JOURNAL OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Volume 5, Issue 1
2020

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Gender Self-Presentations in the 2020 U.S. Elections

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ABSTRACT

Ironically, the 2016 election of Donald Trump catalyzed progressive social change in the U.S.. A record number of women and people of color ran for the 2020 presidential nomination of the Democratic party. This election also saw the first openly gay candidate for president. Drawing on qualitative website and Twitter bio data, this article examines the gender self-presentations of twelve Democratic party primary presidential candidates--the eight men and four women who were in the primary debates in October 2019. We develop a new typology of gender self-presentation by classifying different approaches on a spectrum, ranging from gender traditional on one side to feminist on the other (with gender neutral and gender nontraditional in between). We find that most candidates simultaneously blend different types of gender self-presentations in their campaigns. For both men and women in the 2020 election, traditional self-presentations are the least common and gender neutral self-presentations are the most common. For women, nontraditional self-presentations de-emphasize the traditional role of motherhood, use stereotypically masculine language, or emphasize nontraditional gender career experiences. In contrast, for the men, the nontraditional self-presentations were more narrow and stayed solely in the domain of fatherhood. Finally, feminist self-presentations emphasize women's social and political interests as women, either through the use of pronouns in their Twitter bios or through a discussion of feminist policy issues in websites. While both male and female candidates emphasize feminist issues, the men often do so by drawing on traditionally masculine language or highlight gender stereotypes as male protectors over vulnerable women. Together, these findings suggest that women's identities as candidates draw on a wider, more multifaceted, range of gender self-presentations. This nuanced typology can be applied to future research on gender and elections.

Keywords: gender, politics, elections, self-presentation, women candidates

INTRODUCTION

In the shadow of the 2016 election of Donald Trump, the 2018 midterm elections were distinct in the ways that women candidates represented gender in their campaigns. Campaign advertisements featured candidates pregnant or breastfeeding, highlighted their experiences with sexual assault or harassment, emphasized their military credentials, and showed images of them protesting Trump's inauguration (Aronson, Oldham, and Lucas, Under Review; Axios, 2018). The U.S. is in the midst of a gender revolution that is transforming women's power and identities (Aronson and Fleming, Under Review). Paradoxically, the defeat of Hillary Clinton by Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election sparked dramatic social change in women's power. We have witnessed an explosion in women's movement activism, the rise of the #MeToo movement, and a dramatic increase in the number of women running for office (Aronson and Fleming, Under Review). The 2020 election has witnessed a record number of women and people of color vying for the presidential nomination of the Democratic party, yet

little scholarly work has been conducted about how the candidates are constructing their gender self-presentations. In the 2018 election, Democratic women, especially those from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, were elected in record numbers (Conroy, 2018).

Research has not yet systematically examined gender self-presentations of the 2020 Democratic party primary presidential candidates. Through a qualitative analysis, this article examines the ways in which these candidates present their gender identities on social media and websites. In doing so, we develop a new theoretical framework for understanding the spectrum of gender self-presentations utilized by both male and female candidates. We argue that this spectrum includes gender traditional, neutral, nontraditional, and feminist self-presentations. Our development of a new way of understanding the gender self-presentations of political candidates is important for several reasons. We are entering a new era of women in U.S. politics, with women and people of color running in unprecedented numbers and stepping outside of traditional gender stereotypes in their campaigns (See also Aronson, Oldham, and Lucas, Under Review). Previous research has only considered this issue in narrow gender dichotomous terms; it has not yet developed a complex understanding of candidates' gender self-presentations. In addition, the gendered content of self-presentations on social media and websites are undertheorized. In this paper, we develop a spectrum of self-presentations that can be applied to campaigns at any level or candidates of any gender. In a political context in which gender matters significantly, our new theoretical framework can help advance future research by encouraging more nuanced understandings of how politics is gendered.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender and Elections

While the public is generally supportive of women running for the highest political office in the U.S., not everyone supports this notion. A Gallup poll in 2011 asked, "Do you think the voters of this country are ready to elect a woman president, or don't you think so?" and only 78 agreed (Roper Center for Public Opinion Research 2017). Streb et al. (2008) asked about views toward a female president alongside other political issues (including "gasoline prices . . . going up" and "large corporations polluting the environment") and found that slightly more than a quarter of both men and women were "angry or upset" about the possibility of a female president.

