

# Critical Issues in Justice and Politics

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Discussing the present - Influencing the future

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**Department of Political Science & Criminal Justice**

**Southern Utah University**

# Critical Issues in Justice and Politics

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## *Subscription Information*

*Critical Issues in Justice and Politics* is a refereed (peer-reviewed) journal which contributes to the theoretical and applied nature of justice and politics. We are a scholarly journal which requires all articles to undergo an extensive review process for both content and format. Our emphasis is on the exchange of qualified material in order to generate discussion and extend the often limited boundaries of scholarly exchange.

*Critical Issues in Justice and Politics* is sponsored by the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice at Southern Utah University. The editorial board is comprised of faculty from the department as well as select faculty and practitioners from around the United States.

Published twice a year (March and September) *Critical Issues in Justice and Politics* focuses on emerging and continuing issues related to the nature of justice, politics, and policy. A special emphasis is given to topics such as policy, procedures and practices, implementation of theory, and those topics of interest to the scholar and practitioner alike.

### *Nature of Electronic Publication:*

*Critical Issues in Justice and Politics* is considered a serials publication under definitions by the Library of Congress and the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) system. The ISSN number, along with identifying information for the serial publication, appears on all copies of the journal. The journal may be obtained online or through many of the traditional research databases in academia.

Because we publish online we provide a wider audience than most small, scholarly journals. The cost of other journals can be restrictive; often making purchase and use of the journal difficult for

the average faculty member. With our electronic format we provide access to the journal at no cost to qualified subscribers. This provides a larger audience with increased opportunity for those who wish to publish.

Copies are distributed via email and online access to subscribers first. Authors receive access to the electronic copy and may purchase print copies.

We are an electronic journal which is published using the Portable Document Format (PDF).

### *Submission Guidelines*

*Critical Issues in Justice and Politics* welcomes submissions from anyone who can write a high quality scholarly article. We are especially interested in scholarly, critical, and constructive articles which focus on an emerging or continuing issue in justice and politics. We also seek review essays (reviews of recent literature on a given topic), reports of significant justice or political issues, book reviews, and position papers worthy of scholarly review and comment.

It is the editorial policy of *Critical Issues in Justice and Politics* to accept submissions from all disciplines so long as the material relates to justice and politics. We also encourage submissions from practitioners, students, and others who have an interest in the topics.

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assignment within 10 working days. In most instances an editorial decision may be reached within a month of submission.

Non-refereed materials usually receive attention within the first week of submission. An initial editorial decision is often made within 5 business days.

All papers submitted for refereed publication will be sent to at least two reviewers. We use a blind-review process which submits papers in anonymous format. If there is a clear split between the reviewers then a third reviewer may be used when necessary for clarification or additional comment. We do rely very heavily on our reviewers for insight and recommendations. All of our reviewers hold the appropriate degree and experience to qualify them for the particular project.

Reviewers are asked to evaluate manuscripts on the basis of their scholarly competence as well as the potential contribution to appropriate theory or related areas. Authors may not contact reviewers during the process, and reviewer names are not disclosed unless the reviewer agrees for such disclosure.

Authors who dispute the findings or suggestions of a reviewer may submit their response in writing. Final decisions on publication remain the domain of the editorial board.

For more information or to submit an article or other material for review please see our webpage.

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# From the Editor

As the academic semester comes to close and our spring edition of *Critical Issues in Justice and Politics* is released we are saddened to announce that our longtime associate editor, Ms. Sandi Levy, has taken a well-earned and deserved retirement. Every edition of this journal is the product of her hard work, dedication, and relentless drive for improvement. In short we wouldn't be where we are without her. So it my distinct pleasure to dedicate in full this edition to her and to add her as an associate editor emeritus. We know that finding a replacement will be difficult if not impossible. Thank You Sandi!

In this edition we are pleased to present a series of articles from a diverse range of authors studying across the social science spectrum. From David Hamilton Golland's essay titled "From Black Kiss to Black Captain," exploring the enduring impact of the Star Trek franchise on political and social issues to Avdi S. Avdija/Obang O. Jobi's exploration of the impact of training on school violence, this edition holds forth on our continuing mission of presenting high quality scholarly writing from a myriad of disciplines, methodological approaches, and theoretic orientations. We know that we found this edition's articles enlightening and interesting and hope that you will as well.

Best,

Dr. Ryan M. Yonk  
Managing Editor, *Critical Issues in Justice and Politics*

# Prison Weights for No Man: Interpreting a Modern Moral Panic

Alexander Tepperman  
University of Florida

In 1994, Representative Richard Zimmer (R-New Jersey) introduced a measure to the House of Representatives that targeted “luxurious” prison conditions through an array of proposed takeaways. Of his many suggestions, Zimmer’s proposal to eliminate prisoner access to strength training equipment got the most popular attention. This article constitutes the first attempt to historicize both this proposal and the subsequent national debates over prison weightlifting it sparked. In particular, it discusses how media outlets contributed to the normalization of the idea of inmate weightlifting as a ubiquitous and dangerous element of prison life, as media images of prison strength training grew in breadth and intensity over the last quarter of the twentieth century. This growth directly paralleled the rise of mass imprisonment as a fully-realized public policy, suggesting a connection between a growing public concern with prison weightlifting and the entrenchment of authoritarian attitudes toward imprisonment. This article does not position the prison weightlifting debates as simply the natural endpoint of gradual changes in public attitudes toward prison weightlifting, however, as it also proposes a set of three widely-reported news events from the late 1980s and early 1990s that served as influences on the popular imaginary, rousing public discourse on the issue to the level of panic. This article ultimately attempts to provide a significant contribution to the study of mass media’s role in defining moral panics and in shaping public attitudes toward prison conditions, as well as a model for future historians interested in public attitudes toward penal policy.

## Introduction

Over the final three decades of the twentieth century, the United States embraced a new penal mentality that emphasized punishment, denouncement, and incapacitation, all but abandoning the traditional liberal goal of rehabilitation. National, state, and county-level politicians engaged in a rhetoric of severity, resulting not only in soaring rates of incarceration, but also in a series of high-profile prisoner “takeaway” programs in the early-to-mid-1990s. One of the most widely-discussed targets of these prison takeaways – the formal banning of prison weightlifting and strength training equipment – served as a fitting distillation of the period’s eager adoption of a warehouse prison ethos built on a new actuarial-minded austerity (Simon and Feeley). Most notably, these bans were central to a brief, nationwide moral panic in 1994,<sup>1</sup> a seemingly-anomalous

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<sup>1</sup> These bans, while common formal policies throughout the nation, did not lead the Alex Tepperman is currently a doctoral candidate in the University of Florida’s Department of History, where he studies issues relating to penology and corrections. He is the co-author of *Deviance, Crime, and Control: Beyond the Straight and Narrow* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and the former Editor-In-Chief of *Points*, the official blog of the Alcohol and Drugs History Society. His work has also appeared in the *Journal of Sports History* and the *Journal of Juvenile Justice*.

outray of public concern about a niche policy issue that, as of now, has not received significant historical treatment.

As the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress debated a sweeping new passel of proposed anti-crime laws, a number of opportunistic politicians zeroed in on weights. They argued that, if the state did not remove weights from prisons, convicts would reenter society as emboldened, muscled “super criminals,” a questionable but popular assertion. At first blush, the panic may look to be an impromptu showing of reactionary conservative sentiment. This paper will argue that the event was, however, at least partly the crystallization of three decades of subtly shifting public expectations of how the prison does, and should, function and was ignited, rather than invented, by major news events.

When investigating moral panics, an analysis of trends in mass media can aid significantly in explaining whether a particular panic is an authentic expression of deep-rooted cultural anxieties or if it is merely a cultural or political straw man, serving as a temporary, politically expedient synecdoche for a larger political agenda. This paper will balance these two possibilities by viewing the 1994 prison weightlifting debates both on their own terms as a unique political debate, and as a “sample panic,” through which to glean broader conclusions about the relationship between moral panics and popular culture.

Both “moral panics” and “mass media” are malleable enough concepts that this historical investigation can employ the terms in ways distinct from sociological or cultural anthropological models. For the purposes of this paper, “moral panic” will refer to those public concerns over issues of ethics and values, usually by what Joseph Gusfield called “disinterested reform” (Gusfield, 2), which often lead to broad social actions that social scientists call “symbolic crusades.” The definition of “mass media” is even more fluid, having been the subject of intense debate over the last half-century. This paper will employ a precise definition of the term, however, using it in reference only to products of mainstream, statewide- or nationally-syndicated, for-profit media outlets. This is obviously not a catholic definition of all the media that influence American life, but it provides a rough enough approximation for the purposes of this investigation.

Following a brief, impressionistic discussion of long-term changes in mass cultural representations of prison weightlifting, this paper will propose a number of “trigger events” that served to ignite the panic proper. While this is by no means an exhaustive list of potential historical factors, it is a carefully considered starting point, placing the famous 1988 “Willie Horton” political

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actual abolition of prisoner strength training, as imates continued engaging in *sub rosa* weightlifting.

advertisement, the 1991 Mike Tyson sexual assault case, and the high-profile 1992 riot at Rikers Island at the fore. Taken together, these events provided significant weight to the public's already-roiling discontent about "luxurious" prison conditions and violent "super prisoners," unreeling a seemingly spontaneous national debate on prison recreation that was, in fact, many years in the making. By historicizing a national debate that significantly shaped public discourse about the ideal conditions of prison life, this paper stands to make a contribution to the socio-historical literatures on moral panics and penology. It also speaks to the little-discussed role mass media plays in shaping both past and present attitudes toward inmate access to amenities.

### **An Unexpected Panic**

American domestic politics were, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, all but monopolized by "Tough On Crime" rhetoric. Soaring violent crime rates in the late 1960s and early 1970s led the public away from the ideal of offender rehabilitation and toward a newfound appreciation for penal punishment. Beginning in the 1970s, fuelled in large part by a newly-reinstated death penalty and memories of the Attica uprising fresh in the public mind, the nation embraced ever-harsher views regarding imprisonment. States began to revoke non-guaranteed prisoner rights measures, with attacks on inmate recreation being among the most powerful manifestations of these changing attitudes (Carlson and Garrett, 186). By the mid-1990s, dozens of states had prohibited prisoners from enjoying cigarettes, R-rated movies, conjugal visits, pornography, and other "frivolities" (Tewksbury and Mustaine, 175), though none of these takeaways served a clear instructional or didactic purpose.

It was not until 1994, however, that the prison takeaway movement reached its apex. Shortly after Newt Gingrich took over as the new Speaker of the House following a spate of Republican Party victories during the mid-term elections of that year, Representative Richard Zimmer introduced his "No Frills Prison Act" (HR 663), subtitled "Amendment to Prevent Luxurious Conditions in Prisons." This measure, which Zimmer hoped would weaken President Clinton's proposed "Violent Crime Control & Law Enforcement Act," suggested that Clinton's crime bill was not sufficiently punitive, a talking point House Republicans would insist on until eventually passing the act after it underwent enormous revisions, all but eliminating the bill's most progressive features.

Zimmer's amendment explicitly aimed to entrench punishment as the federal prison system's *raison d'être*. The act worked off of the concept of Least Eligibility, which states that federal prisons were to provide conditions "not more luxurious than those conditions and opportunities the average prisoner would have experienced if such prisoner were not incarcerated." The act, which

neglected to define the meaning of “average,” demanded that prisons no longer allow inmates to possess in-cell televisions, coffee pots, hot plates, movies rated R, X, or NC-17, personal electronics, or musical instruments. It also forbade prisoners from owning their own weights and blocked the Federal Bureau of Prisons from repairing or replacing broken weight room equipment, effectively ending the subsidizing of strength training in federal prisons.

The ethos of the Zimmer amendment quickly trickled down to the state level, as a variety of states, both Democratic- and Republican-run, adopted prison weightlifting bans. The Wisconsin, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Arizona, Georgia, Washington, Florida, and California state governments were the first states to drastically reduce or completely remove prison strength-training equipment. These measures took the form of total bans in states like Georgia, where the Department of Corrections divested itself of 150 tons of equipment; to severe limits on access for medium- and high-security lockups in Arizona; to restricting access only to organized weightlifting teams in Washington (Foster, 3). Though they varied in their approaches, nearly a dozen states accepted the fundamental tenet that weightlifting provided a threat to state finances and security.

Florida, Wisconsin, and California were three of this movement’s most zealous proponents. In early 1994, even before the passage of the Zimmer amendment, the Florida Legislature adopted a law prohibiting inmates from using funds from the prison canteen toward the purchase or upkeep of weights. Around the same time, Wisconsin also adopted an anti-prison weightlifting measure, with Governor Tommy Thompson ordering a complete ban on weights in prison gyms (Parenti, 175). In California, Governor Pete Wilson limited access to weight rooms only to those inmates waiting on a job or educational program. The Golden State also fashioned a broad array of restrictions for eligible prisoners, including an upper limit to barbell and dumbbell weights, strictly limited workout periods, and the fencing off of weights from the rest of the recreation yard.

These policies may have succeeded at any time in American history, as “prisoner coddling” is an unyielding populist concern. The fact it did happen in 1994 is no accident, however, as the mid-1990s were a period of exceptional fear of violent crime. Opponents of prison strength training fretted about increased prisoner violence and confidence, which they believed to be the natural by-products of bodybuilding. While there is certainly a culture of aggression and authoritarianism in some weightlifting subcultures (Klein, 220), and physically larger and more powerful inmates are able to control some poorly monitored weight rooms and bully smaller lifters (Amtmann et al., 21), these are not endemic conditions to all weight rooms. This culture of aggression and

territoriality is a predictable result of the violent, cliquish culture common to maximum-security prison environments and would be present whether prisoners were given weights or not.

Nonetheless, both Republican and Democratic politicians frequently put aside the legitimately positive and negative implications of prison weight training, focusing instead on muscled prisoners' purported threat to the general public. New York state senator Michael Nozzolio summarized this political tack, remarking succinctly that American prisons "have too many benefits and too little punishment." Congressional Representative Tom Ramsay (D-Texas) also lobbied for a ban on prison weight lifting, claiming "there is a psychological mind-set to being bulked up and I don't like that mind-set in a criminal" ("Panel Takes Muscle Out of Prison Bill"). This discourse, and the ideology behind it, was the result of a political climate that rewarded politicians who employed the language of public safety to justify ever-greater levels of retribution.

The easiest message to sell to a public in the midst of embracing hyper-punitive policies like the "Three Strikes" sentencing practice and the mass imprisonment of low-level drug offenders was one based in fear. Representative Deborah Pryce (R-Ohio) unequivocally stated that America had been "unwittingly producing a super breed of criminals" by allowing prisoners access to weights. Steve Chabot, a fellow Ohio Representative, echoed this sentiment, claiming that "too many criminals spend their time in prison becoming even more violent, criminal machines," and that removing weights from prisons would effectively address this problem ("State's Next Target May Be Prisoners Who Life Weights"). By calling prison weightlifters "a super breed of criminals" and "violent criminal machines," Pryce, Chabot, and their ilk eschewed any attempt at a reflective public discourse on the subject, choosing to argue the issue with an emotional language that seems to have purposely discouraged moderation.

Mainstream news agencies were eager to engage the highly charged language of punishment and retribution, largely defining the issue of prison takeaways as a debate over the abolishment of prison weight rooms. In the November 1994 edition of *Reader's Digest*, libertarian commentator Roberto Bidinotto facetiously queried, "must our prisons be resorts?" (Applegate, 253) This characterized a common, though unsubstantiated, belief in the "easy time" caricature of "Club Fed" American prisons. In an April 1994 edition of *Time*, journalist Jon Hull further teased this idea, asking

"why are taxpayers in Milwaukee and elsewhere subsidizing what could be considered the largest health-club chain in the nation, allowing tens of thousands of otherwise scrawny murderers,

muggers and rapists to transform themselves into muscle monsters?” (Hull).

Rather than challenge the vague, emotional sentiments levied by the Zimmer amendment’s supporters, syndicated journalists seemed eager to entertain the idea that prison weight rooms functioned as posh training grounds for the criminal element.

In May 1994, John Stossel led off a segment of the news magazine program *20/20* dedicated to the issue of prison weightlifting by claiming that “prison weight rooms are often bigger and better equipped than those in expansive health clubs,” before asking why taxpayers should “pay to help these guys get bigger and stronger? It’s just going to make them scarier criminals when they get out.” The host then spent the remainder of the segment browbeating two Milwaukee-area prison weightlifters, Sylvester Tolliver and Torrence Hill, posing a number of questions to the inmates, only to interrupt with exclamations of “taxpayers put you in here because you broke the law, not to make you feel good about yourself!” and “I don’t want you to feel better! I want you to be punished!” At the end of the segment, anchor Barbara Walters asked Stossel if he believed in rehabilitation as a goal for prisons, or if he thought prisons only exist to punish. Stossel claimed that he did, in fact, believe in rehabilitation and it was “not clear that banning weight lifting will really affect crime or even save much money, but it’s doing something.” Stossel’s simultaneous support for a weightlifting ban and his paradoxical acknowledgment that such a ban would serve little practical function, begs the question of why he supported the bans at all. Such was the paradox of the panic.

### **The Road to Panic**

To understand why the American public so eagerly undertook the prison weightlifting debate, one must attempt to gauge the cultural ether. Knowledge of mass media at any given time is critical to understanding any modern moral panic, given the “soft power” mass media yields in forging popular attitudes. Media is especially important to discussions of imprisonment, as producers, journalists, writers, and musicians serve as the interlocutors of prison life in the popular imaginary. The vast majority of Americans, after all, will never step into a prison, much less grapple with the institution’s internal social dynamics, meaning the average person gets his or her views on the social ecology of the prison from the media, rather than from anyone directly associated with the it. This section will use a qualitative analysis of popular understandings of prison life in mass media to create a descriptive portrait of the powerful role the media plays in normalizing prison weightlifting. In an important sense, popular media

“invented” prison weightlifting as a major activity of the interred, thereby setting the cultural groundwork for the 1994 panic.

Before the 1970s, weightlifting in prison had virtually no place in public discourse, much less partisan political debate. This was not due to the practice not existing, as pre-war social science literature on prison life occasionally documented the practice. Nor can one assume a total absence of public knowledge about prison weightlifting, as *Life Magazine* printed Charles Steinheimer’s oft-reproduced photo “Prisoners at San Quentin Weightlifting in Prison Yard During Recreation Period” in October 1947, hinting at some minor media coverage of inmate strength training. It was only in the early 1970s, however, that one finds a noticeable cultural turn, with weightlifting becoming common to popular depictions of prison life.

This paper will begin laying out the broadest of cultural trends by investigating 130 feature-length American films, produced between 1929 and 1994. Perusing this collection provides an opportunity to go beyond merely holding up a few popular films (*Cool Hand Luke*, *Birdman of Alcatraz*, or *The Big House*, for instance) as stand-ins for the medium as a whole. Rather, it provides an opportunity to track broad changes in media representation, providing a historically-useful, though statistically non-significant, illustration of popular media depictions of prison life.<sup>2</sup>

While the sample group of films is small, two telling trends nonetheless jump out. The first of these is the fact that prison weightlifting did not exist as a convention within American films until 1972, when both Sam Peckinpah’s *The Getaway* and the TV movie *The Glass House* featured inmates “pumping iron.”<sup>3</sup> For filmgoers of the 1920s through 1960s, or the first 70% of the period at hand, weightlifting was simply not part of the prison film *milieu*. Secondly, one notices that this trend changed dramatically over the final quarter-century of the sample, as the 1970s bore five prison films featuring weightlifting, the 1980s had nine such films, and the early 1990s featured five more (out of a group of just eight films in total). This trend suggests a certain consistency in the depiction of prison weightlifting that seems striking, given the absence of the convention prior to the 1970s. If nothing else, this brief exploration of cinematic imagery indicates when a break in popular depictions of prison weightlifting happened and why cultural historians might consider locating the origins of the 1994 panic in the early 1970s.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix A contains a more complete discussion of the methodology used to track filmic representations over time.

<sup>3</sup> There is a single outlier to this trend, that being the drama *Unchained* (1955), which is also notable for popularizing the song “Unchained Melody.”

Unlike film, newspapers report with such consistency, and archivists have maintained back issues so diligently, that aggregated data on reporting trends is somewhat more evocative. Going through the complete archives of thirty-five daily newspapers from around the country, covering the years 1919 and 1994, and using a simple keyword search,<sup>4</sup> this study was left with a sample group of 7,800 articles, 37 (0.47%) of which featured some mention of prison weightlifting and 23 (0.29%) of which had prison weightlifting as the central focus of the piece. Once again, the conclusions one gleans from the pieces, while not statistically significant, are historically descriptive. The first mention of prison weightlifting – and the only one before the 1960s – comes from the November 2, 1958 edition of the Salt Lake City Tribune, though representations of prison weightlifting in the popular press increased dramatically in subsequent decades. Only four such articles come from the 1960s, while the 1970s and 1980s produced 14 and 16, respectively. Considering a relative consistency in the total *amount* of prison sports-related reporting between 1919 and 1994, this late-century surge in prison weightlifting articles is suggestive of a greater increase in general concern with the issue.

### **Looking For Triggers**

The power of mass media to affect broad cultural attitudes toward prison conditions does not necessarily translate to direct action. Sensational films and novels can inflame popular sentiments, but the reality of their nature as fiction dampens their political clout. This article proposes three major news events that may have, in concert with broad changes in media imagery, served to inflame public opinion to the point of action. Each garnered national news coverage and, in significant ways, supported the ethos of the Zimmer Amendment and its state-level counterparts, though Zimmer only cited one directly as inspiration for his bill. This is by no means an exhaustive list of potential triggers, but it will provide future scholars with a starting point for further explorations of the sudden emergence of public panics about prison weightlifters.

The first of these events, and likely the most foundational to the creation of a national atmosphere of distrust toward physically powerful inmates, was the now-infamous 1988 Willie Horton political advertisement. Leading up to that year's Presidential Election, Democrat Michael Dukakis was polling significantly better than Republican George H.W. Bush. The Republican Party, looking to retain the support of conservative "Reagan Democrats," organized a series of focus groups in Paramus, New Jersey where, over the course of a few weeks, they tested out a variety of pro-Bush campaign messages. The most successful of

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<sup>4</sup> A broader discussion of methodology can be found in Appendix A.

these were attacks on Dukakis' patriotism, his liberalism, and his attitudes toward crime.

