic as generations of new scholars propose "novel" ideas that are actually part of the existing literature, though they might be deemed outlandish or fringe.

Having more depth of coverage, illustrating how bodies of knowledge fit among one another, and curating uncommon examples serves to elevate and promote inquiry into symbols, aesthetics, and even narratives. One might argue that the reason these fall into the category of being "outlandish" is a consequence of our own academic exposure, choices, predilections, and practices as scholars. When I was in graduate school, many thought that the addition of qualitative methods, even as a

supplement to empirical inquiry, was outlandish. In the 2010s through the 2020s inquiry by our graduate students has become more sophisticated, nuanced, and rigorous both quantitatively and qualitatively. At a minimum, these curated works serve as intellectual signposts pointing toward the scholarly possibilities we are now capable of.

We are left with the emergent tasks of having to situate and organize administrative thought and practice in an era that has appeared to begin forgetting research experiences, collected works, and even prior investigations from the not-so-distant past. Simultaneously, there are entire YouTube channels devoted to the preservation of knowledge ranging from sewing techniques to ancient recipes. In the midst of this, we discover an underlying need to preserve, promote, and protect the legacy of professional research and practices if only to illustrate what is possible and what was not possible at that time. That alone would be beneficial to graduate students undertaking some of their first research. In many ways, this monograph accomplishes the task quite efficiently.

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