Women candidates at all levels face a no-win situation: many voters view them negatively if they violate gender stereotypes or if they are portrayed as too nurturing and sensitive (Bauer, 2015; Dittmar, 2015; Dwyer et al., 2009). As a result of the masculinity assumed in politics, women candidates and their strategists carefully weigh whether to draw on, minimize, or challenge gender stereotypes in their campaigns (Dittmar, 2015). In fact, they often aim to strike a "balance" between "feminine and masculine traits and issues" when it comes to both self-presentation and policy stances (Dittmar, 2015: 81). Previous studies find that women candidates running for executive offices typically adopt a "masculine" campaign style that emphasizes "toughness" and experience in male domains like defense, while minimizing attention to women's issues (Carroll, 2009; Dittmar, 2015). At the same time, in order to conform to norms surrounding femininity, women candidates pay close attention to their tone (i.e. "to be tough but not mean") and appearance (i.e. dress professionally to "neutralize gender"; Dittmar (2015: 89, 105). They may even have an advantage when they conform to gender norms that emphasize "feminine" traits such as honesty and authenticity, or highlight their "outsider" status (Dittmar, 2015). Some studies suggest that women candidates appeal to women voters when they emphasize stereotypical women's issues, such as education and child care (Herrnson et al., 2003). In fact, women candidates' websites are more likely to be "congruent" than "incongruent" with gender stereotypes (Schneider, 2013).

Prior studies typically emphasize a gender dichotomy, where women candidates either draw on or reject gender stereotypes. This dichotomous way of understanding gender in electoral politics is simplistic and fails to capture the full range of possible self-presentations. "Feminine stereotypes" emphasize women's traits as "warm, nurturing, and sensitive" or "communal" (Bauer, 2015: 691). In contrast, "masculine" traits are "aggressive," "agentic" (Bauer 2015) or focus on "leadership" (Schneider, 2013: 265). Although Dittmar's (2015) research goes the furthest toward trying to understand the complexity of self-presentation, this body of research as a whole does not examine the complexity of the ways that women candidates present themselves. Yet as West and Zimmerman (1987: 125) theorized in their classic essay, "doing gender" can be complex, and involves a "routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interaction." Like in person, gender is "performed" and represents an "accomplishment" (West and Zimmerman, 1987) in an online self-presentation; it is more complicated than a simple dichotomous expression of male or female stereotypes. Understanding how candidates "do gender" in complicated ways is important when examining their responses to the unique social rules that predominate in the political sphere. That is, politics involves enacting specific self-presentation norms. Although some self-presentations are expected of candidates regardless of gender, we examine how "doing gender" and "doing politics" intersects in complex ways.

In particular, men who run against women typically alter their tactics (Dittmar, 2015). As Dittmar (2015: 130) put it, "mixed-gender contests force men to confront gender dynamics in ways they would not with male opponents." Men typically exercise care when critiquing a female opponent, so that they do not appear overly aggressive (Dittmar, 2015). They also may adjust their campaigns, including policy-based appeals and imagery, in order to appeal to women voters (Dittmar, 2015). While male candidates benefit from images of their families because it "softens" their self-presentation, women candidates use images of their families to "evoke empathy and provide alternative credentials for political leadership" (Dittmar, 2015: 111). In fact, Fridkin and Kenney (2015) found that 96 percent of male candidates mentioned family on their Senatorial webpages, while only 77 percent of female candidates did so.

Previous research focuses on stereotypical self-presentations or those that run against stereotypes (e.g. Dittmar, 2015; Herrnson et al., 2003; Lawrence et al., 2016; McGregor et al., 2017; Meeks, 2017), and examined campaigns prior to the contemporary period. Self-presentations in politics are in the midst of transformation, as we have entered a new era of women in politics (Aronson and Fleming, Under Review). Thus, the full range of gender self-presentations in campaigns remains untheorized. The present paper pushes this analysis forward by introducing a new spectrum to understand candidates' self-presentation on social media and websites. Given the unprecedented dynamics of recent U.S. elections and the large number of women candidates running for the Democratic party nomination for president in 2020, our approach fills a much needed gap in the scholarship. It is important that researchers develop a more complex understanding of gender self-presentations in the current political context, as we are witnessing a new era of women in U.S. politics.