In early October, the National Security Action Committee, a conservative political action group, began airing the "Willie Horton Ad" on national television. The spot, which featured grainy black and white pictures of the bedraggled, African-American Horton, spoke to the unarticulated fears of white middle- and working-class voters. A voiceover stated that Governor Dukakis "allowed first-degree murderers to have weekend passes from prison," and one of those men was "Willie Horton, who murdered a boy in a robbery, stabbing him 19 times." Dukakis gave Horton "10 weekend passes from prison," the last of which the muscular inmate used to evade custody, kidnap a young couple, rape the woman, and stab the man. While the advertisement mentions the "many first-degree murderers" to which Dukakis gave furloughs, the National Security Action Committee chose to highlight the case of a black convict who raped a white woman, forging a strong symbolic undertone that Democrats understandably targeted as racist.

Bush's campaign director Lee Atwater portended the lasting significance of the Willie Horton spot, boasting "by the time this election is over, Willie Horton will be a household name." The Republican Party quickly spread the story of the powerful, uncontrollable Horton and, per Atwater's prediction, the media wove the tale into the fabric of the election. The Republican Party followed up the advertisement's release with a media blitz involving Horton's victims, who told their stories to millions of television viewers (Jamieson, 22). While Willie Horton was not identified as a weightlifter, his case had an unquestionable effect on the cultural ether of the time, thereby influencing the public's attitudes. Horton was, the advertisement implied, the sort of unstoppable monster who, if let out of prison, could overpower innocent Americans and their families.

The Willie Horton case exacerbated public fears about "super prisoners," leading the American public to imagine that those behind bars were inhuman forces of nature. The threat of physically powerful prisoners seemed all the more present in 1992, the year the state of Indiana sent Mike Tyson, the country's most dominant boxer, to prison for sexually assaulting eighteen-year-old Miss Black America pageant contestant Desiree Washington. Faced with a reputation for violent behavior, a series of prior criminal convictions, and overwhelming evidence to suggest his guilt, Tyson received a ten-year prison sentence with four years suspended. Mass media outlets, which had followed the case in its entirety, eagerly noted that the Plainfield, Indiana prison where Tyson was sentenced to live included "state-of-the-art weight training equipment, basketball courts and an outdoor jogging track," as well as personal trainers in the prison gymnasium (Shipp). The fact that the media immediately noted Tyson's access to body-

building equipment is telling, as Tyson posed the most racialized, menacing physical threat imaginable.

The Tyson case certainly captured the attention of the country, further stoking public fears of violent, powerful prisoners. Tyson's lawyer, Vincent Fuller, was little help in mitigating the images of the violent African-American prisoner, painting Tyson as a lustful, reflexive animal. The *New York Times* noted how Fuller characterized Tyson as "your worst nightmare – a vulgar, socially inept, sex-obsessed black athlete." Fuller's ultimate point was that any woman who would go to Tyson's room should have known what she was getting into, as the fighter was simply a vicious high school drop-out who had, in Fuller's words, "been trained to do one thing, to defend himself in a ring and to go to battle in a ring" (Steptoe). If ever there was a sexually charged, violent prisoner who could scare the American public more than Willie Horton, it was Mike Tyson.

While the Horton and Tyson news stories spoke to broad anxieties about prisoner empowerment, the prison weightlifting issue was not fully realized until 1994, in an event Zimmer himself acknowledged as significant. On March 14, public fears regarding the confluence of violence and weightlifting in prisons culminated with a widely publicized riot at New York City's jail on Rikers Island. Around 8:00 pm, a melee broke out between inmates and correctional officers during a basketball game in the gymnasium. Prisoners reportedly struck intervening officers with barbells and, though the incident died down within an hour, the event left thirteen officers injured (Faison).

Most reports on the riot emanating from the national press mentioned the prisoners' use of weightlifting equipment to attack the guards, with the administration claiming that multiple prisoners attacked officers with fifty-pound barbells. Another inmate, the *New York Times* reported, used a six-inch piece of metal from the equipment to create a makeshift weapon (Pereza-Pena). Prison administrators emphasized that the officers who attempted to intervene were fended off with weight-lifting accoutrements, and the administration required thirty-five officers to put down the disturbance. The event was remarkably violent, even for a jail known for its lack of institutional control. The best-known image from the riot was that of wounded correctional officer Raymond Gonzales, who required twenty stitches and received a visit in the New York Hospital Medical Center from Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. The Mayor's visit politicized the disturbance and, in turn, bestowed even more negative attention on the prison weightlifting debate.

## Conclusion

The twentieth anniversary of the 1994 prison weightlifting panic provides an opportunity not only to venture the first historical perspectives on this event, but also to reconsider the nature of the modern moral panic. The growing coverage of prison weightlifting throughout the 1970s and 1980s suggests prison weightlifting had to become normative before it could be the cause for panic. There is, of course, no statistically trustworthy way to measure something as ephemeral as the power of “mass media” and this article has made no attempt to do so. A cursory look at two of the more dominant media of the twentieth century, however, provides some historically-descriptive observations regarding its role in the changing culture of popular attitudes toward prisoner weightlifting. Those looking for the root of modern moral panics are therefore wise to turn to mass media and media coverage, as there are significant insights to mine from movies, newspapers, and all manner of cultural ephemera. Ultimately, understanding the role media plays in crafting the public imaginary allows scholars to locate with greater sensitivity those “trigger” events that serve to rouse the public to action.

## Appendix A: Sampling Methodologies

Newspapers: The main concern when sampling newspapers for trends in reporting on prison sports is to find daily publications that have complete, available back issues and are locatable in a searchable online database. Thankfully, my research requirements made my selection of newspapers relatively straightforward, as I could only choose from publications available through the ProQuest Historical Newspapers service, Google News archives, or Newspaperarchives.com. The 35 dailies I ultimately selected as my sample group come from a wide variety of regions throughout the country, representing thirty states and municipalities ranging in size from just a few thousand to the leading papers of the nation’s biggest metropolises. For each of the papers, I carefully searched the available archive, using a combination of the keyword “prison” with one of a number of sports-related terms (“baseball,” “basketball,” “football,” “boxing,” “rodeo,” “sport,” or “exercise”). This careful perusal yielded a gross of articles, covering the years 1919 to 1994, relating to prison sports. In all, this activity netted 1060 distinct articles, which I then catalogued by source, date of publication, geographical location, sport(s) mentioned, and level of importance sport had to the article.

The following is a list of the newspapers consulted: *Altoona (PA) Mirror*; *Anderson (IN) Bulletin*; *Anderson (IN) Herald*; *Anniston (AL) Star*; *Arizona Republic*; *Atlanta Journal Constitution*; *Bakersfield (CA) Californian*; *Beatrice (NE) Daily Sun*; *Billings (MT) Gazette*; *Bridgeport (CT) Post*; *Bridgeport (CT)*

*Telegraph; Charleston (WV) Gazette; Chester (PA) County Times; Chicago Tribune; Delaware (PA) County Times; Des Moines (IA) Register; Gastonia (NC) Gazette; Greeley (CO) Daily Tribune; Hagerstown (MD) Herald; Hagerstown (MD) Mail; Hattiesburg (MS) American; Ironwood (MI) Daily Globe; Jefferson City (MO) Capital News; Jefferson City (MO) Post-Tribune; Lawrence (KS) Journal World; Lowell (MA) Sun; Nevada State Journal; New York Times; Northwest Arkansas Times; Oakland (CA) Tribune; Panama City (FL) News Herald; Reno (NV) Evening Gazette; Ruston (MD) Daily Leader; Salt Lake City (UT) Tribune; San Antonio (TX) Express; San Antonio (TX) Light; Sandusky (PA) Register; Sandusky (PA) Register; Santa Fe (NM) New Mexican; Walla Walla (WA) Union-Bulletin; Washington (DC) Times; Wisconsin State Journal.*

**Films:** I evaluated as many extant “prison films” (works in which prison life plays a large narrative role) as possible. After excluding films focused on women’s prisons, juvenile detention centers, or Prisoner of War camps, I ended with a list of 130 titles. These productions covered the years 1929 to 1994. Of the 20 films featuring prison weightlifting, 15 were produced in the last fifteen years of the sample.

The following is a list of the films consulted: *The Second Hundred Years* (1927); *The Hoose-Gow* (1929); *Dynamite* (1929); *Thunderbolt* (1929); *Up The River* (1930); *The Big House* (1930); *Pardon Us* (1931); *Hold ‘Em Jail* (1932); *The Last Mile* (1932); *The Penal Code* (1932); *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* (1932); *The Penal Code* (1932); *20,000 Years In Sing Sing* (1932); *Day of Reckoning* (1933); *Sing Sing Nights* (1934); *Woman in the Shadows* (1934); *The Daring Young Man* (1935); *Hitch Hike Lady* (1935); *Prison Shadows* (1936); *The Outer Gate* (1937); *Alcatraz Island* (1937); *The Outer Gate* (1937); *Youth on Parole* (1937); *You Only Live Once* (1937); *San Quentin* (1937); *Prison Break* (1938); *Prison Nurse* (1938); *Prison Farm* (1938); *Up The River* (1938); *Penitentiary* (1938); *Outside These Walls* (1939); *Blackmail* (1939); *Each Dawn I Die* (1939); *Buried Alive* (1939); *Dust Be My Destiny* (1939); *Convict’s Code* (1939); *6,000 Enemies* (1939); *You Can’t Get Away With Murder* (1939); *Mutiny In The Big House* (1939); *Behind Prison Gates* (1939); *Men Without Souls* (1940); *Castle on the Hudson* (1940); *The Men of San Quentin* (1942); *Seven Miles from Alcatraz* (1942); *City Without Men* (1943); *You Can’t Beat The Law* (1943); *Roger Touhy, Gangster* (1944); *Within These Walls* (1945); *Brute Force* (1947); *My Favorite Brunette* (1947); *Kiss of Death* (1947); *Call Northside 777* (1948); *San Quentin* (1948); *Canon City* (1948); *White Heat* (1949); *Prison Warden* (1949); *Triple Trouble* (1950); *Southside 1-1000* (1950); *The Sun Sets at Dawn* (1950) ; *Chain Gang* (1950); *State Penitentiary* (1950);

*Convicted* (1950); *Inside The Walls of Folsom Prison* (1951); *Under the Gun* (1951); *My Six Convicts* (1952); *The Last Mile* (1953); *Riot In Cell Block 11* (1954); *Black Tuesday* (1954); *Jail Busters* (1955); *The Naked Street* (1955); *I Cover the Underworld* (1955); *Big House, U.S.A.* (1955); *Unchained* (1955); *Duffy of San Quentin* (1956); *House of Numbers* (1957); *Escape From San Quentin* (1957); *Jailhouse Rock* (1957); *Birdman of Alcatraz* (1962); *Convicts Four* (1962); *Jacktown* (1962); *Lonely Are the Brave* (1962); *In Cold Blood* (1967); *Cool Hand Luke* (1967); *Skidoo* (1968); *Riot* (1969); *Take the Money and Run* (1969); *The Pursuit of Happiness* (1971); *The Glass House* (1972); *The Getaway* (1972); *The Slams* (1973); *The Longest Yard* (1974); *Framed* (1974); *One in a Million: The Ron LeFlore Story* (1977); *Short Eyes* (1977); *They Went That-A-Way & That-A-Way* (1978); *Mean Dog Blues* (1978); *Penitentiary* (1979); *The Jericho Mile* (1979); *Flesh and Blood* (1980); *Stir Crazy* (1980); *Attica* (1980); *Brubaker* (1980); *Fast-Walking* (1982); *The Executioner's Song* (1982); *Dangerous Company* (1982); *Penitentiary II* (1982); *Eddie Macon's Run* (1983); *Killer in the Family* (1983); *Runaway Train* (1985); *The Christmas Star* (1986); *Down By Law* (1986); *Thompson's Last Run* (1986); *Tough Guys* (1986); *Weeds* (1987); *Penitentiary III* (1987); *Buy & Cell* (1987); *Prison* (1988); *Tango & Cash* (1989); *Lock Up* (1989); *Hardcase and Fist* (1989); *The Heist* (1989); *An Innocent Man* (1989); *Taking Care of Business* (1990); *Death Warrant* (1990); *Ernest Goes To Prison* (1990); *Somebody Has to Shoot the Picture* (1990); *Club Fed* (1990); *Hangfire* (1991); *Bloodfist III* (1992); *Last Light* (1993).

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# **Examining the Effects of Inadequate Staff Preparation Due to Lack of Training and Efforts Limitations on School Violence**

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The aim of this research study is to test the effects of inadequacy of staff preparation and effort limitations, which are factors that limit schools' efforts to reduce or prevent crime in school, on the number of violent and non-violent crimes in public schools. Using data from a national sample of public schools, we found that school violence cannot be explained by using only one set of variables. Nonetheless, the results that emerged from this study show that staff training does not have crime prevention properties. The only type of training that produced some desirable and meaningful results regarding school violence was positive behavioral intervention. Second, this research study shows that inadequate funds for crime prevention measures and limitations posed by state/district policies had a significant effect on the number of violent crimes (e.g., attacks and threats of attacks with weapons) and non-violent crimes (e.g., theft, distribution of drugs, possession of alcohol, and vandalism).

## **Relevant Literature**

School violence is defined as any deviant behavior that is socially and culturally unacceptable, and legally sanctioned, that occurs in schools. Typically, the actors of school violence involve youths ages 10 to 24. Adolescent crimes that occur in schools include gang-related offenses, threats of attack, bullying, drug and alcohol-related offenses, vandalism, theft/larceny, and even murder. These types of deviant behaviors occur between students and students against school staff. The interest in studying this topic by criminologists has been tremendously high. In the past two decades, a large body of research has been developed in an attempt to identify factors that may contribute to a decrease or identify and isolate factors that contribute to an increase in school violence (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985; Ginsberg & Loffredo, 1993; Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Simon, Crosby, & Dahlberg, 1999; Welsh, Stokes, & Greene, 2000; Astor, Meyer, Benbenishty, Marachi, & Rosemond, 2005; Chen, 2008; Robers, Kemp, Truman, & Snyder, 2013; Avdija & Jobi, 2014, and many more).

School violence affects more than just the individuals involved; it affects the institutions in which such acts of violence occur, as well as other socio-environmental settings (e.g., neighborhood crime rates, student residential mobility, etc.), which in turn, have a subsequent effect on the number of crimes that occur in schools (Avdija & Jobi, 2014; Henry, 2000; Welsh,

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Stokes, & Greene, 2000). Schools historically have been considered sanctuaries of violence; a type of violence that is usually associated with the larger communities, larger schools located in neighborhoods with high crime rates (Nickerson & Martens, 2008; Bowen, Bowen, & Richman, 1998). However, considering that adolescents engage in more violent criminal activities than other age groups, it is easy to understand why schools are perceived to serve as hot spots of criminal activities (Felson, 1998). To a large extent, it is age that plays a role in school violence. Beginning in the 1980s, the United States experienced a striking flow in youth violence (Cook & Laub, 1998). Unfortunately, some of this violence infiltrated the nation's school system as well, leaving parents and school officials dazed and concerned (Jennings, Khey, Maskaly, & Donner, 2011).

In some cases, school violence is a progression of mistreatments that occur against the weak. In other words, this is a form of untreated violence that occurs in schools due to inadequacy of school staff training to recognize such criminogenic conditions. In a review of 15 shooting incidents from 1995 to 2001, Leary, Kowalski, Smith, and Phillips (2003) found that in 12 (80%) of the cases, the shooter(s) had been a victim to a pattern of malicious teasing or bullying in school; patterns of deviance that were left untreated contributing to the cycle of violence where the victim becomes the offender. According to Brooks, Schiraldi, and Zeidenberg (1999), students face a 1 in 2,000,000 chance of dying at school. Inferentially, this suggests that youth involvement in violence may start in schools and move in the neighborhood (Townsend, Flisher, Chikobvu, Lambard, & King, 2008). Thus, it is essential that school administrators determine possible causes of school violence, and adopt appropriate violence prevention measures to address such problems. One way to accomplish that is to find out what factors influence school violence. Some researchers contend that security measures may be effective crime prevention measures in schools (Blosnich & Bossart, 2011; Granberg-Rademacker, Bumgarner, & Johnson, 2007; Ginsberg & Loffredo, 1993). However, others did not find enough empirical evidence to fully support this stand (Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013; Avdija & Jobi, 2014). Hence, prevention has to be expended to include other social interventions.

Another dimension of school violence would be to look at the school failure as a potential cause. Statistically, students who drop out of school commit more crimes (Cardoso, Perista, Carrilho, & Silva, 2013; Ikomi, 2010), which contribute to an increase in the neighborhood crime rates and vice versa (Nickerson & Martens, 2008; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985; Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Avdija & Jobi, 2014; Cantor & Wright, 2002). Indirectly, school failure is a contributing factor that affects school violence. However, this relationship is not evidence that failures in school produce higher crime rates outside of school because it is only a correlation between the two. Just because two phenomena are correlated (e.g., school failure and crime), it doesn't necessarily mean that one causes the other. To determine causality, researchers are required to establish the temporal ordering and eliminate spurious relationships between variables, in addition to establishing a correlation between the cause and the effect. The question that follows on school failure is what causes students to fail in school in the first place? Some researchers believe that failure in school can be linked to lack of teachers' training on how to effectively deal with students or manage classrooms. Research shows that to improve

student performance, which will have a more desirable impact on school dropout incidents, requires more effective classroom management skills (Wong & Wong, 1998). Classroom management training, on the other hand, has a positive effect on disruptive behaviors, which in turn contribute to a higher academic achievement (Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011; Allen, 2010; Rose & Gallup, 2005). This suggests that teachers' training has an indirect effect on deviant behaviors.

Perhaps it is time to look at other less frequently used crime prevention variables (i.e., empowering teachers and school staff by not placing limitations on crime prevention efforts) to determine their effect on school violence. Efforts to reduce crime and violence at schools have led many schools to adopt preventative strategies aimed at reducing the actual crime and fear of crime (Jennings, Khey, Maskaly, & Donner 2011). Empowering teachers means giving them the necessary resources to deal with underlying causes of school crime by creating a positive school environment. This includes increasing efforts to reduce dropout rates, reducing school failure among students (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000), increasing graduation rates, and training on how to recognize signs of violence among students (Glasner, 2010), all of which are recognized as risk factors of school violence. Inadequate teacher training on classroom management, behavioral interventions, etc., and other obstacles that schools face seem to be some of the relevant factors that have an effect on school violence. This study is designed to address some of those problems and how they affect school violence.

### **The Present Study**

This research investigated how inadequate staff preparation due to lack of training and effort limitations in crime prevention relate to the number of violent and non-violent crimes in public schools. In this study, we examine whether or not schools that do not provide training for school staff and have limitations on crime prevention efforts, experience a higher number of violent and non-violent crimes. The first objective is to test the effects of inadequacy of staff preparation (e.g., lack of teacher training on classroom management, safety procedures, discipline policies, etc.) on violent and non-violent crimes in schools. The second objective is to test the effects of efforts limitations on violent and non-violent crimes. Efforts limitations in crime prevention range from lack of funding for training, lack of social support for teachers (e.g., lack of parent support, parental complaints, fear of litigation, etc.) to government limitations such as federal and state restrictions. This includes factors that limit school's efforts to reduce or prevent crime in school.

## Methodology

### Dependent Variables – Measures of Violent and Non-Violent Crimes<sup>1</sup>

The main dependent variable in this study is school violence. In terms of the theoretical framework, school violence is a broad construct. To measure school violence in this study, we used three groups of outcome variables: 1) violent crimes involving weapons or threat of use, 2) violent crimes without weapons, and 3) non-violent crimes. The violent crimes with a weapon or threat of use include the number of attacks with a weapon and the number of threats of attacks with a weapon. Both these outcome variables were measured in continuous numbers as reported and recorded by school officials. The violent crimes without weapons, on the other hand, include the number of sexual battery cases, the number of robberies, the number of attacks, and the number of threats of attacks. These four variables were also measured in continuous numbers. The non-violent crimes in this study include the number of theft/larceny incidents, the number of cases involving the distribution of illegal drugs in schools, the number of cases involving the possession of or use of alcohol, and the number of incidents of vandalism on school property.

All dependent variables in this study are measured at the ratio level, with zero crimes being the baseline. Since the dependent variables (outcome variables) are non-dichotomous in nature, multiple regression analysis was deemed suitable to carry out the analysis to determine the amount of influence each predictor has on the outcome variables. Regression analysis allows us to predict the outcome while controlling for the effects of individual variables in the model.

### Independent Variables

In this study, we used seventeen independent variables to predict school violence in public schools. They were divided in two groups. The first group of variables measures the adequacy of staff preparation or lack thereof. The second group measured the efforts limitations. Inadequate staff preparation in this study is indicated by a low score on teachers' training. Inadequate staff preparation in schools comes as a result of lack of training that schools were supposed to provide to teachers and staff. To measure the inadequate staff preparation, we

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<sup>1</sup> This research article is second in a series of three articles, as part of a larger data analysis study on school violence. It addresses specific aspects of school violence by taking into account unique factors that have not been addressed by many researchers. In this context, this research study offers a unique contribution to the existing literature on school violence.

used six variables, measured dichotomously with *Yes/No* response categories. These six variables focused primarily on teachers' training on disciplinary policies, safety procedures, training on recognizing early warning signs of violent behaviors among students, training on recognizing signs of student alcohol/drug abuse, and training on positive behavioral interventions. The responses were coded 1 for *Yes*, indicating schools provided training for teachers, and 0 for *No*, schools did not provide training for teachers. The negative OLS coefficients indicate that schools that provide training for teachers and staff experience fewer crimes.

To measure efforts limitations, we used eleven variables, which measured the extent to which the variables/factors we included in this study limited schools' efforts to reduce or prevent crime. Those limitations on crime prevention include lack of or inadequate teacher training in classroom management, lack of or inadequate alternative placement/programs for disruptive students, likelihood of complaints from parents, lack of teachers' support for school policies, lack of parental support for school policies, teachers' fear of student retaliation, teachers' fear of litigation, inadequate funds, inconsistent application of school policies by faculty or staff, fear of district or state reprisal, and federal, state, or district policies on disciplining special education students. All these variables are measured with *Yes/No* response categories. The presence of limitations in the crime prevention efforts is coded 1 for *Yes*; whereas the absence of such limitations is coded 0 for *No*. A higher number (e.g., greater than zero) indicates schools have limitations on crime prevention efforts. For example, if crime prevention efforts are limited because of the lack of or inadequate teacher training, it is indicated with a numeric value greater than zero. Contrary to teacher's training coefficients, positive OLS coefficients indicate that schools that have limitations on crime prevention efforts experienced higher numbers of crimes. The presence of limitations on crime prevention efforts (X) and the presence of crime (Y), by definition are both negative elements; thus, they are positively correlated.

### **The Data Source**

The analyses in this study are based on the data that were originally collected by the United States Department of Education. The data were released to the public by the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) in 2010. The analyses are based on a national sample of 2,724 public schools from cities and rural areas. Of the 2,724 total schools in the sample, 924 were high schools, 948 were middle schools, 715 were primary schools, and 137 were combined schools. In terms of school locations, the frequency analysis show that 697 schools in the sample were from cities, 1,046 schools were from

urban fringe, 281 from towns, and 700 were from rural areas. The racial composition of schools where data was gathered includes 459 schools with less than five percent enrolled minority students, 729 schools with five to twenty percent enrolled minority students, 661 schools with twenty to fifty percent minority students, and 799 schools with fifty or more percent enrolled minority students. There were 76 schools that had missing data in terms of the racial composition of students. It is worth mentioning that the sampling units in this study are public schools; whereas the units of analysis are reported offenses committed by students in public schools.

## Results

The first step in the analyses was to determine if there were any issues with multicollinearity. One of the many tests that are typically used to check issues related to multicollinearity is correlation analysis. In this study we computed the Pearson's correlation matrix to determine the degree of correlation between independent variables. The correlation analysis indicated that the correlation between the independent variables (the predictors) was within the normal range. The highest correlation was  $r = .555$ ,  $p < .01$ , which was well below .90 correlation value. A high correlation between predictors (e.g., .90 or higher) causes issues with multicollinearity (Pallant, 2011). The next step in the analyses was Ordinary Least Squared (OLS) regression to predict school violence based on a seventeen-variable model.<sup>2</sup>

As outlined earlier in this paper, the first objective of this study was to test the effects of adequacy of staff preparation or lack thereof (e.g., lack of teacher's training on classroom management, safety procedures, discipline policies, etc.) on violent and non-violent crimes in schools. The results are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3. The data in Table 1 show that only two out of six teacher's training variables included in this study were statistically significant in predicting the number of attacks with weapons in schools; namely training on safety procedures ( $b = .053$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and training on early warning signs for violent behavior ( $b = .254$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This indicates that schools that offer training for school staff on safety procedures and training on recognizing early warning signs of violent behavior experience a higher number of criminal incidents involving attacks with weapons against other students. The six measures of staff

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<sup>2</sup> Due to space limitations, the correlation matrix table was not included in this article. The correlation matrix was computed in the first phase of the analysis. The purpose of computing the correlation matrix was to prepare the data to address the objectives of this study outlined in the "The Present Study" section above, by eliminating one of the concerns with multicollinearity assumptions.

training that were included in this study as factors that affect school violence did not have a significant effect on criminal incidents involving threats of violence with weapons against other students. The measures of violent crimes with weapons in this study were attacks and threats of attacks involving weapons.

**Table 1**  
**Regression Analysis: Predicting the Number of**  
**Violent Crimes with Weapons**

Predictors	Attacks with Weapon	Threats with Weapon
<b><i>Teachers' Training</i></b>		
Teacher training-classroom management	.053 (.113)	.106 (.144)
Teacher training-discipline policies	.022 (.106)	-.185 (.135)
Teacher training-safety procedures	.053 (.153)	-.305 (.196)
Teacher training-early warning signs for violent behavior	.254 (.096)**	.170 (.123)
Teacher training-student alcohol/drug abuse	-.235 (.095)*	-.136 (.122)
Teacher training-positive behavioral intervention	.015 (.118)	.111 (.150)
<b><i>Effort Limitations on Crime Prevention</i></b>		
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of teacher training	.065 (.091)	.055 (.117)
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of alternative placement	.063 (.090)	.197 (.115)
Efforts limited by parental complaints	-.054 (.101)	-.035 (.129)
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of teacher support	.128 (.110)	.156 (.141)
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of parent support	.045 (.096)	.055 (.123)
Efforts limited by fear of student retaliation	.185 (.118)	.091 (.151)
Efforts limited by fear of litigation	-.014 (.105)	-.071 (.135)
Efforts limited by inadequate funds	-.126 (.090)	.229 (.116)*
Efforts limited/fear of district or state reprisal	-.030 (.134)	-.098 (.172)
Efforts limited by fed policies/special ed	-.137 (.096)	-.027 (.123)
Efforts limited by state/district policy	.326 (.114)**	.120 (.146)
R <sup>2</sup>	.013	.012
F-value	F (17, 2706) =2.159	F (17, 2706) =1.888
p-value	p < .001	p < .01

2-tailed significance: \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (with standard errors in parenthesis) are presented.

Regarding violent crime incidents without weapons, the data in Table 2 show that teacher's training on crime varies by the type of crime. For example,

training on classroom management had a statistically significant effect only on incidents involving attacks without weapons. Training on safety procedures ( $b = .100$ ,  $p < .05$ ), training on student alcohol/drug abuse signs ( $b = .056$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and training on positive behavioral interventions ( $b = -.067$ ,  $p < .05$ ) had a statistically significant effect only on the number of sexual battery incidents. The positive coefficients indicate that schools that provide such training experienced a higher number of crimes. In this case, only training on positive behavioral intervention had a negative impact on the number of sexual battery cases reported/recorded by the school officials, indicating a reduction in the number of sexual battery cases in those schools that provide such training to school staff.

**Table 2: Regression Analysis: Predicting the Number of Violent Crimes without Weapons**

Predictors	Sexual Battery	Robberies	Attacks	Threats
<b><i>Teacher's Training</i></b>				
Teacher training-classroom management	-.015 (.033)	.066 (.151)	4.254 (1.346)***	.938 (1.202)
Teacher training-discipline policies	.019 (.031)	.207 (.142)	.725 (1.261)	1.185 (1.126)
Teacher training-safety procedures	.100 (.045) *	-.232 (.205)	2.442 (1.827)	-.976 (1.631)
Teacher training-early warning signs for violent behavior	-.003 (.028)	-.087 (.129)	.832 (1.144)	.654 (1.022)
Teacher training-student alcohol/drug abuse	.056 (.028)*	.172 (.128)	-.502 (1.137)	-.489 (1.016)
Teacher training-positive behavioral intervention	-.067 (.035)*	.043 (.158)	1.593 (1.402)	-1.363 (1.252)
<b><i>Effort Limitations on Crime Prevention</i></b>				
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of teacher training	.034 (.027)	.356 (.122)***	3.586 (1.087)***	3.674 (.971)***
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of alternative placement	.045 (.026)	.174 (.121)	4.593 (1.074)***	3.932 (.959)***
Efforts limited by parental complaints	-.032 (.030)	.040 (.135)	-.134 (1.201)	.344 (1.073)
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of teacher support	.035 (.032)	.186 (.148)	5.574 (1.314)***	1.380 (1.173)
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of parent support	.017 (.028)	.182 (.129)	1.046 (1.145)	.314 (1.023)
Efforts limited by fear of student retaliation	.028 (.035)	.475 (.158)***	3.221 (1.404)**	3.861 (1.254)***
Efforts limited by fear of litigation	-.012 (.031)	-.532 (.141)***	-2.614 (1.256)*	-1.889 (1.121)
Efforts limited by inadequate funds	.021 (.027)	.052 (.121)	1.955 (1.077)	.954 (.962)
Efforts limited/fear of district or state reprisal	-.058 (.039)	.061 (.180)	-2.715 (1.601)	-.086 (1.429)

**Table 2 (continued)**

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>Sexual Battery</b>	<b>Robberies</b>	<b>Attacks</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Efforts limited by fed policies/special ed	.046 (.028)	-.044 (.129)	2.659 (1.146)**	2.259 (1.023)*
Efforts limited by state/district policy	.053 (.034)	.156 (.153)	.242 (1.365)	1.002 (1.219)
R <sup>2</sup>	.020	.028	.074	.055
F-value	F (17, 2706) =3.248	F (17, 2706) =4.545	F (17, 2706)=12.741	F (17, 2706) =9.289
p-value	p < .001	p < .001	p < .001	p < .001

2-tailed significance: \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (with standard errors in parenthesis) are presented.

In terms of predicting the number of non-violent crimes, on the other hand, training factors seemed to be even more irrelevant compared to predicting the number of violent crimes. The data in Table 3 show that four out of six types of training variables had a statistically significant effect on the number of non-violent crimes.

**Table 3:  
Regression Analysis: Predicting the number of Non-Violent Crimes**

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>Theft/Larceny</b>	<b>Distribution of Drugs</b>	<b>Possession or Use of Alcohol</b>	<b>Vandalism</b>
	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)	b (SE)
<b><i>Teacher's Training</i></b>				
Teacher training-classroom management	1.034 (.534)	.819 (.387)*	.059 (.176)	1.175 (.371)***
Teacher training-discipline policies	-.046 (.534)	.002 (.362)	-.004 (.165)	.006 (.348)
Teacher training-safety procedures	1.353 (.773)	1.227 (.525)*	.260 (.239)	.545 (.504)
Teacher training-early warning signs for violent behavior	-.697 (.484)	-.279 (.329)	-.078 (.150)	-.384 (.316)
Teacher training-student alcohol/drug abuse	2.265 (.482)***	2.145 (.327)***	.910 (.149)***	.836 (.314)**
Teacher training-positive behavioral intervention	-1.891 (.594)***	1.330 (.403)***	-.702 (.183)***	-.908 (.387)*
<b><i>Effort Limitations on Crime Prevention</i></b>				
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of teacher training	1.091 (.460)**	.472 (.312)	.361 (.142)**	1.108 (.300)***
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of alternative placement	.842 (.455)	.103 (.308)	.077 (.140)	.580 (.296)*
Efforts limited by parental complaints	-.380 (.509)	-.672 (.345)*	-.155 (.157)	.420 (.331)

**Table 3 (continued)**

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>Theft/Larceny</b>	<b>Distribution of Drugs</b>	<b>Possession or Use of Alcohol</b>	<b>Vandalism</b>
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of teacher support	2.294 (.557)***	1.842 (.378)***	.967 (.172)***	1.387 (.363)***
Efforts limited by inadequate/lack of parent support	-.566 (.485)	.116 (.329)	.157 (.150)	-.349 (.316)
Efforts limited by fear of student retaliation	1.040 (.595)*	1.904 (.403)***	.346 (.184)*	.884 (.387)*
Efforts limited by fear of litigation	-1.136 (.532)*	-.944 (.361)**	-.319 (.164)*	-.909 (.346)**
Efforts limited by inadequate funds	1.488 (.456)***	.903 (.309)**	.262 (.141)	.670 (.297)*
Efforts limited/fear of district or state reprisal	-.901 (.678)	-.777 (.460)	-.604 (.209)**	-.869 (.442)*
Efforts limited by fed policies/special ed	.617 (.485)	1.394 (.329)***	.201 (.150)	.655 (.316)*
Efforts limited by state/district policy	1.151 (.578)*	-.179 (.392)	-.161 (.179)	.235 (.376)
R <sup>2</sup>	.054	.081	.057	.053
F-value	F (17, 2706) =9.054	F (17, 2706) =14.086	F (17, 2706) =9.579	F (17, 2706) =8.926
p-value	<i>p</i> < .001	<i>p</i> < .001	<i>p</i> < .001	<i>p</i> < .001

2-tailed significance: \* *p* < .05; \*\* *p* < .01; \*\*\* *p* < .001

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (with standard errors in parenthesis) are presented.

However, only one type of training had a desirable outcome in terms of reducing the number of non-violent crimes. Namely, teacher's training on positive behavioral intervention had a negative effect on the number of theft/larceny incidents ( $b = -1.891$ ,  $p < .001$ ), on the number of cases involving distribution of drugs ( $p = -1.330$ ,  $p < .001$ ), possession of or use of alcohol ( $p = -.702$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and the number of vandalism cases ( $b = -.908$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This means schools that provided training for school staff on positive behavioral intervention strategies reported a lower number of non-violent crimes compared to those that did not provide such training. Other types of training had an inverse effect on the number of non-violent crimes. Schools that provided training on classroom management, safety procedures, and training on signs/symptoms of student alcohol/drug abuse reported/recorded a higher number of non-violent crimes compared to schools that did not provide such training to school staff.

The second objective of this study was to test the effects of efforts limitations on violent and non-violent crimes. As discussed above, efforts limitations refer to factors that limit schools' efforts to reduce or prevent crime in school. The data in Table 1 show that only two factors had an effect on the number of violent crimes that were committed with weapons (e.g., attacks and threats with weapons); inadequate funds for crime prevention ( $b = .229$ ,  $p = <.05$ )

and limitations posed by state/district policies ( $b = .326$ ,  $p = <.01$ ). All other efforts limitations variables were statistically insignificant in predicting the number of crimes with weapons (e.g., attacks and threats) in public schools. While most of the eleven efforts limitations factors that we included in this study did not have a significant effect on violent crimes committed with weapons, this changed for crimes committed without weapons (Table 2). Most of them were statistically significant in predicting the number of attacks with a weapon. Four out of eleven factors had a significant effect on the number of threat incidents involving no weapons, and three of them had a significant effect on the number of robbery incidents. It is noteworthy that limitations on crime prevention efforts did not have a statistically significant effect on the number of sexual battery incidents. One factor that needs to be brought to attention is fear of student retaliation. The crime prevention efforts that were limited by the fear of student retaliation had a statistically significant effect on the number of robberies ( $b = .457$ ,  $p <.001$ ), attacks without weapons ( $b = 3.221$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and threats of attack without weapons ( $b = 3.861$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The data in Table 3 show that factors that limit school's efforts to reduce or prevent crime best predict non-violent crime such as theft/larceny, distribution of drugs, possession of or use of alcohol, and vandalism on school property. Among the most relevant influencing factor was the lack of or inadequate parent support, fear of student retaliation, and fear of litigation. These three factors had a statistically significant effect on all four types of crimes we used to measure non-violent crimes in schools. It is noteworthy that the fear of litigation had an inverse effect on the number of non-violent crimes. That is, the presence of the fear of litigation as a limitation on crime prevention caused a decrease on the number of non-violent crimes.

## **Discussion**

This article provides information in terms of the relevancy and the measurable effects of the adequacy of staff training or lack thereof on school violence. Another contribution this article provides is an understanding of how having limitations on crime prevention efforts affects the overall number of violent and non-violent crimes in public schools. The research results in this study should be interpreted within the context of the objectives of this study, and the following three limitations. First, the national data that were analyzed in this study have been originally collected with specific goals and objectives in mind. Thus, they were restricted to only the number of variables they have tested and, in most cases, relevant variables that may make a difference (e.g., age, gender, etc.) are missing. Second, in this research article, we did not include an exhaustive list of factors that affect school violence. Third, the analyses are

based on a cross-sectional data collection design; therefore, it provides merely a snapshot of how training and crime prevention efforts limitations affect school violence and/or are related to school violence.

### **Effects of Teacher's Training on School Violence**

There is no doubt that school staff should be prepared to properly deal with problems in schools. However, it remains debatable as to whether or not to train them on specific violence-related crime prevention procedures. The research analyses in this study indicate that schools that offer training to school staff on safety procedures and training on recognizing early warning signs of violent behavior in students, typically experience a higher number of criminal incidents involving attacks with weapons against other students. Training offered by schools had an inverse effect on the number of violent crimes that are committed with weapons. This is an unexpected research finding because most people would believe that having a well-trained school staff will be a proactive crime prevention measure, and therefore, it should reduce crime. Prior research shows that training has an indirect, but still a positive effect on overall school violence (Glasner, 2010; Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). It turned out this study does not concur with prior research or support that general belief. The six measures of staff trainings that were included in this study as factors that affect school violence did not have a significant effect on criminal incidents involving threats of violence committed *with* weapons against other students.

Similarly, staff training did not have a substantial or a desirable effect on the number of violent crimes committed *without* weapons and non-violent crimes (e.g., theft/larceny, distribution of drugs, possession of or use of alcohol, and vandalism) either. Only training on positive behavioral intervention had a negative impact on the number of sexual battery cases reported/recorded by the school officials and on all four types of non-violent crimes. This means schools that offered training on positive behavioral intervention experienced fewer sexual battery cases and fewer non-violent crimes compared to schools that did not offer such training. In general terms, this study shows that providing training for teachers, if the objective of that training is to reduce violent crimes in schools, is not an effective investment. In fact, this research shows that certain types of staff trainings may contribute to an increase in the number of non-violent crimes. The data shows that schools that provided training on classroom management, safety procedures, and training on signs/symptoms of student alcohol/drug abuse reported/recorded a higher number of non-violent crimes compared to schools that did not provide such training to school staff. Overall, this study shows that staff training or lack thereof does not have a significant or desirable effect on most non-violent crimes.

### **Effects of Efforts Limitations on School Violence**

There are only a few research studies that have tested directly or indirectly the effects of factors that limit schools' efforts to reduce or prevent crime in school. Putting limitations on such abilities to prevent or reduce crime, theoretically, has an effect on school violence. In this regard, research shows that crime prevention works best when combining multiple strategies (Kramen, Massey, & Timm, 2012). Limiting funds to run multiple programs is always a disadvantage when it comes to effectively preventing or reducing school violence. Of the eleven crime prevention efforts limitations included in the analysis, the results of this study show that only two of them had a significant effect on school violence. Namely, the inadequate funds for crime prevention measures and limitations posed by state/district policies had a significant effect on the number of violent crimes (e.g., attacks and threats of attacks with weapons) and non-violent crimes (e.g., theft, distribution of drugs, possession of alcohol, and vandalism). Nonetheless, these two factors did not have an effect on the number of crimes committed without weapons (e.g., sexual battery cases, robberies, attacks, and threats of attack).

One of the key factors that had a statistically significant effect on school violence that is noteworthy was fear of student retaliation. The data in this study show that crime prevention efforts that were limited by the fear of student retaliation had a statistically significant effect on the number of robberies, attacks without weapons, threats of attack without weapons, as well as on the non-violent crimes. The second most influencing factor was limitations by inadequacy or lack of teachers' training on classroom management. The number of non-violent crimes, on the other hand, were mostly affected by inadequate or lack of teachers' support for school policies. Among other relevant and influencing factors were the lack of or inadequate parental support for school policies and teachers' fear of litigation. However, fear of litigation had an inverse effect on non-violent crimes.

In summary, the seventeen-variable model we tested in this study can best be used to predict non-violent crime such as theft/larceny, distribution or possession of drugs offenses, possession of or use of alcohol, and vandalism on school property. The same model did not effectively predict violent crimes committed *with* weapons, and only partially predicted violent crimes committed *without* weapons. Nonetheless, the unique contribution of this research article to the existing literature on school violence rests on the fact that we tested a number of unique factors that not many studies have included in their analysis.

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## **Farewell Ignorance-based Innocence: We Choose Guilt!**

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In many African societies, the ordinary man has come to accept the popular belief held by many African scholars that the unpleasant political and economic conditions they have found themselves in have been caused by corrupt and incapable political leaders. By applying the causal explanation in previous explanations of the post-colonial quagmires of Africa, political leadership became the factor that determined the state of political and economic systems. This paper argues the reverse. Firstly, reference to political representatives as leaders is a misuse of language. Secondly, if truly the political and economic progress of African nations has been fatally determined as scholars have previously argued, Africa is doomed. This paper applies the theoretical and epistemological methodology of self-analysis. Its main argument is that in order to reverse doom imposed by previous analyses and explanations of the socio-political woes of Africa, ordinary Africans have to be prepared to accept responsibility for their role in Africa's problem.

### **Introduction**

The monumental complexities surrounding the political climate of Africa leave us with much to worry about. The search for a probable solution that can stand the test of time preoccupies every rational mind that accommodates Africa. This is evident in various suggestions that have been offered by scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds and intellectual orientations. For some decades now, many indigenous African scholars, in the name of pan-Africanism (Martin, 2008, 209-227, Prah, 2009, Murithi, 2005), afrocentricism (Gray, 2001, Asante, 1988 and 1987), renaissancism (Aristidea, 2006, 164-174, Manguabc, 2006, 147-163, Mbeki, 1999, Mbeki, 2010, Cheru, 2002, Mignolo, 1995), self-reliancism (Ogundowole, 2007), nationalism (Sithole, 1959, Hill & Pirio, 1987: 209-253,

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Falola, 2001, Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems, 2009: 943-965, 2009: 61-78, Nyangoni, 1977, Williams, 1970: 371-383), and the like, have filled the pages of academic journals, magazines and newspapers with numerous defenses of the thesis that Africa is backward and chaotic because of its unfortunate past colonial and imperial experiences. Others, employing some curious objectivity and intellectual neutrality, have equally defended the view that the colonial and imperial incursions of Western powers in Africa were intended to liberate Africa. In more recent times and, perhaps because of some historical events such as the agitation for “life presidency” and the looting of national treasuries in Nigeria, Ghana<sup>1</sup> and numerous stories of corruption in literature relating to Africa (*The Guardian*, 2000). Hope, K. R. (1997), Mulinge, M. M. and Lesetedi, G. N. 1998: 15-28), some scholars have argued that post-colonial political representatives of Africa are the cause of socio-political challenges in Africa. The numerous theses appear to be oppositional and intellectually fashionable to the extent that most articles written about Africa depend on the disguised emotional affiliation of the author with either of the two sides: colonialism is responsible for Africa’s backwardness; or postcolonial African leaders are responsible for the African problem in question. In addition, their submissions generally seem to shift the blame for the societal predicament to two opposing extremes, albeit illogical, and without one position necessarily challenging the assumptions and oversights of the other. This paper contributes to the literature about this controversial issue, but from a perspective that many scholars are either ignorant of or have simply ignored. While the situation in Africa becomes even more embarrassing, development relies especially on Africans. Africans ought to accept the task of refashioning their lives and future by initiating dialogue about why Africa is the way it is, hence cultural nostalgia (appeals to renaissance and general appeals to the past) and various theories about re-making Africa that have been purported (Òkè, 2006: 332–343).

Currently, it has become a widespread belief in many African societies that unpleasant socio-politics that pervade African societies have been caused by corruption in the ranks of political representatives (Raditlhokwa, 1999:45-55), coupled with the incapability of leaders (particularly those who assumed political responsibility after colonialism) to lead with a clear sense of governance, and with no ill-intentions of exploiting the people. Presumably, these uncritical beliefs have been influenced by related intellectual assumptions that emerge

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<sup>1</sup> A Ghanaian minister was reported to have paid \$100,000 to the bank account of his American concubine (*The Ghanaian News*, 2006). Over \$500 billion was looted from the National Treasury during the military regimes alone in Nigeria (*The Guardian*, 1999). In 1996, about \$30 billion of aid to Africa went into the foreign bank accounts of individuals.

from foundations uncritical of epistemological proclivity. Two of these assumptions are that:

1. The only reliable method for explaining social issues is the scientific method; and
2. The appropriate scientific explanation of a social phenomenon is to identify causes or to apply the causal model.