Gender and Social Media

Candidates have limited control over how gender is covered by the media (Meeks, 2017). In a recent study, Wagner (2019) found that the more powerful position a female candidate is seeking, the more likely she will be covered unfairly. Trimble et. al (2013) found that journalists and pundits emphasize women candidates' personal lives and bodies more often than those of male candidates. Of course, candidates also communicate directly with voters during debates and on the campaign trail, yet these formats are often mediated by media coverage. For example, as a candidate for the 2020 U.S. Democratic nomination for President, Elizabeth Warren's presence was often "erased" by the media (Ellefson, 2020). Social media and candidate websites, however, have created a shift to candidate self-presentation; women candidates can communicate directly with voters without the gender bias of the media (Fountaine, 2017; McDonnel, 2020; McGregor, 2018; Meeks, 2017; Schneider, 2013). Women candidates can utilize social media to overcome the obstacles they often face to visibility (Fountaine, 2017). Twitter, in particular, has become a key platform for political presentation (Jungherr, 2016) and has altered traditional campaigning styles in ways that benefit marginalized groups through an emphasis on likability (Fountaine, 2017). Jungherr (2016) found that that the gender of candidates does not influence Twitter usage. Wagner et al. (2017) found that women, as disadvantaged candidates, are more likely to use Twitter in their campaigns. Evans and Clark (2016) found that women candidates are more likely than men to attack their opponents, tweet about policy issues in general, and women's issues in particular.

Previous research has found that social media personalization also differs for men and women candidates. "Personalization" is multifaceted, but generally refers to candidates' self-disclosure to voters (Meeks, 2017). It emphasizes "personal narrative over abstract policy discussions" (Lawrence et al., 2016: 193). Men candidates tend to personalize more than women (McGregor et al., 2017) and benefit from the personalization strategy more than women (Meeks, 2017). Studies have found that personalization is "the classic double bind" for women, as stereotypical gender self-presentations can be risky and makes a candidate appear "incompetent" (Meeks, 2017: 7; Lawrence et al., 2016; McGregor, 2018). This research emphasizes comparisons between men and women candidates, and contrasts men's more "agentic" (leadership and confident) traits with women's more "communal" (caring and collaboration) ones (Lawrence et al., 2016; McGregor, 2018; Meeks, 2017). It finds that men's self-disclosure is viewed more positively than women's (Meeks, 2017), suggesting that they have a broader range of self-presentation options. However, when races are competitive, women tend to utilize personalization, especially emphasizing their caregiving roles (McGregor et al., 2017). "Strategic stereotype theory" suggests that candidates draw on gender stereotypes that provide them benefits (Fridkin and Kenney, 2015). For women, this could involving strategically drawing on stereotypes that women are caring (Fridkin and Kenney, 2015). In an examination of the 2016 election, McDonnell (2020) found that both Trump and Clinton both conformed to, and defied, gender stereotypes in the Twitter posts. For example, Clinton Tweets expressed "a more masculine linguistic style, but also a greater number of cooperative words, which are stereotypically associated with feminine speech" (McDonnell, 2020: 71). Although this body of research emphasizes that women candidates can counteract gender stereotypes (e.g. Lawrence et al., 2016; Meeks, 2017), it tends to focus on gender dichotomies and does not examine a full range of gender self-presentations. An exception is Lawrence and her collaborators (2016: 203, 197),

whose study of three women candidates found a "hybridized" and "diverse strategic deployment of femininity," some of which was traditional and some of which challenged traditional gender roles.