These two, though naive, assumptions have conceivably influenced debates around the root cause of the socio-political challenges of Africa, and about the future paths of African development. Whether the debates also influence the beliefs or not, many African scholars now argue that post-colonial political leadership has irreversibly determined the state of political systems in Africa (Ayittey, 1999: 28-38 and Oke, 2006: 332-343).

This paper was first inspired by the title of Allan Aubrey Boesak's text, *Farewell to Innocence*, published by Orbis Books in Maryknoll in 1977. The point of convergence for these two works is the belief that a certain group of oppressed people deserves freedom. The similarity lies in the aim to arouse the appropriate consciousness about the liberation of the oppressed. Boesak's point of departure, however, is the assumption that oppressed people have been the way they are because of the manipulations and conspiracies of some insurmountable oppressor. While this conventional belief, that the quagmire of the oppressed has been designed by an external oppressor, forms the basis of the thesis and Boesak's central argument, it is the very problem with which this paper contends.

While Boesak's text employs a socio-theological analytic approach, this paper uses an epistemological application of the phenomenological approach in examining the socio-political situation of Nigeria, which is the situation of many other African states. That is, the paper does not demarcate its authors from the Africa of its analysis. Rather, it sees Africa as a part of the lived reality of its authors. Therefore, the African of our analysis is to a large extent is us (as Africans and Africans in the Diaspora). Additionally, the combined phenomenology and epistemological application does not suggest that we are unaware of the historical rivalry between phenomenology and traditional epistemology.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, the basic supposition of this paper is that every idea that challenges previous assumptions is, in fact, epistemological. As such, this paper assumes that there is a more harmonious relationship between epistemology and the

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<sup>2</sup>As argued by Carman and Hansen (2005: 1-25), Husserl's phenomenology was groundbreaking in its rejection of this epistemological picture. Also see Wait, 2000.

intuition driven, in-depth, self-examination called phenomenology than has previously been acknowledged.

It must be noted, however, that this paper has no predetermined intention to show that African political representatives are innocent of the present challenges with which Africa is faced, or that Africans are the cause of their own socio-political crisis for that matter. Perhaps, Piero Gheddo (1979), Achille Mbembe (2006: 143-178, 2001) and Stanley Igwe (2012) are more inclined to lean towards such positions. The paper does not intend to show that causal models of explanation are unsuitable to explain social issues. The authors do not all agree with this position. Neither does the paper take a position for or against the advocates of “African solution to African Problems” (Back, 2012:1-5). Rather than starting from a judgemental and prescriptive position, our position is informed by the logics of premises asserted. Therefore, the paper is diagnostic towards identifying a logically consistent position, hence the combination of methods of sincere self-examination and epistemic logicity.

#### **Ignorance-based Innocence (Ignocence)**

To begin with, the coining of the term “ignocence” is intended to underscore the ignorance based innocence which is implied in the analyses of scholars on the social and political plight in African societies. Though many African states now practice the democratic system of government, which has a very high regard for the opinion and interests of the people, many of the previous analyses of the post-colonial crisis of Africa tend to blame political office holders for the problems. They create the impression that ordinary Africans (who were neither part of the colonial rulers nor fall into the class of post-colonial politicians) do not matter and are completely innocent of the difficult situations in which they have found themselves.

Democracy has come to mean different things to different people<sup>3</sup>. While Schumpeter sees it more as an institutional arrangement (Schumpeter, 1942:242), Dewey (1990:327-328) conceives it to be a moral ideal or way of life that can be achieved regardless of the practiced political system of a society. Even if we manage to form a working definition, it would only become clearer that democracy does not necessarily translate to a stable economy, even when practiced properly. Therefore, the idea that democracy is any system that looks good or functions well is a misguided belief. At the same time, however, the role of a fully functional and effective democracy in ensuring sustainability, and in

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<sup>3</sup> See the following examples: Hook, 1939: 31-46, Held, 2009, 211ff, Appadurai 2002:21-47, Dewey, 1985:349, Anderson, 2009:213-228, Carew, 2004:460-47, Barry, 2000:285-6 & 278-288, Fayemi, 2009:101-126.

ensuring that economic development translates to human and social development in a community is never in question (Barro, 1999:158-183).

Ordinarily, the phrase ‘political problem’ refers to any political challenge that directly impairs the establishment, maintenance and consolidation of a political system. When one says that the democracy, or the democratic project, is experiencing challenges or difficulties in Africa, it simply means that the necessary components and values of an “ideal” democracy are weak, completely absent or unobtainable in a system that claims to be democratic. But this does not necessarily mean that there is a “perfect” democracy anywhere in the world against which the democracies in Africa can be compared. At the very best, it implies that some democracies appear to be faring better than those in Africa, but not necessarily that they are “perfect,” faultless, better or even ideal to juxtapose the democracies practiced in Africa. The concept of political problem in Africa, therefore, is not necessarily the consequence of a comparative analysis.

If Adam Smith’s (1970) argument that democracy at its best leads to economic buoyancy is based on the fact that there is no economic development in the midst of political crises, then economic backwardness, within the context of this paper, is considered part of the political challenge that postcolonial Africa contends. This is later exemplified in the case of Nigeria, where the political woes are highlighted against the political system in practice. Democracy, therefore, if taken in its loose sense, would mean a system of governance in which all its structure, as theorized by Awopetu,<sup>4</sup> and components ensure economic efficiency. It could be pithily articulated that democracy is one of, or a combination of two or more of the following:

1. A political system for choosing and replacing a government by the process of free and fair elections. Political system and institutional arrangement or ideology;
2. A rule of law that ensures that laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens. System of governance and power relation;
3. The protection of the human rights of all citizens (democracy as a moral idea);
4. Educating and ensuring the active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life (democracy as a way of life).

To say that any democracy runs smoothly means not only that a combination of all the indices translate to a substantially improved standard of living for its citizenry, but, also that the abovementioned indices function coherently and in

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<sup>4</sup> According to Awopetu (2007:22-25) there are three main structures necessary in a democracy: infra-structure, techno-structure and super-structure.

good shape, and are not likely to revert to poor conditions if confronted with social challenges.

Using the specific example of Nigeria, democracy was introduced into the political system of postcolonial Nigeria at independence in 1960. At early stages of its independence, democracy in Nigeria could not be classified as consolidated because it was yet to be tested in any serious way. Soon after independence, it was challenged and tested by numerous insurgencies which culminated in the Civil War that lasted for about six years and ended in 1969. Since the war, however, democracy in Nigeria, as in many African states has continuously fluctuated between autocracy and near anarchy, on one hand, while the common people, without hope in the horizon, dangle and oscillate between penury and death on the other.

According to Ogungbemi (2007), Nigeria is one of the most populated countries in the world. Its population gives it a seat as one of the richest countries in human resources and expertise if properly explored. Its mineral and natural resources are also of inestimable value. This means that in addition to its well-equipped human resources, it is potentially one of the most politically admirable and economically viable nations in the world, but only if all the resources are properly and intelligently harnessed. In spite of these potentials and possibilities, however, Nigeria is indexed as one of the poorest and most hopeless countries in the world in Agunlana (2006) and Puddington (2009), and according to Nnonyele (2013) the political sphere is fiercely challenged by ethnicity, corruption, religious disunity and terrorism.

Moreover, Ondo State in Nigeria is one of the poorest and comparably underdeveloped states, whilst simultaneously classified as one of the richest states in terms of its wealth of human and material resources. It is one of the oil producing states in Nigeria, and has one of the largest deposits of bitumen and stockfish in the world. In addition to sharing links with the sea and being a gateway to the hinterlands of Nigeria, and according to Mimiko (2010), Forest (2012) and the Department of Research and Statistics of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget (2010), Nigeria is one of the foremost producers of cocoa in the world. Although it is challenged with the problem of land availability, when compared to the size of its population, this is not as acute a problem, and is certainly not peculiar of Ondo State in the contemporary era of population explosion specific to underdeveloped nations. Despite this challenge, however, it is still one of the largest producers of cassava, cola-nut, and palm oil in Nigeria. These products are mere additions to the federal allocation<sup>5</sup> that

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<sup>5</sup>The federal allocation is a monthly allotment of funds from the Federal Government to States and Local Governments in Nigeria.

comes to Ondo State every month. Even as one of the leading oil producing states, its federal allocation exceeds those of many other Nigerian States. Notwithstanding the resources available to Ondo State, it is one of the poorest states in Nigeria, and is faced with numerous security threats (Gbadamosi, 2012). Cho and Kirwin assert that the situation in Ondo State is not far from the situation in Benin, Tanzania, Malawi or Sudan. This suggests that the situation in Ondo State not only mirrors what goes on in Nigeria, but also what takes place in Africa as a whole, although to varying degrees.

Scholars such as Zeleza (2008) have attempted to explain the problems in Africa using the causal model, consequently leaving blame at the doorstep of leadership (colonial, postcolonial or both). With reference to the social, political or economic crises in parts or all of Africa, renowned scholars such as Achebe (as cited in Ayittey, 1999:29), Szeftel, (2000:287-306), Mwansa, (1999:122-129) and Soteolu, (2004:70-78) have continuously cited political leadership as the only problem. While these scholars may have had their reasons for arguing the way they did and for drawing the conclusions they have, and while each conclusion may have a logical, as well as practical implication, it is a very judgemental and prescriptive approach to the issue to adjudicate on the correctness or otherwise of any of the positions. This paper, as evidenced in introductory paragraphs, is not interested in making judgements on the correctness or incorrectness of any position. Its sole interest lies in attempting to undo the impending implications caused by postcolonial African woes.

By saying that postcolonial African woes have been caused, scholars are also logically implying that the problem is beyond solution, and that Africa is doomed. The implication of their argument is that Africa is merely an effect of forces that have caused it to be the way it is (Olatunji, 2012). If it is true that postcolonial African “leaders” (representatives) are responsible for postcolonial African woes, it would also mean that undefeatable forces, and not Africans, are responsible for the situation in Africa. By putting Africa’s fate in the hands of such insurmountable and malevolent forces, the claims put forward by such scholars quite simply spell doom for Africa and for all African States and communities. Since Africans are not responsible for the problem, they cannot be responsible for finding a solution. Moreover, even if theories about remaking Africa, or their corresponding practical efforts, appear to be working it only appears that way until another instance of antic or intervention from the insuperable causal force. The logic here is simple: the people did not desire the problem and could not prevent it. If they were unable to prevent the problem or stop the perpetrators from creating it, will they ever be able to remedy the situation? Additionally, how reliable would their solution be if the unstoppable perpetrators are still around? Moreover, can it be said with any absolute certainty

that the so called problem caused by postcolonial political representatives wasn't in fact created by scholars themselves? These questions raise even more fundamentally relevant questions to the discourse. If colonial leaders are thought to account for the corruption and underdevelopment of the colonial era, why have postcolonial leaders been incapable of reversing the situation half a century later? In addition, if postcolonial leaders are to be held accountable for postcolonial social deficits, does it mean that colonial misdeeds have had no effects? Alternatively, is corruption and incapability peculiar of postcolonial African leaders?

Notwithstanding references to other parts of the world (Li, & Wu, 2007: 24-28) and other possible answers to such questions, let us assume that it is accurate that postcolonial African leaders are pathologically corrupt or genetically defective. Let us also assume that corrupt leaders are weak governors. If such defects are peculiar of the political class, a simple change in government should remedy the situation<sup>6</sup>. Although there are few African States that have not made changes in their governments in a long while, they are by no means the only problematic nations. There are African nations, including Nigeria, that have experienced several changes in government, but their situations remain similar to those that have not. A further implication of asserting that postcolonial socio-economic challenges exist because postcolonial political representatives are corrupt and/or ineffective is a tactical endorsement of the thesis that Africans are pathologically corrupt and/or genetically inferior (Hegel, 1974, 1967 & 1975). This is not the way Africans see themselves, as such does not speak to real Africans, except the Africans of these scholars analyses.

Pan-Africanists and Afro-nationalist scholars such as Nyerere, Senghor, Nkrumah, Biko and Tefo have long held views that ensure Africans are not indicted in explanations of their own experienced challenges. By so doing these scholars have succeeded in "whipping up" sympathy for Africa and Africans. Such sympathies, unfortunately, cannot solve the problem. The real solution depends on Africans. However, a reliable solution is possible if and only if, some force actually caused the problem and the people have correctly identified and dealt with it irreversibly.

Many non-Africanists, Afro-pessimists (Quist-Adade, 2012:1-4) and Afro-critics such as Hegel, Kant, Achebe, Oke and Diamond do not see any reason to spare Africans. Some even believe that there is something inherently wrong with Africans. This, too, is not how Africans see themselves. Africans (at home and in the Diaspora) do not see themselves as inferior or even different

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<sup>6</sup>A change in Government would at least have brought into power, others what were hitherto not part of the earlier corrupt politicians.

from other people, except in skin colour. We do not consider ourselves a people without a history or a future, and we do not perceive our current predicaments to be irreversible. The arguments of scholars who tout inferiority and inherent defectiveness merely concern the Africans of their theoretical analyses, rather than the Africans we know ourselves to be.

Other Afro-critic scholars argue that colonialism can no longer be for the postcolonial developmental and political challenges of Africa. With the exception of Hegel and Kant who out rightly validate colonialism, many other Afro-critics and Afro-pessimists do not indict Africa in its entirety of being responsible for postcolonial woes. On the contrary, such scholars indict the leadership cross-section of Africa as the cause of the problem. From that epistemic position, some scholars (as testified in Moses Oke, 2006, 332-343) advocate for a return to the glorious past (Aristidea, 2006, 164-174). Notwithstanding the intellectual nostalgia, the only reason by which someone could single out African leadership as the course of a problem in Africa, to which the rest of Africa has contributed nothing, is to have distinguished said leaders from the people themselves. That is to say, they observe some identifiable factor that necessarily distinguishes leaders from the rest of the African masses. The surest proof of its truthfulness is change in leadership, as earlier posited.

Although in recent times there have been scholars such as Mazrui (2000), and Mimiko & Aluko (2006:565-575) who have combined Afro-optimism (Falola, 2003) with Afro-pessimism,<sup>7</sup> they have indicted both colonialism and postcolonial leaders as the combined force that crumpled postcolonial Africa. These scholars believe that the rest of the African masses are merely innocent victims who would never have been able to change the situation at all. Unfortunately, colonialism has come and gone and can no longer be summoned to solve the problem it created, and if for any reason or under any guise and cunning it resurfaces it would still be impossible for Africans to stop it since it is entirely unstoppable. On the other hand, if African political leaders are the cause of the problem, and leadership has in fact changed hands several times and the situation has not improved, then, at the very least, the problem may not necessarily lie with the leaders. Given this analysis, the combination of colonialism and postcolonial African leadership in the hybrid of Afro-optimism and Afro-pessimism is not in any way more logical or plausible.

If  $p$  or  $q$  causes  $r$ , then it cannot be the case that  $p$  and  $q$  have caused  $r$ . A thing cannot be said to have caused another if the causal connection is contingent

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<sup>7</sup>For an expression of afro-optimism and Afro-pessimism, see Uchenna Okeja's "Narratives and the Dialogue of Cultures of Knowledge: A Perspective on the Experience of the West and Africa" 2010: 142-154).

upon another event. Therefore, if  $p$  is the cause of  $r$  it would mean that  $q$  is not the cause of  $r$ . Also if a combination of  $p$  and  $q$  has caused  $r$ , despite De Vreese's (2006) argument supporting the possibility of plural causes, it would still mean that none of the alleged causal factors can produce the effect independently or apart from the synergy. Therefore, it would be flawed to say that either  $p$  or  $q$  caused  $r$  if  $r$  is a product of  $p$  and  $q$  combined. Furthermore, there is a difference between a mere combination of factors and a synergy of factors. If  $r$  is produced by a synergy of  $pq$ , neither  $p$  nor  $q$  can be blamed for  $r$ , nor can a mere combination of  $p.q$  be blamed for  $r$  since neither  $p$  nor  $q$  can produce  $r$  independently.  $r$  is produced only at the instance of  $pq$  working together as a synergy rather than as mere combination. It must be noted as an illustration that a combination of blue and yellow produce green, but neither blue nor yellow can produce green or half-green independently. Also, a broom (a synergy of fifty sticks) can sweep a floor well, but using each stick individually, one after the other (a mere combination of sticks) will not be able to sweep the same floor well. Logically, then, if colonialism caused the socio-political crisis of Africa, post-colonial or post-independent political representatives cannot be the cause of said crisis. The truth of one necessarily negates the truth of the other. If post-colonial or post-independent political representatives have truly caused the problem, then colonialism cannot be the cause. Furthermore, if a synergy of colonialism and post-colonial or post-independence political representatives caused the socio-political crisis of Africa, none of the factors could have caused the problem independently.

Finally, nothing can bring into existence that which cannot exist. Accordingly, anything that causes a problem can only do so because it is possible. The problem was already in the process of becoming. By inference, then, colonialism could never have inflicted such quagmires on un-colonisable Africans. It also implies that colonialists could never have successfully corrupted incorruptible African leaders. In addition, postcolonial political representatives could never have exploited, or even mismanaged, the affairs of Africans who were not exploitable, or whose affairs could not be mismanaged (Acheampong, 1985: xiii). Whether or not colonialism or African postcolonial political leaders caused the problem in question, if Africans were colonised because they were colonisable and are exploited by political opportunists because they are as equally exploitable as they are free, then, who caused the problem? And to what extent should contingent causes be blamed instead of the original factor (whatever that is) which predisposed Africans to colonisation and exploitation? It could be argued that Africans did not willingly accept colonialism. Whoever takes such a position should explain how Ethiopia was able to resist colonisation and why un-colonised Ethiopia has not fared better than colonised Botswana.

Since scholars are quick to explain that pre-colonial Africa was as civilised as any other part of the world (wa Thiong'o, 2009, Ayittey, 1991, Mazrui, 1988: 469-87, Diop, 1974), they should also explain how small European nations were able to subdue giant nations so easily. Even if it so happened, to what extent should the opportunist be blamed? In the same vein, political office holders are only a handful of opportunists. Most likely, we can be justified in blaming opportunists for their wiliness and sneaky opportunism. That notwithstanding, it is complacency or the inability of the victim that ultimately makes him a victim. Either he is not able to withstand his adversary, in which case he humbly acknowledges his inability or weakness, or he could have stopped his adversary but did not, in which case he allows his misfortune.

Whether or not the people have caused their own problems or their problems are inherently a part of their nature, there are reliable grounds to show that no benevolent external agent can cause or donate any reliable solution without the knowledge and consent of the one who has the problem. In this case, the solution depends on the people of Africa. The grounds for these assertions include:

1. A reliable solution can only come from within, or at least with the knowledge and consent of the people. Whatever comes from outside is only an opportunity for benevolent support, and can be withdrawn at any time. It is therefore not reliable;
2. As we have seen in the analysis of this paper, both colonial and postcolonial "leaders" are analytically or logically externalisable (detachable from the people). Therefore, like other external forces, they cannot be relied upon for a solution even, and especially, if they have caused the problem;
3. If political leaders did not cause the problem, any solution from them would only appear reliable until the unidentified causal force strikes again. If they are the cause of the problem, their removal from office should solve the problem, although regime change has not improved the situation anywhere in Africa. Secondly, if they (political "leaders") are the cause of Africa's woes, they still cannot be a reliable source for solutions because by proffering solutions they would be undoing the situation that sustained them. Therefore, the natural principle of self-preservation would motivate them towards a mere disguise that gives the impression that they are, indeed, solving the problem, when deceptively and instinctively they are compounding it;
4. There may have been some honest leaders, but the continuity of their efforts would be extremely difficult or impossible since the only way to

ensure continuity would be to entrust leadership to the people, rather than the “leaders” or representatives;

5. Unfortunately, the only way the people can be held responsible for the solution is if they were their own leaders, and are accountable for the problem in the first place. If they were not responsible for the problem and could not prevent it from surfacing in the first place, they may still be unable to prevent it if the need arises in the future. That is, the people cannot be held responsible for a problem they did not cause.

As concerned stakeholders and African scholars, it is high time we begin rejecting innocence and pacifism founded on such avoidable (culpable) ignorance. Such self-defending, ego-protecting and self-consoling theories as represented by the traditions of Pan-Africanism, Afrocentrism, and perhaps Afro-radicalism (Sekyi-Otu, 2003, 1-14) were good in their time to boost African ego and avoid psychological depression, as well as enormous social contrition that could attend a sense of guilt. Over half a century later since the wave of self-rule and political independence in Africa, such palliative and self-consoling theories should be jettisoned if Africa must progress. Theories such as these must be replaced with theories that logically place the solution in the hands or within logical reach of real Africans, rather external and externalisable forces who were thought to have caused the problem in the first instance, and who, by implication, cannot be capable of or committed to undoing themselves.

To be more precise, for the possibility of a reliable and lasting solution, such a solution has to be found within the capacity of ordinary people no matter how painful and difficult it may be. The solution cannot continue to be located among analytically externalisable leaders. To make a reliable solution to the problem possible is to situate ordinary people in positions to solve the problem. To empower the people towards solving the problem is also to make them accept responsibility for their own history, so that they do not continue to be sandwiched in the footnotes of other people’s history and plans as is currently the case (Swift, 2005: 1-15). To empower the people towards solving their problems necessitates that they accept their choices in history, as well as accept guilt for the problem at hand in order to be considered accountable for finding solutions.

True pan-Africanism among other things involves being honest to ourselves. It means telling ourselves the truth about colonialism, a choice once made and allowed by Africans. Like the Hobbesian and Lockean social contracts, the choice was presumably made semiotically (actions and signs). Traditional pan-Africanism has failed to explain that there is a single heritage,<sup>8</sup> not triple as

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<sup>8</sup> By heritage, Mazrui (2000:1-10) implies the roots of the postcolonial defective structure.

argued by some scholars (Mazrui, 2000 & 1986, Bamikole, 2012: 68-76). No heritage can stand the choice of the people. Whatever heritage there is is contingent on the choice of the people. Therefore, the alleged three heritages is merely accusing the proverbial woman of stealing yam from the farm and confiscating the mortar with which she pounded the yam, simply because she was found pounding the piece of yam for supper at home. The investigation is fruitless if no further enquiry is made about how the yam got home. To know how the yam was stolen and how to prevent yam from being stolen from the farm henceforth, it would be necessary to further investigate how the piece of yam left the farm and how it got home. If merely impounding the mortar from the woman appears to have stopped the phenomenon of yam going missing on the farm, it would only have done so temporarily. It would not be a reliable solution. The thief could decide to use the yam for *amala* (yam powder), or *asaro* (porridge) and could decide to roast the yam rather than making pounded yam with it. The most effective way to prevent any future theft of the yam on the farm would be to ensure that the proverbial thief is caught and dealt with accordingly. Without the knowledge of the bitter truth that Africans should be accountable for their destinies, even revolutions would be no more than the mere kicks of a dying horse, because the people of Africa would revolt in vain as they have done in the past (Anderson, 2005: 1155-1189, Ntalaja, 1987, Bridgman, 1981, Cabral, 1969). Nothing would change, and developments would occur without any positive progress. Unguarded and free-styled revolution could end up seeing Africans revolting against themselves without remedying the situation (Matsinhe, 2011: 295-313).

From the foregoing analysis, attempting to deal with postcolonial “leaders” will not necessarily be a reliable solution to the problem of Africa if there is no system in place to ensure it. Political representatives cannot be stopped from furthering the problem as long as they are left to make themselves behave appropriately or without checks from the people. According to Thomas Jefferson, in every government on earth there are some traces of human weaknesses, germs of corruption and degeneracy. Therefore, since the state depends on the consent of the governed for its existence, any government that becomes destructive to the interests of its principals risks being altered or abolished (1944, 22, *see also* Padover, 1946, 168). This is also possible when the people are well informed or have access to information, and are free to form their own opinions. Any revolution that is not by the people or not based on knowledge will experience government changing hands among opportunists with one gang overturning the other. Elites (as intellectuals and political “leaders”), who at any point in time are played out of power, will continue to whip-up

sympathy and stir-up ethnic, religious, theoretical or political sentiments and violence which could be mistaken for revolutions.

The people's docility and their willingness to somewhat submit to dependency vulnerably are more capable of forestalling progress than the alleged oppressive colonial regime, and corrupt postcolonial political "leaders" for that matter, who themselves are products of the same precarious situation. As Mimiko advises (AIT, 2012), "It is the people who will modify the behaviour of the politicians." Such behavioural modification cannot be ensured by merely accusing political representatives of the problem, and consequently claiming that the people are at the mercy of corrupt 'leaders' or could not do anything to prevent political representatives from causing the problem.

The question therefore becomes who is going to perform the function of putting the solution in the hands of real Africans? If the function were to be performed by postcolonial leaders or any agent besides the people, it would still be unreliable since the agent would determine the fate of the people. Africans should not, however, expect a benevolent Messiah, agent or ruler who ensures that they are responsible for their fate and history. The people must do this for themselves. The only weapon they need is knowledge. It begins with knowledge of the fact that it needs to be done in order for them to be truly free, and that they alone and no one else can change their fate. The self-knowledge in question comes with pain and agony, and coupled with the instinct to survive will lead to a struggle for survival. Guided with knowledge, rather than ignocence (innocence based on ignorance), the people will be lead to true freedom and solution.

## **Conclusion**

As representatives of ordinary indigenous Africans and the diaspora, we have explored the theoretical and epistemological methodology of self-examination in repositioning the ordinary African towards admitting he has orchestrated the problem with which he finds himself faced, as a way of making him accountable for his mistakes and capable of finding solutions to the problem. Admittedly, the pain will be excruciating and it appears unreasonable to own up to, and accept responsibility for a crime that one has not committed. That alone can complicate the problem since no reliable judgement and solution, like the nostalgic drive and the renaissance alternative will work if they are based on the machinery of false witnesses. On one hand, it is impossible to find a reliable solution to a problem one has not caused and it is mortifying to admit that others determine one's own state and future in life. On the other hand, following the analysis of this paper, it is difficult to see how the postcolonial problem of Africa would have existed without the involvement of Africans by wilful participation,

omission or commission of culpable ignorance. In the case of Africa or any of its sub-regional units such as Nigeria or Ondo State, there has been no convincing argument or evidence to prove that the people have not contributed to their enduring socio-political crisis.

The paper therefore concludes that since there is no reliable evidence for the innocence of the people, which for the most part is neither needed nor helpful, and the people need to be guilty (of being the cause of their own problems) in order for it to be logically possible for them to find solutions, it becomes necessary for Africans to reject any logical state (of ignorance and innocence) that makes it impossible for them to accept responsibility for the trajectory of their history and future. As a result, the paper suggests conditions of intentionality and humble acknowledgement of faults as necessary and basic equipment that must underline any reliable solution to the socio-political developmental challenges of Africa. Following the analysis of this paper, doing otherwise would only amount to wallowing in the succour of ignorance (*igno-*) and the comfort of innocence (*-cence*) which necessarily perpetuate the problem and engender an avoidable doom.

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# Does Moderation Pay?

## Members of Congress, Campaign Donations and Voting Patterns

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That money and politics make strange bedfellows is nothing new, but the relationship, which is necessary and utilitarian, is also problematic. We test whether members of the United States Congress might benefit from moderated voting patterns by increasing the pool of potential PAC donors and actual donations. We find first that members with more moderate voting records have more diverse PAC donations, and second that those members with greater diversity in their donation pools are able to turn that diversity into higher campaign donation receipts.

### Introduction

That money and politics make strange bedfellows is nothing new, but that relationship, which is necessary and utilitarian, is also problematic. As rational actors, elected officials need to have a large enough war chest to be electorally competitive and assuage concerns about their reelections. On the other hand, raising money to fulfill that goal has to be done without raising the suspicion that contributions change their voting behavior in Congress.

The question of money and its influence on politics has been with us since the beginning of the Republic (Thayer 1973). Indeed, where there is money, questions of its influence on the legislative process and electoral outcomes are legitimately raised. These questions have become even more relevant as political action committees' (PACs) and their related 501(c) 4 group donations have increased substantially<sup>1</sup> over time to both the political parties generally and members of Congress individually (Jacobson 1983; Malbin and

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1974-1980, PAC expenditures increased by 500%. The total contribution to Congressional candidates tripled over the same period. Between 1981-1982, 2665 non-party PACs donated \$87 million to federal candidates from both parties.

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Skladomy 1984). As these donations have increased, questions about how they influence the legislative process have been explored by a myriad of authors. They have attempted to work through what the relationship between members, campaign donations, those who donate, and legislative outcomes with varying degrees of success and somewhat conflicting results.

These questions are increasingly important, as the recent Supreme Court decisions removing campaign donation restrictions become active in future electoral cycles. If money from groups, whether PACs or 501(c)4 groups, substantially influences how members of congress vote there are important implications for American democracy and public policy. Understanding how members of congress position themselves with these groups through their voting record is of particular importance as these groups substantially increase the scope and size of their donations in this expanded campaign finance landscape.

In general the literature dealing with money and its influence in the legislative process is concerned with two primary questions: 1) does money raised or donated from special interest groups (PACs or 501(c)4 groups) influence the legislative process and does that influence compromise members of Congress' votes? The second question generally asked is whether those donations influence the outcome of elections resulting in a substantially different policy landscape. In short, this line of inquiry asks the fundamental question; does money influence electoral outcomes? The large body of literature exhibits a lack of consensus on the nature of this relationship both in direction and in magnitude.

Given that it is a cottage industry of studies addressing these questions, we turn to a set of questions that emerge from literature and that have not been clearly addressed in the extant literature. Our goal therefore is to address three questions. First, are all members of Congress equal before PACs? Second, does moderation or extremity in the voting behavior of the members of Congress affect their ability to receive PAC or 501(c)4 contributions from a wider group of donors? Finally, does an expanded set of possible donors through moderated voting lead to increased campaign funds?

The literature has consistently demonstrated that it is a safe assumption that labor PACs and 501(c)4s donate more often and in larger amounts to Democratic elected officials and candidates (see Saltzman (1987) and Grenzke 1989), and corporate PACs and 501(c)4s donate more often and in larger amounts to Republican elected officials and candidates. However, a simple review of the data clearly shows that some elected officials are able to attract donations from both sides. This reality hints at the possibility that ideological extremity impacts the diversity of groups from which an elected member of Congress could generate donations. We hypothesize that members of Congress

who exhibit moderate voting patterns have access to a greater diversity of PACs, and that from this larger universe of potential donors members may draw substantively increased donations than those at the ideological extreme.

### **Overview of The Literature and Theory**

The relationship between PAC donations (and money in general) and politics has been analyzed from at least two perspectives. One perspective focuses on analyzing and discussing the impact of money and PAC contributions on electoral outcomes (Glantz, Abramowitz, and Burkart 1976; Jacobson 1980; Shepard 1977; Crain and Tollison 1976; Welch 1974, 1980, 1981). The other perspective concentrates on analyzing the influence of PAC money on the votes of members of Congress. In attempting to clarify the theoretical link between donations and Congressional votes, scholars have looked at the impact of PACs on certain legislation, on particular issue domains, and on the aggregate of votes.

Providing an adequate framework for analyzing the relationship between PAC contributions and voting behavior is normatively important. Democratic governance is meant to reflect and represent the interests and grievances of voters, donations notwithstanding. If donations from specific groups alter the vote choices of individual members of Congress, outcomes of policy debates may simply be functions of the preferences of those most willing to pay, not the products of larger democratic processes. (Silberman and Durben 1976; Gleilber, King, and Mahood 1987; Frendreis and Waterman 1985; Sharfstein and Sharfstein 1994; Mondari and Glantz 1998; Luke and Krauss 2004; Cohen & Hamman 2003; and McCall 2003). These scholars do not, however, consider whether the relationship between PAC donations and members' votes is a simultaneous one. It is not enough to say that PAC donations influence voting behavior, without considering that the voting behavior of members of Congress also influences PAC donations. The techniques that have been used to conclude that PAC donations do, in fact, affect the voting behavior of members of Congress have the potential to lead to false-positive results. This is because only assessing one side of the causal mechanism and ignoring the potential for simultaneous impact leads to overestimation of the relationship. Despite this tendency of some analyses to overestimation, the empirical evidence concerning the influence of PAC contributions on members' voting behavior remains contradictory and far from generating a consensus on the relationship (Wright 1985; Bronars and Lott 1997).

For example, Chappells (1981) finds that the effects of contributions from maritime unions on members' votes were at best ambiguous. Welch (1982) arrives at the same conclusion when assessing dairy PAC contributions. Moreover, in another analysis, Chappell (1982) finds little to no support when

considering general farm policy and PAC donations. This negative-to-little influence of PAC contributions on members' votes is echoed by the results of Grenzke (1989a, 1989b). However, Wilhite and Theilmann (1997) and Kau and Rubin (1982) find support in favor of the vote-influencing hypothesis.

Although analyzing this question has serious empirical and normative implications, the inconsistency in the findings is not surprising, nor is it an abnormality in social science. Because scholars have looked at different votes in different Congresses, taking into consideration different PACs and different constituencies, even the use of the same econometric techniques may yield various results.

We contribute to this discussion by leaving aside the vote buying or influencing hypothesis and instead exploring the potential for bi-directional transactions between members and groups. Sultzman (1987) rightly observes that labor PAC contribution patterns tend to favor Democratic more than Republican elected officials (state and federal levels). He also observes that the increase of corporate PAC contributions ultimately increased the power of business over labor by helping "Republican candidates get elected and by giving Democratic incumbents an alternative source of funding that makes them less dependent on labor support" (Sultzman 1987, 164). However, the competition between labor and corporate PACs over the Democrats' votes is still skewed in favor of the labor PACs, since almost all their contributions are channeled toward the Democratic officials.

For instance, between 1979-80, 94.2% of all labor PAC money to incumbents went to Democrats, and 98.3% of labor PAC money to challengers went to the Democrats (Sultzman 1987). Kau and Rubin (1981) also observe that labor PACs disproportionately favor Democrats over Republicans, and the same can be argued for corporate PAC contributions. They also tend to favor Republicans over Democrats in their contribution patterns. The question is if labor PACs favor Democrats and corporate PACs favor Republicans, how do we explain those who consistently receive donations from both groups? We hypothesize that these members operate in a field of a high diversity of PAC contributions, and that diversity decreases as we move toward the extremes of the political spectrum. Moreover we suspect that those members who have the ability to draw from a more diverse set of PACs have larger total contributions than those relegated to a smaller pool.

Our hypothesis is not that contributions from labor or corporate PACs influence members' votes. Instead we argue that certain members of Congress have greater diversity of PAC contributions because of the moderation of their voting patterns. Further we argue that moderate voting patterns in Congress lead

to a greater diversity of PAC contributions. In this vein we posit and test the following hypothesis:

*H1: As moderate voting patterns increase,  
the diversity of PAC contributions increases*

Our second hypothesis tests the proposition that as that diversity increases, members of congress find themselves able to increase their total contributions. Thus we posit and test the following hypothesis.

*H2: As diversity of PAC contributions increase,  
total contributions likewise increase.*

Given these hypotheses we posit a theoretical model that includes the groups and members of congress as active players in a political game often with repeated iterations. Indeed we assume that both the givers and recipients of political donations are keenly aware of the actions of the other side and modify their behavior based on observational data.

### **Testing our Hypotheses**

To test our first hypothesis, we use a two-stage least squares model. The two-stage least squares regression is used to better control for the inherent endogeneity between contributions and voting patterns and the resulting violation of the assumptions that underly OLS. Further using a two-stage least squares model provides an increased ability to explore directionality rather than simply correlation although not without some substantial continuing limitations. The presence of this endogeneity can be best explained by fact that not only can contributions influence voting patterns, but voting patterns can also influence contributions and it is not clear that one will consistently trump the other.

### **Data**

Our data includes all members of the House of Representatives from the 109<sup>th</sup> and 110<sup>th</sup> Congresses. These two Congresses are chosen because members ran and were elected after the McCain-Fiengold campaign finance reforms were implemented, and these congresses have been well used in the larger literature exploring these questions. Further data from these congresses is widely and consistently available to encourage future replication. Further it is safe to expect that the changes in the regulatory regime of campaign finance would have a significant effect on PAC contribution patterns. Seeking greater consistency and

avoiding the potential of complications that come with a significant institutional change, we opted to limit the data available to us to these two Congresses.

Our dependent variable in H1 is Diversity of donations from organized interest groups, PACs and 501(c)4s. We operationalize Diversity using a Hachman Index. Hachman scores, which have traditionally been used to consider the diversity of economic development, are the measures of the deviation of an observation from a constructed ideal. As such, they represent an ideal choice for measuring the deviation of each individual member of Congress's donation diversity from the diversity of the mean member.

In practical terms, we use the FEC donation data and construct the donation profile of the *mean* member of Congress. In constructing this profile, we collapse the three FEC categories that are donations from business interests, leaving us with three categories: Labor, Business, and donations from Trade and Membership Organizations. Our constructed profile is the average of proportion of each of the FEC donation categories in relation to the total donations of the member. Using Hachman's methodology, we calculate the deviation of each member of Congress' actual proportions, and sum those deviations to obtain a diversity score. For clarity's sake and to aid in interpretation, we take the inverse of the summed deviations so that values closer to zero are unlike the mean member – i.e., the least diverse – and larger scores are more representative of the mean member – i.e., the more diverse.<sup>2</sup>

Our main independent variable which measures moderation are Folded-Nominate scores. To capture members' voting patterns, we used DW-Nominate scores, (This approach has become increasingly common in the literature see Johnson 2010) on zero. Operationalized this way, the Folded-Nominate no longer measures liberal and conservative ideological behavior, but extreme and moderate voting behavior. Folded-Nominate values approaching zero indicate absolute moderation, while high Folded-Nominate values indicate extreme voting patterns. Because DW-Nominate is often used as a measure of ideology, using it as a measure of voting is problematic at first glance. However, at its core, the Nominate scores reveal voting patterns, patterns that are then used to estimate ideology. Those scores are estimations of ideological positions, which generally range from -1 to 1. Nevertheless, when it is folded on its zero value, the Folded-Nominate score no longer measures ideological positioning, but becomes a measure of extreme and moderate voting patterns. Unlike much of the existing literature, we use Nominate as a vote score, not as a measure of ideology. Folded-Nominate has a mean score approaching .48 with a standard

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<sup>2</sup> See Hachman, Frank. 1995. *Economic Report to the Governor*. State of Utah, 207-213.

deviation of approximately .18 (See Table 1 for a complete list of Summary Statistics)

The first control variable is Adjusted ADA.<sup>3</sup> We use ADA to control for the ideological leaning of members of Congress. ADA is a score which measures ideology. Higher values indicate more liberal members while lower values indicate less liberal voting behavior. We used Adjusted ADA scores as recommended by Anderson and Habel (2008).

**Table 1: Summary Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Diversity	888	3.23	4.39	0.58	101.4
Folded Nominate	862	0.48	0.18	0.01	1.26
Percent Unionized	862	12.33	6.24	2.3	25.3
Spending Against	888	195.55	1465.88	0	22000
Incumbent	888	0.87	0.32	0	1
Vote Margin	877	68.05	13.02	45	99
ADA	846	44.43	38.28	-8.56	89.75

The second control variable is Union-Percentage.<sup>4</sup> This variable accounts for the percentage of unionized workforce in each state for the period covered by the 109<sup>th</sup> and 110<sup>th</sup> Congresses. If labor unions are heavily represented in a given district, we expect that Diversity to decrease. Union-Percentage has a mean score of approximately 12.33 with a standard deviation of approximately 6.23 (See Table 1 for the complete Summary Statistics).

The third control variable is Spending-Against. It is a measure of the percentage of dollars spent against the candidate. This variable is a proxy that gauges the electoral competition each member of Congress faces in his/her district. Spending-Against is taken from the FEC dataset for the years corresponding to the 109<sup>th</sup> and 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. It has a mean score of approximately 195.55 and standard deviation of 1465.88.

The fourth control variable is General-Election-Percentage. This variable controls for the level of electoral competitiveness in each district. It also differentiates between the candidates who are running in safe districts and those competing in marginal districts. This variable has a mean score of approximately 68.04 and standard deviation of 13.03 (See Table 1 for a complete Summary

<sup>3</sup> The correlation between Folded-Nominate and Adjusted-ADA is -0.59

<sup>4</sup> United State Department of Labor. Bureau of Labor Statistics:  
<http://www.bls.gov>

Statistics). The last control variable is Incumbent. It has a mean score of approximately .9 and a standard deviation of about .032

The exogenous variables used to instrument Folded-Nominate are District Ideology and Democrats as a party identification estimator. Thus, the simultaneous relationship is broken between our main independent variable, Folded-Nominate and the dependent variable, Diversity (See Table 1 for a complete list of Summary Statistics) and we can better explore directionality.

First stage equation:

$$\text{Folded-Nominate} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Dem} + \beta_2 \text{District Ideology}$$

Second stage equation:

$$\text{Diversity} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Folded-Nominate}^* + \beta_2 \text{Adjusted-ADA} + \beta_3 \text{Union-Percentage} + \beta_4 \text{Spending-Against} + \beta_5 \text{General-Election-Percentage} + \beta_6 \text{Incumbent} + u$$

### Testing H1

Table 2 reports the result of the two-stage least squares regression. The findings support our main theoretical prediction and indicate that when Diversity increases, voting patterns moderate. The model yields an  $F$ -value 6.97 with a 6 degrees of freedom and a  $p$ -value approaching 0. The  $p$ -value is smaller than the critical alpha level ( $\alpha = .05$ ), which allows us to reject the null hypothesis that the  $\beta$  coefficients in the model are equal to zero ( $H_0: \beta = 0$ ), and to conclude that the set of independent variables are reliably related to the outcome of interest, *Diversity*. Thus, our model passes the minimum standard of adequacy.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2: Two-stage least squares model: diversity**

	<u>Diversity</u> <u>Model</u>		<u>Corporate</u> <u>Model</u>	<u>Labor</u> <u>Model</u>
Folded Nominate	-7.81 (2.55)	***	-0.12 (0.09)	0.11 (0.09)

<sup>5</sup> Hausman test yields (chi-square = 1.49492, df =1, p = 0.22145). We fail to reject that the regressor is exogenous and that the difference between the 2SLS and OLS coefficients indicates that OLS is an inconsistent estimator in this equation.

**Table 2 (continued)**

	<u>Diversity</u> <u>Model</u>		<u>Corporate</u> <u>Model</u>		<u>Labor</u> <u>Model</u>	
Percent Unionized	-0.03 (0.02)		-0.002 (0.00)	***	0.003 (0.00)	***
Spending Against	-0.00 (0.00)		-0.00 (0.00)		-0.00 (0.00)	
Incumbent	1.76 (0.37)	***	2.51 (0.02)	***	-0.06 (0.01)	***
Vote Margin	0.01 (0.01)		0.002 (0.00)	***	-0.00 (0.00)	
ADA	-0.01 (0.00)	***	-0.004 (0.00)	***	0.004 (0.00)	***
Constant	5.84 1.62	***	0.54 (0.05)	***	-0.02 (0.05)	
N	838		838		838	
F	6.97	***	219.64	***	322.89	***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.04		0.59		0.66	
Root MSE	4.21		0.13		0.12	

Note: Standard Errors are in parentheses. \*\*\*p<.01, \*\*p<.05.

Our main explanatory variable, Folded-Nominate, is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, and it is in the predicted theoretical direction with a negative coefficient of 7.81. This empirical result supports our hypothesis, and indicates that an increase of one unit in Folded-Nominate score decreases Diversity of PAC contributions by 7.81.

As our explanatory variable moves further away from moderation and toward greater scores – i.e., moving toward extreme voting patterns – the Diversity score decreases. When Folded-Nominate is set to its minimum value of 0.01, which is an indication of maximum moderation, Diversity score increases by approximately 1.22, while holding all continuous variables to their means and setting the dichotomous variable to 1. If we move Folded-Nominate

to its maximum value of 1.26, which indicates minimum moderation, the Diversity score decreases by approximately 8.55, while holding all continuous variables to their means and setting the dichotomous variable to 1. This illustration shows that as patterns of voting behavior become more moderate, the Diversity score increases. In other words, moderate members of Congress have a greater Diversity of PACs available to them. This result supports our hypothesis and theory. It is also a result that is in the Downsian tradition – i.e., that moderation can pay more than extremity whether it is in campaigns when political parties compete over the bulk of the electorate bunched in the middle of the ideological spectrum or in patterns of voting behavior in Congress.

The Corporate and Labor models act as robustness test for our H1. First, the models act as predicted by the previous literature, and indicate that our variables are properly defined. Second, we see that moderation does not influence corporate or labor donations. Percent unionized and ideology significantly impact both labor and corporate donations in the expected direction. Thus, we show that moderation affects the diversity of PAC donations. In other words, if members of Congress seek to diversify their pool of donors, they must moderate their voting behavior.