Within Twitter, users are given exactly 160 characters for a personal "Twitter bio." While there are many different approaches, writing a series of self-labels has become a common convention. Hillary Clinton was one of the first and notable women candidates to develop such a Twitter bio, using the following labels:'Wife, mom, lawyer, women & kids advocate, FLOAR, FLOTUS, US Senator, SecState, author, dog owner, hair icon, pantsuit aficionado, glass ceiling cracker, TBD…" (Ungerleider, 2013). In her 2016 presidential run, she kept most of her Twitter bio, but added "2016 presidential candidate." Research on membership categorization devices has taken different approaches to the conversational use of gendered membership labels like these. Some scholars have argued that gendered labels such as "woman" should not be understood to be inherently gendered (Kitzinger, 2007; Schegloff, 2007). That is, terms like "woman" may be used with other goals in mind, without reference to gender itself (Kitzinger, 2007; Schegloff, 2007). Although conversation analysis has questioned the idea that gendered terms always refer to gender, political candidates' self-presentations are likely to differ from this perspective. In countries with very few women in political office, candidates have great difficulty escaping gendered evaluations on the part of voters and the media (Dittmar, 2015). For example, Clinton received some criticism about the prominent placement of "wife;" feminist activist Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche expressed frustration that the first woman to run for president of the United States labeled herself "wife" before all else (Adebayo, 2018). As a result, candidates' self-presentations differ from those studied in conversational analysis, as they rely on media consultants and campaign managers to carefully craft their self-presentations in order to achieve their political aims (Dittmar, 2015). In fact, the controversy over Clinton's Twitter bio demonstrates the weight and importance that a Twitter bio can carry for women candidates.

In this paper, we focus on the 2020 Democratic primary candidates for U.S. president. The Democratic party platform prioritizes fighting inequality and social justice issues (Democrats.com, 2020), while the Republican platform is rooted in individual rights and creating a small government (GOP.com, 2020). The Democratic party platform defines itself as "the party of inclusion" and its website catalogs its support of diverse racial and ethnic groups, particularly minority groups, as well as women, people with disabilities, union members, and the LGBTQ community (Democrats.com, 2020). Because of this emphasis on diversity and social justice, Democratic candidates may have flexibility in their gender self-presentations. The 2018 midterm election suggests that the 2016 presidential election may have galvanized women to vote for Democratic candidates. However, considered historically, the gender gap in presidential elections began in 1980, as women have been more likely than men to vote Democratic (Arnold, 2020). According to Cascio et al. (2020), women's shift toward the Democratic party has been driven by party positions, as the Republican party moved closer towards "traditional" gender roles since the 1980s, particularly its stance on abortion.

In contrast to prior work that emphasizes gender dichotomies, we develop a more complex and nuanced typology of self-presentation that can be applied to future elections. In the analysis that follows, we ask the following research questions: how do Democratic presidential candidates in 2020 present gender in their campaign websites and Twitter bios? To what extent do these self-presentations fit into gender traditional, neutral, nontraditional and feminist perspectives? How do these self-presentations vary by the gender of the candidate? Finally, what are the implications of gender differences in self-presentation?

METHODS

We conducted a qualitative study of owned digital platforms, specifically campaign websites and Twitter bios, for the 2020 Democratic primary candidates who qualified for the Democratic party debate in October 2019. We examined candidate accounts that were live in September and October 2019. Although other aspects of the websites reveal how the candidates represent particular issues in their campaigns, we focus our analysis on the website bios, which contain the most information about self-presentation. We also examine candidates' personal Twitter bios, as these have become their primary campaign account. This approach reflects social change in the use of Twitter for political candidates. During Obama's 2008 campaign for president, he tweeted from the account @BarackObama. During Obama's presidency, the official presidential Twitter handle (@POTUS) was created and utilized. In contrast, Donald Trump pioneered the use of a personal Twitter account (@realDonaldTrump) while in political office. The Democratic presidential candidates have all chosen to use their personal Twitter accounts for the 2020 campaign.