## Testing H2

To test our second hypothesis, that those with more diverse donations have larger aggregate total donations, we use a standard OLS regression. This methodological choice is appropriate given the data we use. We use the total contributions received by a candidate as our dependent variable and the diversity score we constructed in our test of H1 as our key independent variable. Table 3 reports those results.

**Table 3: OLS campaign donation totals**

	<u>Total Donations</u>	
Diversity	11986.62 (3147.0)	***
Freshman Dummy	403590.9 (95328.23)	***
Leader Dummy	686303.60 (208127.30)	***

**Table 3 (continued)**

Committee Chair	110613.40 (106931.90)	
District Ideology	-5044.12 (2488.35)	**
Electoral Security	-19698.41 (2252.38)	***
<u>Total Donations</u>		
Tenure	-687.94 (3291.64)	
Majority Party	32915.21 (50742.63)	
Folded Nomination	-180122.80 (135062.70)	
South	62765.30 (57044.80)	
Appropriations Member	18479.96 (57806.56)	
Spending Against	39.26 (17.50)	**
Constant	2,839,216 (190749.7)	***
N	850	
F	20.36	***
R <sup>2</sup>	.23	

Note: Standard Errors are in parentheses. \*\*\*p<.01, \*\*p<.05.

Our main explanatory variable, Diversity, is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, and it is in the predicted theoretical direction with a positive coefficient of 11986.62. This empirical result supports our hypothesis, and indicates that moving away from the mean of diversity by one unit in Diversity of PAC contributions (changing the mix only moderately) increases total donations by \$11,986.62.

This increase is after controlling for the most likely sources of donation increases. Our model controls for congressional position and finds statistically significant evidence that freshman status increase donations by \$403,590, and

Leadership positions \$686,303.60, both of which represent the total campaign spending of many members of congress. However, neither appropriations membership nor Committee Chairmanship are statically significant predictors of donations in our model. Further, our control for spending against a candidate indicates that each dollar spent against a candidate leads to 39.26 dollars in increased donations. We find negative effects for Electoral security and district ideology, which seems to indicate that democratic districts and more secure districts lead to fewer donations to candidates; not an unlikely result.

Given the range of Diversity from .58 to 101.4 the potential for increased donations is substantial. For example, a 1 standard deviation increase (4.39) in Diversity provides \$52,621.26 in increased donations. This illustration shows that as the diversity of PACS individual members to draw from increases, substantial campaign donations result. In other words, moderate members of Congress who have a greater Diversity of PACs available to them are financially better off than their less moderate colleagues who find themselves with a smaller pool from which to draw donations, and ultimately a smaller war chest to wage reelection. This result supports our hypothesis and theory.

### **Implications**

The implications of our results are apparent for two groups: members of congress, and PACs. Given our improved understanding of the of the donation-vote connection, the strategic implications for both sides of the relationship are significant.

We can identify three potential strategic implications for members of Congress given our findings: 1) Voting is connected to PAC donations; 2) for cash strapped members, a moderated voting position increases the pool from which resources – donations – could be drawn; and 3) that donations actually rise for moderated voting. When members move toward the mean position of the congressional body as a whole, having moderated their votes, they have the potential to increase both the number and amount of campaign donations. For example, Representative Jim Matheson, the now retiring, democratic member from Utah's second and then third district was a classic example of a moderated voting pattern tracing our pattern. Despite strong Republican challengers, Representative Matheson was consistently able to out raise and ultimately fend off his biennial opponents. He did so with a voting pattern that was near the center of the chamber and by drawing substantial donations from a variety of groups not just those typically associated with the Democratic Party.

The first implication is perhaps the most important and least groundbreaking of our study. Votes and donations are connected. Even after using the

more appropriate 2SLS model we find significant evidence that a relationship between votes and donations actually exists.

The second implication provides the most direct strategic suggestion for members of congress – that is, if the benefits of increasing the resource pool outweigh the potential costs, moderating vote positions has the potential to increase the diversity of donation sources that can be tapped. For the cash strapped member in a marginal district, this approach becomes even more attractive as a moderated voting record has the dual effect of increasing the donation pool and improving electability.

The last implication suggests that while in theory the first and second implications are potentially important, there are, in fact, members of Congress whose moderated voting record has led to a larger resource pool to tap for donations. Indeed those moderate vote records lead to a wider pool of PACs donating and that wider pool provides more money for the candidate to use.

The strategic implications of our findings are not limited to members of congress. The evidence that there may be a different causal direction suggests that those who give donations are also an important part of the relationship. Given our results, there are at least two implications for those who supply the donations: 1) Members of Congress have the incentive to act strategically; 2) members of Congress are the first movers.

The revelation that members of Congress are likely to act strategically is not much of a revelation, but that members move votes to attract donations is a different strategy than has been typically articulated. This sort of strategy provides the engaged interest group that understands the strategy of the member with an opportunity to help shape the incentives and ultimately the vote decision of that member.

Second, it transitions the interest group out of the role it is most comfortable with – the activist. Interest groups would be well advised to remember that despite the fact that the interest group is likely in existence before the member, and may well continue to exist after the member leaves Congress, the member is the first actor, and any interactive game begins with the decisions of the member and the resulting vote profile. Our data suggests that interest groups implicitly understand this reality and respond to votes rather than attempting to be the first actor inside congress. However, our data also indicates that those running for the first time receive considerably more donations and that likely represents an attempt by donators to ensure a friendlier first actor inside the congress.

The task of this research project was to explain patterns of PAC donations. The premise was twofold: 1) to find and develop alternative perspectives to analyze patterns of PAC contributions; and 2) to assess who gives

to whom and why. As demonstrated in previous studies, labor and corporate PACs favor Democratic and Republican elected officials respectively. However, if we stop here, we overlook those elected officials who have access to a wider variety of PAC contributions. This paper finds that moderate voting patterns in Congress – i.e., the 109<sup>th</sup> and 110<sup>th</sup> Congresses – can explain the diversity of PAC money available to these members. Further that diversity leads to greater total donations.

Our analysis which was conducted during a period just before the rise of the Tea-Party and the decision in Citizens United provides important insight into how the continued increase of money into the campaign finance system is likely to play out. It suggests that rather than monied interests simply buying the policy outcomes they most prefer is only one side of the story. Members of congress may already have strategically moved their voting patterns to increase total donations. With increased money and the removal of donation limitations we would expect Members of Congress to again respond to the incentives they face by acting strategically.

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## **From Black Kiss to Black Captain: Race, Gender, and a Half Century of *Star Trek***

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“He [Martin Luther King] said to me, ‘Think for a moment why Uhura was chosen to go on this mission where no man or woman has gone before – because she was the most qualified and was chosen on that basis alone.’ And he said ‘I am very proud of the dignity with which...you have created your character. You must stay.’ And so I had to stay.” – Nichelle Nichols<sup>1</sup>

“Today or a hundred years from now don't make a bit of difference – as far as they're concerned, we'll always be niggers.” – Cirroc Lofton as Jimmy/Jake Sisko<sup>2</sup>

In 1966 America witnessed an unusual milestone in civil rights history: a "negro" woman as a recurring cast member on a mainstream television program. Lieutenant Uhura was a smart, talented member of the crew of the USS Enterprise – and during the next three seasons she gave the first televised interracial kiss and demonstrated professional competence, again and again. Yet in 1993, when the *Star Trek* producers developed a series with an African-American commanding officer, the decision was greeted with a collective shrug. Three decades in, white America had become accustomed to the notion of talented African-Americans and black women operating on an equal basis with whites. Along the way, the franchise produced some of the most integrated mainstream television shows, continuing to cast African-American actors in non-stereotypical roles, from Levar Burton as chief engineer to Tim Russ as a Vulcan security chief, and topping it off with the casting of a woman captain – who was neither a stereotypical “boss bitch” nor sexpot ingénue. Nichols had helped pave the way for a new understanding of race and gender – at least in the public medium of broadcast television.

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<sup>1</sup> Nichelle Nichols interview, “Bonus Features,” *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*, Directed by William Shatner (1989; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> “Far Beyond the Stars,” *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, first broadcast February 11, 1998 in syndication, Directed by Avery Brooks and written by Ira Steven Behr and Hans Beimler.

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And yet *Star Trek* was also capable of reflecting a parallel story. That is the story about the frustrated African-Americans who had never escaped the grinding poverty and racism which had resulted in a seemingly permanent underclass, and the women who continued to feel forced into real-life stereotypical roles. Although the *Deep Space Nine* episode quoted above, which featured the only use of the “N word” in the history of *Star Trek*, was set in the 1950s, it spoke to the continuing frustrations of the 1990s, when it was first broadcast. Over the years, African-American actors played far more Klingons than humans. Whoopi Goldberg’s character reprised a Jim Crow stereotype, the wise mammy playing the master’s trusted confidante.<sup>1</sup> And the tendency to attribute over-the-top behaviors to various alien species – from the money-grubbing Ferengi to the bloodthirsty Cardassians – tended to speak to our society’s historical penchant to similarly stereotype human peoples. Kate Mulgrew’s Captain Janeway notwithstanding, woman actors in *Star Trek* were often chosen for their sex appeal (Jeri Ryan in particular), and only rarely were they seen to juggle the modern responsibilities of the working woman. In these ways, *Star Trek* demonstrated that as much as it had the potential to change society, so too was it reflective of continuing inequality.

*From Black Kiss to Black Captain* will tell the story of how *Star Trek* made civil rights history and reflected its successes and failures over time. This essay will both celebrate the advances made by the franchise and discuss the ways in which it has demonstrated how American society had fallen short of its goals.

The role of television in our society – how it reflects and effects human behavior – has been the subject of significant academic debate and concern. According to Erika Engstrom and Joseph Valenzano, “television programs are really messages...that communicate *something* about a culture.” Paddy Scannell, meanwhile, notes that “[television] is part of the taken for granted fabric of the world as a whole and speaks to the everyday life concerns of peoples situated in their own life world everywhere,” while Paul Monaco, in his *Understanding Society, Culture, and Television*, posits that “[m]uch of what goes on in society that becomes newsworthy can be presented as involving tensions between individuals, political parties, races, special interests, social classes, or nations.” When Pierre Bourdieu warned in 1998 that “real information, analysis, in-depth interviews, expert discussions, and serious documentaries lose out to pure entertainment and, in particular, to mindless talk show chatter between ‘approved’ and interchangeable speakers,” Jonathan Gray responded that

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<sup>1</sup> On the “mammy” trope, see for instance bell hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 1981).

“[t]elevision entertainment is not as all-encompassing as some critics and alarmists make it out to be – it has not colonized the world, much less our souls and brains – but it is pervasive, and a major entity both to be reckoned with and to be embraced and enjoyed.”<sup>2</sup> Ultimately the best justification for an analysis of the importance of race and gender in *Star Trek* comes from Tim Dant, who writes that

“[T]elevision is today the medium that mimetically reproduces the life that humans directly experience as actuality and as fiction. The...telling of history, the reporting of news and spectacles such as sports events are all mimetic forms that appear on television and give pleasure. Mimesis is not the same as a ‘copying’ or a ‘mirroring’ actual behavior; it is always a representation.”<sup>3</sup>

This topic is most assuredly *not* where “no one has gone before.” A number of scholarly books and articles have dealt with race and gender in *Star Trek*, but not both at the same time, and not in any detail since 2003. The most comprehensive of these either consider only the original series or the original series together with *The Next Generation*.

Most recent discussions of race in *Star Trek* cite Daniel Bernardi’s book *Star Trek and History: Racing Toward a White Future*. This book applied scholarship on whiteness studies to a critical analysis of the original series, *The Next Generation*, and the films featuring the original cast. Bernardi demonstrated how notions of racial egalitarianism in these incarnations of the series invariably came up short, over-sexualizing Nichelle Nichols’ Uhura and depicting aliens as savage and uncivilized when they failed to assimilate into the hegemonic, white, dominant Federation. An especially blatant case he cited was an early episode of *The Next Generation* in which Picard’s Enterprise visited a planet peopled by an imperialist’s fantasy of a sub-Saharan African tribe. Despite publication in 1998, the book did not consider *Deep Space Nine*, with its African-American Captain Sisco, played by Avery Brooks.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Erika Engstrom and Joseph M. Valenzano III, *Television, Religion, and Supernatural* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), p. 3; Paddy Scannell, *television and the Meaning of Live* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2014), p. xiii; Paul Monaco, *Understanding Society, Culture, and Television* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), p. 6; Pierre Bourdieu, Tr. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *On Television* (NY: The New Press, 1998), p. 3; Jonathan Gray, *Television Entertainment* (NY: Routledge, 2008), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Tim Dant, *Television and the Moral Imaginary: Society through the Small Screen* (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Leonard Bernardi, *Star Trek and History: Race-ing Toward a White Future*

Micheal Pounds' 1999 book, *Race in Space*, likewise covered only the first two series, also with in-depth analysis of selected episodes. Like Bernardi, Pounds found *The Next Generation* lacking in a true vision of an egalitarian future, but was kinder to the original series, noting in particular that “*Star Trek* focused approximately one in every three programs...on ethnicity (Terran and extraterrestrial) or race relations issues (many of which felt as if they were torn from journalism’s coverage of the civil rights struggle domestically and internationally).” This despite his finding that “[t]he series’ only character who is visibly a person of color, Uhura, develops no off-duty relationships with any of the ship’s crew.”<sup>5</sup>

The first scholarly discussion of gender in *Star Trek* occurred nearly two decades earlier than those publications, in a 1981 article by Edward Whetmore which analyzed the Season Three original series episode “Turnabout Intruder.” This episode depicted Captain Kirk (William Shatner) being forced to switch brains with old friend Dr. Janice Lester. The ship was now under control of a woman pretending to be Kirk, and the episode, as Whetmore detailed, was about the unsuitability of the female “temperament” for command situations.<sup>6</sup> Whetmore’s article was published thirteen years before the premiere of *Star Trek: Voyager*, which featured Kate Mulgrew as Captain Kathryn Janeway (and five years before the franchise’s first depiction of a human female captain: *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* opened with Madge Sinclair, an African-American woman, playing the captain of the USS *Saratoga*).<sup>7</sup>

Also pertinent is Susan Lentz’ 2003 article, “‘Where No Woman Has Gone Before:’ Feminist Perspectives on *Star Trek*.” While Lentz correctly depicted the women of the original series as mainly filling the “Gal Friday” roles so prevalent in the 1960s, with Uhura as “reminiscent perhaps of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century switchboard operator” and Nurse Chapel (Majel Barrett) filling a stereotypical woman’s role in medicine, she perceived an evolution in the depiction of women through *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine*, and *Voyager*. In *The Next Generation*, the women medical officers, Gates

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(New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998). The episode cited is “Code of Honor,” *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, first broadcast October 12, 1987 in syndication, Directed by Russ Mayberry and Les Landau and written by Katharyn Powers and Michael Baron.

<sup>5</sup> Micheal C. Pounds, *Race in Space* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1999), pp. 54, 137.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Whetmore, “A Female Captain’s Enterprise: The Implications of *Star Trek*’s ‘Turnabout Intruder,’” in Marleen S. Barr, *Future Females: A Critical Anthology* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, Directed by Leonard Nimoy (1986; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2003); Rick Berman, Jeri Taylor, *et al*, Producers, *Star Trek: Voyager*, originally aired 1995-2001 in syndication.

McFadden's Beverley Crusher and Diana Muldaur's Katherine Pulaski, were doctors, not nurses; the other major recurring female character, Marina Sirtis' Counselor Troi, was the equivalent of a trained psychologist (a position in our world usually requiring a terminal degree). These, however, are "nurturing" professions; the truly nontraditional female character, Denise Crosby's security chief Tasha Yar, was gone before the end of the first season. But the role of women evolved with the two later series covered by Lentz: in *Deep Space Nine*, both Nana Visitor's Major Kira Nerys and Terry Farrell's Jadzia Dax were strong, independent women, while Lentz found "Quark's mother Ishka as one of the most interesting" recurring female characters, for she refused to be bound by the harsh rules of the misogynist Ferengi society. Lentz turned last to *Voyager*, noting that "the major female characters of the series are scientists and engineers," likewise nontraditional pursuits. Although unmentioned by Lentz, the fact that Nurse Chapel of the original series returned as a doctor in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* – the character's only appearance in any of the films – still fits neatly into this "evolutionary" analysis.<sup>8</sup>

It is Lentz' analysis which most closely adheres to the current author's historical "ground rule" for this essay. As this is a work of history, we must treat the past on its own terms, and not expect those who lived in the past to have conformed to the societal norms and mores of the present. The historian should not hold historical television to a higher standard than that to which we would hold its contemporary society. In other words, since shows were often reflective of the racism of the culture in which they were produced, we should not focus on how their producers and writers failed to live up to later standards. Our task is to show how historical media *reflected* the society in which it was created; also, to identify the programming which did not, i.e. programs which pushed societal boundaries. As this relates to the history of the *Star Trek* franchise, the questions therefore should not be "was Gene Rodenberry a sexist" or "were African-Americans cast in roles commensurate with egalitarian expectations," but rather "did the show demonstrate a more (or less) egalitarian ethos than society at the time it was produced, and how (if at all) did that change?"

The original *Star Trek* was indeed ground-breaking in its casting. The decision to cast an African-American woman (Nichelle Nichols) and a Japanese-American man (George Takei) as recurring characters, indeed as officers on the

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<sup>8</sup> Susan A. Lentz, "'Where No Woman Has Gone Before': Feminist Perspectives on *Star Trek*" in Robert H. Chaires and Bradley Chilton, Eds., *Star Trek Visions of Law and Justice* (Dallas, TX: Adios Press, 2003), pp. 136-159 (quotations from pp. 144-149); *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, Directed by Robert Wise (1979; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2001); Rick Berman, Michael Piller, and Ira Steven Behr, Producers, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, originally aired 1993-1999 in syndication.

starship in positions of at least theoretical authority over characters played by white men, was unheard of at that time. In 1966, when the show first aired, positive depictions of African-Americans were few and far between. The blatantly racist *Amos 'n' Andy* was still in syndication despite nearly two decades of NAACP attempts to get it off the air, and a generation of television and film viewers had become accustomed to seeing African-American women in two stereotypical roles: that of the mammy – the nurturing African-American woman whose purpose was to raise white children and give sage advice to white adults – and the whore, who failed to control her sexual desires because of a supposed lack of civilization among African peoples. The 1950s and 1960s also marked the heyday of two screen entertainment genres: the Western and the World War II film. In both of these genres, Asians were presented as obstacles to inevitable white American supremacy. The Chinese immigrants whose virtual slavery built the railroads were almost universally depicted in Westerns as inscrutable, scheming, and dangerous. And the World War II film genre identified the Japanese as treacherous, single-minded, and terroristic. Fear of the Japanese translated into discrimination against Japanese Americans: George Takei, who played Sulu in the original series, was raised in an internment camp during World War II. And so it is remarkable that he and Nichols were cast in such important roles during this era. Nichols' character, Lieutenant Uhura, neither "mammy" nor whore, was sexy without the nudity and blatant sexuality so prevalent in the later "Blaxploitation" genre (this was, after all, network television). Hers was an empowering sexuality, and (perhaps in a conscious attempt to avoid stereotype) she was more in control of her sexual desires than the cast-member with whom she shared the first American televised interracial kiss: the swashbuckling Kirk, who seemed to have a love affair in nearly every episode.<sup>9</sup>

The original series was groundbreaking in its choice of characters as much as with its casting: the Enterprise crew included a Russian (Walter Koenig's Chekov) and a space alien (Leonard Nimoy's Mister Spock). The audience for *Star Trek*, baby-boomers raised during the height of the Cold War, had been trained to see Russians as the apotheosis of evil. At worst they represented communism, a threat to the "American Way of Life." At best they were dupes, sheep following Marxist shepherds. They were not to be trusted.

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<sup>9</sup> On race and gender in television roles during the 1950s and 1960s see, for instance, Laura J. Sweeney, [The Origins of the Star Trek Phenomenon: Gene Rodenberry, The Original Series, and Science Fiction Fandom in the 1960s](#) (San Marcos, California: Department of History, California State University San Marcos, 2012), pp. 49-51 and 65-71. On Takei's youth in an internment camp, see "George Takei," Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=George\\_Takei&diff=574111461&oldid=574111048](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=George_Takei&diff=574111461&oldid=574111048), accessed September 26, 2013.

And yet here – albeit as the lowest-ranking member of the bridge crew – was a Russian who evinced a lack of evil intent and demonstrated competence at his job. Space aliens were at least as scary to 1960s audiences as Russians, who as fellow humans at least shared their motivations and emotions; space aliens were variously depicted as invisible, as horrible monsters, or even as deceptively human in appearance, waiting to show their true nature and harm or enslave us. The fear of the space alien in human form is also connected to the fear of the Russian: Russians could learn English and blend in with white American society, with dangerous potential. And so the Chekov and Spock characters, despite being presented as overwhelmingly positive, were made somewhat more safe for the audience by clearly identifying their “otherness:” Chekov was given a thick Russian accent and Spock light green skin and pointed ears.

Rather than analyze one or two episodes for their racial overtones, it is fruitful to look at the depiction of a single character over the course of the series. As Nichols’ Uhura was the one character in the original series to break both race and gender boundaries, it is to her role in the series we now turn, beginning with the premiere episode, “The Man Trap,” in which she spoke Swahili. This was a positive depiction, and we can take it at face value that Swahili was being positively presented as the language of a civilized people. However, in “Charlie X,” there is a negative characterization. In a group recreation scene, Uhura sang while Spock played a stringed instrument. The space alien other and the African other provided entertainment for the white crew, most of whom were junior in rank to both Uhura and Spock. Likewise in “The Conscience of the King” Uhura again sang for the entertainment of others, this time playing the stringed instrument herself. While there is considerable value to – and pleasure in – sharing one’s talents with others, it is nonetheless noteworthy that Uhura and Spock were so characterized in these episodes. There is a long history in American entertainment of African-Americans being deemed “acceptable” through musical performance, and the producers of *Star Trek* clearly used these scenes to make Uhura more palatable to a white audience.<sup>10</sup>

In three episodes during the first season, “The Naked Time,” “Balance of Terror,” and “Court Martial,” Uhura temporarily took over navigation. This is a positive depiction, considering her gender as well as her race. The navigation station was typically held by Lieutenant Sulu, a male Japanese-American. Taking

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<sup>10</sup> “The Man Trap,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast September 8, 1966 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by George Clayton Johnson; “Charlie X,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast September 15, 1966 by NBC, Directed by Lawrence Dobkin and written by D.C. Fontana; “The Conscience of the King,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast December 8, 1966 by NBC, Directed by Gerd Oswald and written by Barry Trivers.

over the controls of the ship, even under supervision, was nontraditional. While the Japanese were not stereotyped as poor navigators (they had, after all, carried out the 1941 air attack at Pearl Harbor, hundreds of miles from their own ships), African-Americans were not expected to fill such posts on naval vessels. Later in “The Naked Time,” when a delusional Sulu held the bridge crew at bay with a sword, it was cool-headed Uhura who bravely challenged him, ultimately distracting him long enough for Kirk to take him down. Overall, these moments demonstrated the versatility of the character: she was not your typical telephone switchboard operator. And if Uhura could handle navigation, and keep a cool head in a tense standoff, perhaps she could handle tactical, or even command? (That said, Uhura was never shown in command of a starship, not even temporarily, in any *Star Trek* episode or film.)<sup>11</sup>

Similarly to her attempted tackle of the delusional Sulu in “The Naked Time,” Uhura again demonstrated command capability in “Space Seed.” In this episode, an intruder named Khan temporarily took control of the ship. While in control, Khan ordered Uhura to turn on a viewing screen so that the crew could watch Kirk, in another room, writhing in agony. Uhura stoutly refused. Arguably, of course, she did this out of loyalty to Kirk, and so was only doing her job. But the task of turning on a viewing screen is minor and fell squarely within the scope of her usual duties; to have complied would have been unlikely to result in a reprimand once the ship had been restored to its normal chain of command. She was therefore exercising critical rather than merely functional faculties: she was thinking for herself, acting correctly under duress; a positive depiction.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the apogee of demonstrations of Uhura’s versatility during the first season occurred in “The Galileo Seven.” In this episode, Spock was away with a landing party and Uhura appeared to have taken over the science position – clearly the most important position after the command chair, given that it was usually held by the first officer and required far more than technical expertise. Indeed, it was she who identified the earthlike planet in the center of the anomaly into which Spock’s team had disappeared.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “The Naked Time,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast September 29, 1966 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by John D.F. Black; “Balance of Terror,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast December 15, 1966 by NBC, Directed by Vincent McEveety and written by Paul Schneider; and “Court Martial,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast February 2, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by Don M. Mankiewicz.

<sup>12</sup> “Space Seed,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast February 16, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by Gene L. Coon and Carey Wilber.

<sup>13</sup> “The Galileo Seven,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast January 5, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Robert Gist and written by Oliver Crawford and S. Bar-David.

While Uhura's versatility was repeatedly apparent during the first season, what was far less apparent, at least in the actions and words of other characters, was her facility for communications, her stated specialty. Time and again, when Uhura couldn't do something in communications, usually because of technical problems, Spock would immediately go to her station and attempt to solve the problem himself. Sometimes he was successful and sometimes not. While this presented Spock as having advanced technical proficiency, it reflected poorly on the opinion Spock held for Uhura's abilities. But if she wasn't highly proficient at communications, why had she been assigned to the bridge? Had these episodes been filmed in the 1990s, one might have assumed that the writers were taking a dig at affirmative action, repeatedly attempting to show that the African-American character was out of her league and had only gotten her "unearned" job because of her race or gender. But affirmative action did not exist as a coherent policy during the filming of the original series. One possible answer to this conundrum is that while everyone on board was depicted as technically proficient, Kirk, Spock, and DeForest Kelley's Doctor McCoy were the true experts.

The advent of the second season of the original series appears to have been the opportunity for a significant re-thinking of the Uhura character, possibly because Nichelle Nichols had considered leaving the show. Another reason for the re-thinking might have had to do with the elimination of another recurring character. The departure of Grace Lee Whitney's Yeoman Rand, who had often appeared on the bridge and in landing parties and had been depicted as a potential object of the captain's affections, dropped the number of recurring female cast members from three to two. Uhura more than Nurse Chapel filled the space formerly occupied by Rand. One example of this is in the use of Uhura in landing parties: whereas she had done this only once in the first season, during Season Two Uhura participated in three landing parties ("Mirror, Mirror," "I, Mudd," and "The Gamesters of Triskelion"). Rand's departure also cleared the way for the development of a romantic interest between Uhura and Kirk, as shall be discussed below.<sup>14</sup>

Uhura also had clearly gained the confidence of the captain and his first officer, in a reversal of the pattern from Season One. In "Who Mourns for Adonais?," as Uhura again demonstrated facility with the "nuts and bolts" of her

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<sup>14</sup> "Mirror, Mirror," *Star Trek*, first broadcast October 6, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by Jerome Bixby; "I, Mudd," *Star Trek*, first broadcast November 3, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by Stephen Kandel and David Gerrold; and "The Gamesters of Triskelion," *Star Trek*, first broadcast January 5, 1968 by NBC, Directed by Gene Nelson and written by Margaret Armen.

job, crawling behind a panel to re-engineer the communications station, she doubted her ability to successfully complete her task. But Spock expressed confidence in her: “I can think of no one better equipped to handle it, Miss Uhura. Please proceed.” She did, and succeeded; her re-establishment of communications between the ship and the surface saved the landing party.<sup>15</sup> In “Mirror, Mirror,” in an alternate universe wherein the crew of the Enterprise was devious and bloodthirsty, Kirk asked Uhura to go to the bridge to ascertain the ship’s mission. When she expressed anxiety, Kirk said “Uhura, you’re the only one who can do it.” And along with the confidence of her supervisors, she had gained the self-confidence necessary to handle physical confrontations: in the penultimate scene of the same episode, Uhura disarmed the mirror-Kirk’s lover, a successful reprise of her unsuccessful Season One attempt to disarm the deranged, rapier-wielding Sulu.

Again and again in this second season viewers were presented with a tougher, more independent, more central Uhura. In “Friday’s Child,” Uhura participated in a senior-level briefing. In “The Gamesters of Triskelion,” when crew members were forced to be gladiators, Uhura fought admirably, and the “master thrall” commented that she was equal in spirit to the captain. At the end of “Bread and Circuses,” after the crew had liberated a planet from a dictatorial former Starfleet captain, it was Uhura – not Kirk, Spock, or McCoy – who added a critical piece to the puzzle by identifying the planet’s religion. Finally, in “A Private Little War,” Uhura, Chekhov, and Engineer Scott (James Doohan) supplied historical and anthropological ideas to Kirk in the absence of Spock.<sup>16</sup>

There were also two episodes in this season, “The Trouble with Tribbles” and “The Changeling,” in which Uhura gave orders over the intercom. These were in the nature of the “now hear this” style of orders, where the speaker is not so much giving orders as relaying them from a superior officer, but it is nonetheless telling that the writers were feeling more freedom to put an African-American woman even in this position (usually Shatner did these voice-overs, beginning with “This is the captain speaking”). In “The Changeling,” she gave specific orders through the ship’s intercom to an individual crewman: “Mr. Scott’s engineers are working on [the warp power indicators] now. Report to him when your indicators are registering properly.” The crewman at first appeared to

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<sup>15</sup> “Who Mourns for Adonais?,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast September 22, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by Gilbert Ralston and Gene L. Coon.

<sup>16</sup> “Friday’s Child,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast December 1, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Joseph Pevney and written by D.C. Fontana; “Bread and Circuses,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast March 15, 1968 by NBC, Directed by Ralph Senensky and written by Gene Rodenberry and Gene L. Coon; “A Private Little War,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast February 2, 1968 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by Gene Rodenberry.

be white, but was later referred to as “Mr. Singh,” and therefore of south-central Asian origin; he was played by Hawaiian actor Blaisdel Makee. At no point in the original series did Uhura give or deliver an order to a white person.<sup>17</sup>

Another moment of some import in the portrayal of Uhura came later in the same episode. After suffering brain trauma, Uhura was placed in an infantile position, being taught to read again by Nurse Chapel. But the writers turned this into a positive depiction of Uhura’s capabilities. Chapel, when pointing out to Doctor McCoy that Uhura was now at a first grade reading level, stated that “She seems to have an aptitude for mathematics,” a nontraditional pursuit for women. Uhura did not give up or appear frustrated with learning, defying the stereotype attributed to African-American children by opponents of school integration; by the end of the episode McCoy reported to the captain “I thought you might like to know that Lieutenant Uhura is back to college level; she can be back on the job within a week.” These scenes go further than any other in the series to demonstrate that Uhura held her job “because she was the most qualified and had been chosen on that basis alone,” a quotation Nichols would later attribute to Martin Luther King.<sup>18</sup>

In the third season of the original series, the depiction of Uhura was not dramatically different from that of the second season, but certain moments are worth deconstruction. In “Spock’s Brain,” informing Kirk of a transmission from a planet, Uhura demonstrated that her communications expertise was theoretical as well as technical, offering various theories of the cause for an unexplained transmission. “Wink of an Eye” featured a recorded distress signal received as if it were current, making communications a plot point. Kirk, Spock, and Uhura discussed the matter but it was Uhura who put it all together.<sup>19</sup>

But perhaps the most ground-breaking depiction of Uhura during Season Three came in “Day of the Dove,” when Uhura was allowed to express anger for the first time, actually throwing a device to the floor in frustration with her inability to complete a necessary communication. A greater propensity to violence is a false stereotype associated with African-Americans, and the producers had heretofore not allowed Uhura such frustration in an apparent attempt to show that she was not stereotypical, a “credit to her race,” safe. That

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<sup>17</sup> “The Trouble with Tribbles,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast December 29, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Joseph Pevney and written by David Gerrold; “The Changeling,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast September 29, 1967 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by John Meredyth Lucas.

<sup>18</sup> Nichelle Nichols interview.

<sup>19</sup> “Spock’s Brain,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast September 20, 1968 by NBC, Directed by Marc Daniels and written by Lee Cronin; “Wink of an Eye,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast November 29, 1968 by NBC, Directed by Jud Taylor and written by Arthur Heinemann.

they did finally allow her a moment of anger in this late episode is testimony to the confidence they and producer Gene Roddenberry felt by this point in the relationship between Uhura and the audience. In other words, she had demonstrated that she was competent, so she was now allowed to be human.<sup>20</sup>

The episode “That Which Survives” contained two very interesting moments from the standpoint of race. After the bridge was shaken, Spock replied to Uhura’s “what happened?” query with his typical literalism: “The occipital area of my head seems to have impacted with the arm of the chair.” It was clear that she was asking what happened to the ship rather than what happened to Spock personally. She smiled knowingly, as she was by now quite used to Spock. While her response was not haughty, there was nevertheless a bit of condescension, as with a mother to a child: “No, Mister Spock, I meant ‘what happened to us.’” Moments later, when discussing the “chances of the captain and the others being alive,” Uhura’s facial expression as Spock explained that “we are not engaged in gambling” clearly demonstrated impatience with his emotionless clinicality. She almost smirked as she replied “Yes, Mister Spock.” Part of this was subordination to a superior officer, but there was a bit of the classic sublimation to whites: after centuries of slavery and Jim Crow, African-Americans had learned that talking back could lead to dangerous repercussions. Uhura knew just how far she could take her impatience and condescension.<sup>21</sup>

While these moments were neither inherently negative nor positive depictions of Uhura as an African-American woman on American television in the late 1960s, what they indicated was a willingness to acknowledge the sensibilities of the African-American audience, something largely unheard of in mainstream popular entertainment at that time. As with the expression of anger depicted in “Day of the Dove,” most whites would not pick up on these subtle cues, but most African-American viewers could easily discern them. We cannot be certain to what degree these cues were specifically written into the script and to what degree they were the expression of the actress and missed or ignored by the editors and censors, but perhaps it is this, in the end, which was most remarkable about *Star Trek* by its third and final season: that it was appealing to a multicultural and diverse audience as much as it was employing a multicultural and diverse cast.

No discussion of Uhura’s path-breaking role would be complete without an analysis of the celebrated kiss scene in “Plato’s Stepchildren.” In this third-

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<sup>20</sup> “Day of the Dove,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast November 1, 1968 by NBC, Directed by Marvin Chomsky and written by Jerome Bixby.

<sup>21</sup> “That Which Survives,” *Star Trek*, first broadcast January 24, 1969 by NBC, Directed by Herb Wallerstein and written by John Meredyth Lucas.

season episode, Kirk kissed Uhura, albeit under the influence of telekinesis. Although footage of actual lip contact was edited out and the camera shot cut to the back of Uhura's head, the kiss was a plot point, the viewer was made to believe that it had occurred, and the actors actually did kiss. This interracial kiss resulted in the refusal of several NBC affiliates in the South to air the episode, and it has gone down in history as the first televised interracial kiss.<sup>22</sup>

A deeper analysis of the scene and its antecedents reveals that this kiss may have been more than simply the result of telekinesis. The kiss was clearly in the works as early as the second season, when, following the departure of Yeoman Rand, Kirk and Uhura began to demonstrate a deepening affection for one another. In "Mirror, Mirror," Kirk comforted Uhura in a very touching, physically intimate manner. He softly took her shoulders in his hands, facing her, looked deeply into her eyes, and said "Uhura, you're the only one who can do it. I'll be right there." This was written as the actual Kirk and the actual Uhura, and they were not in the grip of any outside influence. There was clearly affection between the two but it was not clearly platonic: the writers, director, and actors appeared to be making a serious attempt to push the boundaries of what was acceptable on broadcast television, a necessary prelude to the kiss scene. Later, in the final scene of "The Tholian Web," as Kirk recounted being trapped in an empty dimension, he nodded at Uhura as he said to Spock and McCoy "I must say I prefer a crowded universe much better," indicating an affection (or at least sexual appreciation) for her. She smiled back. At some level this was merely sexism; Kirk liked his women compliant, and Uhura, like African-American women throughout history, was in a position requiring compliance. But there was more to this. In the context of the "Mirror, Mirror" scene before and the "Plato's Stepchildren" scene later, this moment in "The Tholian Web" appeared to be the expression of a shared secret rather than simply the leer of a rake. Uhura's smile evinced confidence, not compliance.<sup>23</sup>

With this background it is clear that the intimacy between Kirk and Uhura in the kiss scene was not fully dependent on mind control. The reality was somewhere between a race relations milestone and a television contrivance. Kirk had a demonstrated affection for Uhura, and found her attractive; he had not acted on this, presumably because he felt that an affair with a crew member

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<sup>22</sup> "Making History: The First Interracial Kiss on TV Happens...on Star Trek." Makers Blog, [http://www.makers.com/blog/making-history-first-interracial-kiss-tv-happens-star-trek?icid=maing-grid7|main5|dl2|sec1\\_lnk2%26pLid%3D283870](http://www.makers.com/blog/making-history-first-interracial-kiss-tv-happens-star-trek?icid=maing-grid7|main5|dl2|sec1_lnk2%26pLid%3D283870), accessed September 20, 2013. "Plato's Stepchildren," *Star Trek*, first broadcast November 22, 1968 by NBC, Directed by David Alexander and written by Meyer Dolinsky.

<sup>23</sup> "The Tholian Web," *Star Trek*, originally broadcast November 15, 1968 by NBC, Directed by Herb Wallerstein and written by Judy Burns and Chet Richards.

would interfere with his ability to command the Enterprise. But now we find that his feelings were reciprocated. Uhura and Kirk were not in control of their actions but they controlled their speech. Uhura said “I’m thinking of all the times on the Enterprise when I was scared to death and I would see you so busy at your command, and I would hear your voice from all parts of the ship and my fears would fade.” Kirk may not have been her lover but he was her romantic savior and love interest. Indeed, Kirk seemed almost to welcome the kiss. His anger was over the loss of self control, not being made to kiss this beautiful woman for whom he clearly cared, and not platonically.

Nichelle Nichols reprised her role as Uhura in six feature films. In *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, it is noteworthy that Uhura’s hairdo was presented as an Afro rather than straightened, reflecting the tastes and standards of the era. The film was produced during the 1970s, the height of the Black Pride movement. But Uhura’s was not a role of importance in this film, and as usual, despite the increased diversity of the Enterprise crew (evident in a briefing scene), command roles were still reserved for white men (Shatner’s Kirk, of course, and the younger Captain Will Decker, played by Stephen Collins).<sup>24</sup>

During the 1980s, the decade which saw production of four of the six original-cast *Star Trek* films, the United States was in the throes of a conservative backlash against the achievements of the Civil Rights Era, and the depiction of Uhura in the films was representative of those social and political changes. The early gains of the Civil Rights Era had taken place in an era of governmental largesse, and were in any event focused on creating a “level playing field” for African-Americans: declaring overt employment discrimination illegal, establishing measures to ensure voting rights, and withholding government funds from segregated school districts. Later in the 1960s and into the 1970s, as the federal government became focused on actual jobs programs, affirmative action, and cross-district busing to integrate schools, the Vietnam War cut short the promise of substantial funding for the War on Poverty and a declining economy subsequently increased competition for jobs, leading to a white, primarily working-class, backlash against the gains of the Civil Rights Era. These changes resulted in the victory within the Republican Party of conservatives over moderates and the rise of Ronald Reagan to the presidency (after launching his campaign in Philadelphia, Mississippi, the site of racist killings in 1964). A desire to appeal to working-class whites also resulted in the rise of moderates in the Democratic Party including Bill Clinton, whose

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<sup>24</sup> *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

presidency saw a rollback of social programs seen to benefit African-Americans after conservative Republicans retook Congress in 1994.<sup>25</sup>

In *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, Uhura was present for only a few scenes at the start of the film and one at its conclusion. The 1984 film was however noteworthy for our study in that it contained the only depiction of Uhura giving a direct order to a white male officer. Taking a job as transporter chief on Earth so that Kirk, McCoy, Engineer Scott (James Doohan), and Chekhov could illegally board the Enterprise, she ordered a young white ensign into a closet. But the age of the ensign was critical: this scene followed a familiar trope in the depiction of African-American women, that of the mammy. Uhura may have been employed by the conspiracy, but she was not one of the white male conspirators. African-American women have traditionally been employed by white families in child-rearing, and the ensign was a stand-in for a child in Uhura's care.<sup>26</sup>

The most negative stereotypical depiction of Uhura occurred in *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*. In the second act she performed a sexy, tribal dance to entice an enemy group into a trap, relegating a professional bridge officer to the position of primitive sex object. Later she and Sulu – not coincidentally the bridge crew's nonwhites – were the first crew members to succumb to the persuasive powers of alien intruder Sybok, because nonwhites are traditionally depicted as being weak-willed. Under Sybok's influence Uhura was again sexualized: she made an advance on Mister Scott, claiming that Sybok “has simply put us in touch with feelings that we've always been afraid to express” (despite the fact that there had never been any indication in the television shows or prior films that she had romantic feelings for anyone other than Kirk). Meanwhile McCoy, likewise “touched” by Sybok, remained loyal to the captain. Whites, especially elite whites, were depicted as having full command of their own faculties.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> For more on the post-Civil Rights Era backlash and the rightward drift in American national politics, see for instance Mary Frances Berry, *And Justice for All: The United States Commission on Civil Rights and the Continuing Struggle for Freedom in America* (NY: Knopf, 2009); Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (NY: The New Press, 2010); David Hamilton Golland, *Constructing Affirmative Action: The Struggle for Equal Employment Opportunity* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011); and Dennis Deslippe, *Protesting Affirmative Action: The Struggle for Equality after the Civil Rights Revolution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, Directed by Leonard Nimoy (1984; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2002).

<sup>27</sup> *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*.

If the third *Star Trek* film was unconsciously racist and the fifth demonstrably so, *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* moved in exactly the opposite direction, returning Uhura to her former position of professionalism and respect. In her first scene in the film, she expressed surprise at being called into a meeting by stating “I’m supposed to be chairing a seminar at the Academy.” Later in the film, after Vulcan Lt. Valeris (Kim Cattrall) fired a phaser in the galley as a demonstration, senior officers and a security team arrived to investigate. Uhura was first on the scene. “Did somebody fire a phaser?” she asked, clearly exercising her authority. At the end of the same scene, Uhura said to Spock, “You understand, we have lost all contact with the Captain and Dr. McCoy.” She, Spock, and Chekhov were the only remaining bridge officers in the galley (and Chekhov had no lines after he dismissed the security team). Uhura behaved as one who had Spock’s confidence as a trusted advisor, and he confirmed this status by discussing strategy with her: “Yes, at the moment they’re surrounded by a magnetic shield. However, if I know the Captain, by this time he is deep into planning his escape.” This indicated that Uhura, unlike Valeris, knew that Spock had placed a tracking device on Kirk; presumably it was Uhura who had been monitoring Kirk’s whereabouts. But what made this scene particularly remarkable is that prior to this last exchange, Spock had sent Valeris to the bridge to “inform Starfleet Command our warp drive is inoperative.” This task should have been Uhura’s, as the communications officer; further, as the message was a fiction, the human Uhura would presumably have been more comfortable lying to Starfleet Command than the Vulcan Valeris, who needed to be convinced by Spock that it was not a lie, but “an error.” While it would later be revealed that Valeris was one of the conspirators, Spock did not know that yet. He was clearly choosing to reserve the high-level discussion in this scene for Uhura, or at least counting her as part of a command/tactical triumvirate including himself and Chekhov (echoing the typical triumvirate of Kirk, Spock, and McCoy.) While the plan was Spock’s, Uhura and Chekhov were depicted as trusted associates.<sup>28</sup>

In a still later scene in the same film Uhura gave an order to the entire ship over the intercom system (as she had on two occasions during the television series): “This is the bridge. We are still in Klingon space. Deck Nine, remain at battle stations.” She was the communications officer, and this could be taken as more of an announcement than an order. But such announcements typically began with “This is the Captain speaking.” With two captains present on board at the time, (Kirk and Spock), and with Chekhov the head of security, others could

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<sup>28</sup> *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, Directed by Nicholas Meyer (1991; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2004).

have just as easily made this announcement. Clearly Uhura was giving an order here, albeit on behalf of one of the Captains. Since Kirk had so recently returned from a Klingon prison camp, perhaps he and Spock were debriefing in sick bay or his quarters – leaving Uhura in charge of the bridge! She did, after all, outrank Chekhov; Sulu was on another ship, and Scott was examining schematics over coffee in the Captain’s mess when Uhura made the announcement. This – along with Sulu’s promotion to Captain – may have been indicative of the end of the Roddenberry era. Producer Gene Roddenberry was prone to stereotype ethnic characters and women. With his health failing (he died with *Star Trek VI* in production), Roddenberry was much less in control of this film than he had been in the past.<sup>29</sup>

The evident desire among the creators of *Star Trek* to break racial and social stereotypes in their casting and characterizations continued with the successor series *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine*, *Voyager*, and *Enterprise*. The *Next Generation* cast included African-American Actor Levar Burton, who portrayed a handicapped character: Lieutenant Commander Geordi La Forge was blind, but because of the latest technology in the conceit of the show, could “see” through a specially-designed visor which covered his eyes and fed optical signals directly into his brain. Brent Spiner, a white actor, portrayed Lieutenant Commander Data, an android. In *Deep Space Nine*, the Sudanese-British actor Alexander Siddig played Dr. Julian Bashir, an Arab. In *Voyager*, African-American actor Tim Russ played Vulcan Lieutenant Commander Tuvok, while Latina Roxanne Dawson was cast as the half-human, half Klingon B’Ellana Torres. Like Uhura, Torres was complicated and sexy but not usually sexualized; indeed her eventual marriage to the latest swashbuckler in the Kirk mold, Lt. Tom Paris (Robert Duncan McNeill), was depicted as a partnership of equals. The recurring characters of *Enterprise* included an African-American man, an Asian-American woman, and a female space alien, but returned to the standard format of a white male commander.<sup>30</sup>

Like the nontraditional casting and characterization choices of the original series, these later characters were portrayed as competent but not perfect, safe but not docile. But a new theme had taken hold with the advent of *The Next Generation*, one which continued through the later series: absolute professionalism. Whereas Uhura, Sulu, Scott, and Chekhov had been presented as

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<sup>29</sup> On Roddenberry’s background in race, gender, and casting, see Sweeney, [Origins of the Star Trek Phenomenon](#), pp.17-29 and 65-71.

<sup>30</sup> Gene Roddenberry, Rick Berman, *et al*, Producers, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, originally aired 1987-1994 in syndication; Rick Berman, *et al*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*; Rick Berman, *Star Trek: Voyager*; and Rick Berman, *et al*, Producers, *Star Trek: Enterprise*, originally aired 2001-2005 by UPN.

“normal” – albeit in a manner wherein their racial, ethnic, or special differences were occasionally celebrated – the “nontraditional” characters of these later series functioned as part of hyper-professional, expert teams. Each was capable of a unique contribution and possessed superior general skills. Uhura and Chekov were proficient; La Forge, Bashir, and Torres were geniuses.<sup>31</sup> The lesson was that in the pure meritocracy of the future, when race and ethnicity become irrelevant, the capabilities and achievements of the best among us will set an ever-increasing standard.

The most groundbreaking aspect of *Deep Space Nine*, in an era when African-American actors and characters were now considered the norm (to the point that their absence in the recurring cast of popular television shows like *Seinfeld* and *Friends* raised eyebrows<sup>32</sup>), was the selection of an African-American man to play the captain. The most important role in any Star Trek series, this third incarnation saw Avery Brooks filling shoes previously been worn by William Shatner and Patrick Stewart. It helped that Brooks, like Stewart, was an erudite veteran of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Further, the producers decided to play it safe, starting his character, Benjamin Sisko, at the rank of commander rather than captain (although he was the ranking officer), and in a sense emasculating him by not giving him a starship.<sup>33</sup> These slights nevertheless pale in comparison to the fact that the Sisko family – Benjamin, his son Jake, his father Joseph, his late wife Jennifer (portrayed using the “flashback” device as well as the “alternate universe” device), and his love interest and eventual second wife Kasidy Yates – were indeed all-American (while remaining true to their African-American heritage). As with the Huxtable family in the contemporary *The Cosby Show*, this was an attempt to push the boundaries of popular television, presenting a cast dominated by African-Americans to a mainstream audience. Like *The Cosby Show*, *Deep Space Nine*

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<sup>31</sup> Pounds, *Race in Space*, p. 83.

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, Jillian Sandel, “I’ll Be There for You: Friends and the Fantasy of Alternative Families,” *American Studies* Vol. 39, No. 2, TV and American Culture (Summer, 1998), pp. 141-55.

<sup>33</sup> Another poke at racial sensitivity, despite being first broadcast in the era of “political correctness,” was that this job, commander of Starfleet personnel on an alien space station, was presumably considered undesirable by the white officers eligible for the position, so it fell to a Black man. When the space station was finally assigned a ship much later in the series, Sisko placed it under the command of Klingon Lieutenant Commander Worf, played by African-American actor Michael Dorn. Worf was hyper-masculine, and as an African-American man could have been seen as very threatening to racial norms, but the actor’s race was sublimated into his character’s identity as a space alien. Worf’s interracial love affair on the series – with white Terry Farrell’s character Jadzia Dax – was likewise rendered racially unthreatening by the fact that neither of the characters were human, making it “interspecies” rather than interracial.

presented an upper-middle-class family with professional parents in stark contrast to the silliness of *The Jeffersons* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, the standard depiction of disadvantaged African-Americans found in *Good Times* and *What's Happening!!*, and the more typical working-class experience depicted in *Family Matters*. The Siskos were thus rendered fully palatable to the white segment of the audience. Also like the Huxtables, the Siskos were mainstream yet intensely proud of their heritage. Whereas the grandfathers of the Huxtable family unashamedly recounted their experiences – good and bad – as members of the segregated army during World War II, grandfather Joseph Sisko (Brock Peters) maintained a thriving creole restaurant in New Orleans with an interracial clientele. Whereas *The Cosby Show* featured regular references to the lessons and successes of the Civil Rights Era, including a depiction of the Huxtables watching a clip of Martin Luther King's speech at the 1963 March on Washington and at least one timely reference to the importance of defeating *apartheid* in South Africa, the Siskos (through a Benjamin dream sequence) revisited African-American urban life in the 1950s. The lesson from both shows was that in the post-Civil Rights era, the American Dream of integration was no longer represented by a melting pot, wherein ethnic differences add to a mixture but lose their integrity, but rather to a salad bowl, wherein ethnic *and racial* differences each add something to the mix but maintain their distinctive characteristics. A tomato next to lettuce will always remain a tomato, no matter how you toss it; shredded cheese does not melt in a salad. Again like the Huxtables, The Siskos of *Deep Space Nine* were not simply African-American versions of white people, but African-American people who combined success in the white-dominated culture with integrity for their own sub-culture.<sup>34</sup>

Arguably, the white segment of the *Star Trek* franchise audience was already open to the notion of an African-American captain. Unlike their forebears of the postwar era, for whom Lieutenant Uhura was novel, the audience for *Deep Space Nine* had grown up during the post-Civil Rights era. But racial stereotypes had been easier to defeat, it would seem, than gender

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<sup>34</sup> *The Cosby Show* was Nielsen's top-rated American television program from 1985 to 1990. "The Cosby Show," Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The\\_Cosby\\_Show&diff=571857235&oldid=571856801](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Cosby_Show&diff=571857235&oldid=571856801), accessed September 13, 2013. Marcy Carsey, *et al*, Producers, *The Cosby Show*, originally aired 1984-1992 by NBC; Bernie West, *et al*, Producers, *The Jeffersons*, originally aired 1975-1985 by CBS; Quincy Jones, *et al*, Producers, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, originally aired 1990-1996 by NBC; Norman Lear, *et al*, Producers, *Good Times*, originally aired 1974-1979 by CBS; Bernie Orenstein, *et al*, Producers, *What's Happening!!*, originally aired 1976-1979 by ABC; and Thomas L. Miller and Robert L. Boyett, Producers, *Family Matters*, originally aired 1989-1997 by ABC.

stereotypes, as many “trekkers” found the casting of a *woman* captain difficult to stomach.<sup>35</sup>

In 1994, with *The Next Generation* drawing to a close and *Deep Space Nine* in its second season, Rick Berman (who had succeeded creator Gene Rodenberry as executive producer of the franchise) cast actress Kate Mulgrew as Captain Kathryn Janeway, a no-nonsense female scientist in command of a starship which, in the first episode of the series, was flung to a distant quadrant of the galaxy without communication with earth or any hope of returning to “Federation Space” in the crew’s lifetime. In some sense, therefore, Janeway was more than a captain; she was a head of state, engaging with completely unknown species, appointing an ambassador, and guiding her “nation” through the unknown.<sup>36</sup>

Traditional casting in mainstream public television has divided women into two tropes: the sexpot ingénue, which Rodenberry had toyed with but ultimately rejected for Uhura; and the “boss bitch.” Thirty-nine years old in 1994, Mulgrew no longer qualified as an ingénue; indeed, for the character she portrayed, such a trope would have been ridiculous. And so the trope to be avoided for the sake of equality was that of the “boss bitch.” This sexist and derogatory characterization encompasses the notion that wherever a woman is employed, her “proper” role in relation to men is that of subservience. The *Star Trek* successor series had been built on the principle that humankind would eventually institute full equality of the sexes, just as it would institute full equality of the races – indeed that these had been accomplished by the 23<sup>rd</sup> century. With this background, therefore, the casting of a woman captain would be as natural as the casting of an African-American captain. Following the format of absolute professionalism in the successor series she would be, like the members of her crew, capable of a unique contribution to team excellence while possessing superior general skills; further, as the captain, she would be, like Sisko and Picard, qualified and experienced in the command of such advanced

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<sup>35</sup> See for instance “Fan Mutiny: With Janeway, or Against?” *Star Trek: Voyager* Forums, May-July, 2006, <http://www.tv.com/shows/star-trek-voyager/forums/fan-mutiny-with-janeway-or-against-378-248740/>, accessed September 15, 2013; K. Tempest Bradford, “Standing Up for Sisco and Janeway,” August 21, 2009, <http://tempest.fluidartist.com/standing-up-for-sisko-and-janeway/>, accessed September 15, 2013; Sara Eileen Hames, “Janeway Doesn’t Deserve This Shit,” *Tor.Com Blogs*, August 2012, <http://www.tor.com/blogs/2012/08/janeway-doesnt-deserve-this-shit>, accessed September 15, 2013; and “TrekkieFeminist,” August 6, 2013, <http://trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com/post/57490055633/900-done-with-people-hating-on-captain-janeway>, accessed September 15, 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Greenberger, *Star Trek: The Complete Unauthorized History* (NY: Voyageur Press, 2012).

people. And so while some fans of the series would denigrate Janeway as a typical “boss bitch,” in fact she was no different than her male predecessors – at least when it came to her professional life.

Janeway’s personal life was another matter entirely. Here the writers and the actress worked to distinguish Janeway as a woman, inherently different from Sisko and Picard, and even more so from Kirk. A confirmed bachelor, Kirk was hypersexual and promiscuous, both on and off duty, behavior that was expected from a white leading man in the postwar era. Picard, by contrast, was controlled, with continual hints that he might be interested in a love affair with Doctor Crusher (possibly to avoid the implication of homosexuality). Ben Sisko was a widower who was eventually allowed to fall in love and marry (albeit in a circumscribed fashion to avoid evincing the hyper-promiscuity with which the African-American community has been unfairly labeled). With all three prior male captains, love interests – whether or not included in the plotline – were not seen as hindrances to their ability to fulfill their duties. With Janeway, however, the writers had the opportunity to explore the issues facing the modern working woman of the 1990s, trying to balance work life with home life, exploring female sexual desire in a post-feminist environment but still dealing with the double-standard which inveighed against female promiscuity. Like Sisko, Janeway began the series with an absent longtime lover: whereas Sisko’s wife had died, Janeway’s fiancée was in another quadrant of the galaxy; he thought she had died and she was unable to tell him otherwise. As with Sisko, Janeway was eventually allowed to love again; various plot devices resulted in the discovery that her fiancée had moved on, leaving her free to pursue romance (but as with Sisko in a circumscribed manner to avoid suggestions of promiscuity). In one particularly interesting plotline, she entertained the possibility of a love affair with Commander Chakotay, her Native American first officer, played by Robert Beltran. While this development was never fully realized, it was considered with two plot devices. One had the two stranded permanently on an uninhabited planet, while the other imagined a future wherein Janeway had retired and Chakotay had assumed control of the starship. Notably, in neither of these circumstances was Janeway in direct command of her lover, as such a construction would suggest that wives could overthrow their husbands as head of the nuclear family.

We should not take this glorification of *Star Trek*’s ability to cast above sexism too far. Janeway may not have been a “boss bitch,” but the *Voyager* cast did include a sexpot ingénue, costumed in what passed for nudity in 1990s primetime television. Former Miss America runner-up Jeri Ryan portrayed Seven-of-Nine, a human who had been assimilated by the collectivist Borg species. Freed by the crew of *Voyager*, Seven was given a distinctive skintight

outfit leaving little to the imagination. She was cast, therefore, more for her voluptuous body than any other characteristic.<sup>37</sup>

For a series usually so forward-thinking and equality-conscious, the overt sexualization of Seven-of-Nine was not the only area in which the producers and writers failed. The successor series also played on ethnic stereotypes in the characterization of certain species. The money-grubbing Ferengi bore all too many of the traits anti-Semites associated with Jews, notably a lack of ethics, a worship of profit, the legal subordination of women, and an uncontrollable sexual attraction to gentiles (or non-Ferengi, in the conceit of the show). By contrast, the Cardassian species were characterized much as Americans were taught to see Germans during the World Wars: militaristic, despotic, genocidal. The continued presence of these species alleviated somewhat the totality of these stereotypes through increased interaction and “profile” episodes; this was especially true as more mixed-species characters were introduced. But their continued presence was a double-edged sword as their stereotypical behavior remained the dominant feature. Further, the very fact that the mixed-species Klingons, Ferengi, Cardassians, and Vulcans tempered their stereotypical “nature” belied the implication that mixed-race people in our own time are less stereotypically “African-American,” “Jewish,” “German,” etc., precisely because of the presence of white, gentile, or “American” heritage.<sup>38</sup>

In race, too, casting in the successor series proved problematic. After the Soviet-seeming Klingons were transformed for the films and successor series into animalistic, ritualistic thugs, with angry-looking ridges on their skulls and a primitive attachment to violence, extras of the species were most often cast with African-American actors, thereby “othering” African-Americans with one hand even as the other hand was breaking new ground with the recurring casts. While this might have been done to meet new affirmative action guidelines, the positive presence of African-Americans in the featured and recurring casts obviated that need, going far beyond mere tokenism.<sup>39</sup> And having avoided the whore trope with the complicated sexuality of Lieutenant Uhura (except in the fifth film, as

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<sup>37</sup> “Jeri Ryan,” Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jeri\\_Ryan&diff=569477318&oldid=569477047](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jeri_Ryan&diff=569477318&oldid=569477047), accessed September 27, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Pounds, *Race in Space*, p. 186.

<sup>39</sup> This is presumably why the producers of the *Lord of the Rings* films cast African-Americans as the animalistic Orcs; those films had no African-American featured cast members. See for instance Shyam Bhatia, “The Lord of the Rings Rooted in Racism: Academic,” *Rediff India Abroad*, January 8, 2003, <http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/jan/08lord.htm>, accessed September 15, 2013; and David Ibata, “‘Lord’ of Racism: Critics View Trilogy as Discriminatory,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 12, 2003, [http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/chi-030112\\_epringsrace.0,4574891.story](http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/chi-030112_epringsrace.0,4574891.story), accessed September 15, 2013.

noted above), during the reactionary 1980s the producers perpetuated the mammy trope with Whoopi Goldberg's recurring character on *The Next Generation*, the bartender Guinan, who reprised a familiar role in American popular culture: the intuitive servant, female (and therefore non-threatening), preferring the company of the white master/commander (and those at or near his station) to those with whom she shares skin tone. In *Star Trek: First Contact*, the second *Star Trek* film to feature the cast of *The Next Generation*, Goldberg's Guinan was replaced by Alfre Woodard's Lily, an African-American scientist from the 2060s (and assistant to the white male Dr. Zephram Cochrane). As merely the assistant in a future set 100 years after the broadcast of the original series and filmed in the 1990s, Lily showed that African-Americans and women were still relegated to second-class status. Lily acted as Picard's alter ego, and it was she who successfully advised him to give up his vendetta against the Borg much as African-American women have historically served as sounding boards for white men in television (e.g. *Gimme a Break!*) and film (e.g. *Gone With the Wind*).<sup>40</sup>

The later *Star Trek* films featuring the cast of *The Next Generation* continued this unfortunate pattern of backsliding in their depiction of race. A particularly egregious example of this was found in *Star Trek: Insurrection*, which depicted an idyllic, peaceful, seemingly pre-industrial civilization consisting of only white people. Their villainous cousins, however, were multiracial, implying that the species achieved perfection by removing non-whites. Less than a decade after the genocide in the former Yugoslavia, the supposedly enlightened *Star Trek* found itself celebrating ethnic cleansing!<sup>41</sup>

*Star Trek: Nemesis*, meanwhile, was a story about race, despite the ostensible theme of "brotherhood" (major guest characters included Data's prototype and Picard's clone). The film depicted the crew of *The Next Generation* intervening in a race war in the Romulan Empire: the primitive, enslaved Remans represented African-Americans, while the sophisticated, governing Romulans represented hegemonic whites. Guided by a white outsider, the Picard clone Shinzon (African-Americans are often stereotyped as incapable of leadership on their own behalf<sup>42</sup>), the Remans had risen up against the Romulans

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<sup>40</sup> *Star Trek: First Contact*, Directed by Jonathan Frakes (1996; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2005); Hal Cooper, *et al*, Producers, *Gimme a Break!*, originally aired 1981-1987 by NBC; *Gone With the Wind*, Directed by Victor Fleming (Beverly Hills, CA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, 1939).

<sup>41</sup> *Star Trek: Insurrection*, Directed by Jonathan Frakes (1998; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> One example of this is the popular (and largely incorrect) depiction of Abraham Lincoln as "the Great Emancipator." His Proclamation carried no legal force but encouraged

and wrested control of the empire, enacting what is for many whites a recurrent fear: that African-Americans, held in subservience for so long, will overthrow white dominance. Further, Shinzon's ship, described by Picard as a "predator" and by Data as a "weapon," was called the Scimitar. A scimitar is the curved sword of the medieval Moslem, evoking the racial fear Europeans once held for the Arabian invasion, fears then being reinforced by modern acts of terrorism. The defeat of Shinzon would be the result of his betrayal by the Romulan "whites." True to form, previously loyal whites betrayed the Reman "Blacks." During the American Civil War the slave-owners had sought help from the British in their war to keep their slaves. Here the Federation, with a captain portrayed by an English actor, represented the British, and unlike the actual British during the American Civil War, the Federation did come to the aid of the Romulan masters, causing the revolt to fail and white hegemony, in the form of Romulan control of their empire and slaves, to resume. In that sense, this film was a remake of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, replete with racial stereotypes, only this time the South won. To top it all off, the film began with what amounted to a segregated wedding: Guinan and La Forge were seated at one table together with Worf alone at the next, relegating the three African-Americans of the recurring cast, Whoopi Goldberg, Levar Burton, and Michael Dorn, to the "colored section."<sup>43</sup>

This slide into negative stereotypical depictions on the part of *Star Trek* has sadly not been reversed by the two latest films, which recast the crew of the original series with actors from the millennial generation. Zoe Saldana's Uhura is very different from Nichelle Nichols' demure portrayal of the character, and more in line with an era expecting female characters to resemble martial arts experts like Angelina Jolie's Lara Croft. She too is sexualized, wearing a skintight outfit and being depicted as involved sexually with Zachary Quinto's Spock, but without nudity, making her compare more favorably to Dawson's Torres than Ryan's Seven-of-Nine. But the latest of these films is even more exploitative of women, especially nonwhite women: while Uhura continues to be depicted as tough, modern, and professional, the viewer is confronted in an early scene with Chris Pine's Captain Kirk waking with two lovers, Asian in appearance, soon revealed as space alien. This is degrading but sadly typical of recent media, as the scene is a remake of the opening scene of the final episode

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African-Americans themselves to flee the plantations of the South, some of whom later enlisted in the Union Army. See for instance James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> *Star Trek: Nemesis*, Directed by Stuart Baird (2002; Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2005).

of Season 14 of the television series *ER*. Their tails, however, make it especially degrading, as they imply a lack of civilization in Kirk's lovers. And while the scene is evidently included to buttress young Kirk's reputation as a "bad boy," the fact that he is consistently rewarded for his bad behavior indicates that the writers see such sexist, racist degradation as deserving of a wink and a nod rather than a real reprimand.<sup>44</sup>

As with any collaborative enterprise, *Star Trek* has both benefited and suffered from a diversity of opinions and backgrounds among its writers, producers, and directors. On race and gender, the result has been schizophrenic. As often as the franchise took two steps forward in its depiction of women, African-Americans, other nonwhites, and even space aliens, it took two steps back. The depiction of Nichelle Nichols' Uhura in particular saw several revisions over time, as society changed. At first she was a bit player, the token African-American, relegated largely to "hailing frequencies open, sir," the product of a sense during the 1960s that mainstream television programs should include more African-Americans in non-traditional roles. In the second season she was re-made into a key member of the bridge crew. In *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* she was a mammy, and in *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* she was a weak-minded, uncivilized sex object. But in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* she was again a key member of the crew, in a position of trust and responsibility. Still, the mammy trope was even then being revisited by the successor series *The Next Generation*, first with Whoopi Goldberg and later Alfre Woodard. The racial stereotypes depicted in the franchise have grown more, not less explicit, despite the positive depiction of the Siscos in *Deep Space Nine*. Likewise the sexualization of women has worsened in *Star Trek*, as seen in the fetishized sex aliens of *Star Trek Into Darkness*, despite the depiction of *Voyager's* Captain Janeway as a strong, intelligent, professional woman. Like American society, *Star Trek* was full of promise on the role of African-Americans and women during the 1960s and demonstrated the gains made by the 1990s, but also reflected the racist backlash of the 1980s and has illustrated the continued sexual subservience of women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As much as we may enjoy *Star Trek*, therefore, we must conclude that the franchise overall has not been groundbreaking in its depiction of race and gender (and indeed has never considered alternate categories of sexuality despite countless opportunities).

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<sup>44</sup> *Star Trek*, Directed by J.J. Abrams (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2009); *Star Trek Into Darkness*, Directed by J.J. Abrams (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2013); *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, Directed by Simon West (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2001); and "The Chicago Way," *ER*, first broadcast May 15, 2008 by NBC, Directed by Christopher Chulack and written by David Zabel and Lisa Zwerling.

While *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, *Deep Space Nine*, and *Voyager* were groundbreaking within *Star Trek*, and broke certain molds in the depiction of people capable of command, they barely exceeded societal expectations for the 1990s, were certainly not revolutionary for the era, and therefore did not make up for the repeated and continuing demeaning depictions of nonwhites and women in the franchise.

In 1998 and 1999, Daniel Bernardi and Micheal Pounds published books dealing with these topics but covering only the original series and *The Next Generation*. They were forced to conclude that *Star Trek* had not lived up to its promise of a racially and sexually egalitarian society. They did not consider *Deep Space Nine*, *Voyager*, or the later films, and they did not look comprehensively at a single African-American female character. Having now done so we must unfortunately conclude that they were right.