For the Twitter bios, we used each label as our unit of analysis. For the candidate websites, we used each sentence as our unit of analysis. Each data source was coded by two researchers and disagreements in coding were discussed and resolved. Due to the short nature of the Twitter bios, we created a simple yes-no classification to evaluate whether or not each candidate used labels that fit into each style of self-presentation on the spectrum. For the websites, which contain more text, we were able to complete a more comprehensive analysis. We counted all

Table 1. Summary of Spectrum of Gender Self-Presentations

	Gender Traditional	Gender Neutral	Gender Nontraditional	Feminist
Women	Stereotypical feminine gender roles, such as caretakers and family-oriented	Gender blind perspectives, accomplishments or policy positions	Stereotypical masculine gender roles, language or traits, such as swearing, toughness and "fighters"	Focus on women's social and political interests as women, women's political issues, an awareness of gender inequalities and patriarchy
Men	Stereotypical masculine gender roles, language or traits, such as toughness and "fighters"	Gender Blind perspectives, accomplishments or policy positions	Stereotypical feminine gender roles, such as caretakers and family-oriented	Focus on women's social and political interests as women, women's political issues, an awareness of gender inequalities and patriarchy

Table 2. Women's Self-Presentations on Twitter

Candidate's Name	Gender Traditional	Gender Neutral	Gender Nontraditional	Feminist
Tulsi Gabbard	N	Y	Y	N
Kamala Harris	Y	Y	Y	Y
Amy Klobuchar	N	Y	N	N
Elizabeth Warren	Y	Y	Y	Y
Percent (n)	50% (2)	100% (4)	75% (3)	50% (2)

* N = No (not present); Y = Yes (present)

of the self-presentations on each website, keeping in mind that each sentence could contain multiple self-presentations on the spectrum. However, only 32 out of 811 sentences (3.9 percent) were classified in multiple ways. As we will explain, the categories on the spectrum are not mutually exclusive and most candidates drew on multiple self-presentation approaches.

The analysis of the data started inductively with open coding for major themes. That is, these modes of self-presentation emerged from the candidate websites and Twitter bios. We used qualitative data analysis methods to enter codes, highlight passages of text, and examine co-occurrences of codes. The coding scheme and analytical framework was continually refined throughout the analytic process (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This strategy sought to compare quotes from multiple websites on a given theme. As we developed codes inductively, we then analyzed our existing codes in light of previous theories of gender and feminist consciousness and identity. As we progressed to a more fine-grained coding system, we developed a typology or spectrum of self-presentation that drew on previous theories. We then went back to the data to further refine our typology and codes. This iterative process ensured that our spectrum was built inductively from the data, while also being compared to existing theory.

In their classic work, Ferree and Hess (1994: 131) define gender consciousness as "politicized consciousness or identification of women as a group with common interests and a collective identity as women." Research that builds on this work posits that women can be classified on a continuum of consciousness and identification, ranging from traditional on one side to feminist on the other (Aronson, 2017). Starting with these two ends of a continuum, traditional and feminist, we developed a typology that represented multiple points on a gender self-presentation spectrum. In particular, we classified self-presentations according to a full spectrum of possible approaches: traditional, neutral, nontraditional, or feminist (See **Table 1**). In the analysis that follows, we begin by examining each of the gender self-presentations, comparing women and men. Our spectrum advances understandings of gender and elections at a pivotal time in politics. Rather than simple dichotomies that reify gender binaries, our analysis of the candidates suggests a more complex, nuanced theoretical framework.

FINDINGS

Traditional Self-Presentations

On one side of the spectrum, we find traditional self-presentations (See **Table 1**). For women, this approach emphasizes their roles within the domestic sphere or family care, such as highlighting their status as wives and mothers. For men, traditional masculine identity is presented in terms of strength, independence, leadership, courage and traditional masculine workplace roles, such as the military. Considering Twitter bios, half of the women (n=2) and one-quarter of the men (n=2) used gender traditional self-presentations (See **Tables 2** and **4**). Considering website bios, just 3.2 percent (n=9; see **Table 3**) of women's and 7.2 percent (n=38; see **Table 5**) of men's sentences featured self-presentations that were traditional. Together, these findings suggest that while traditional self-presentations are used, their prevalence is minimal. Thus, these candidates seek to de-emphasize traditional gender roles in favor of other approaches.

Table 3. Women's Self-Presentations on Websites

Candidate's Name	Traditional	Neutral	Nontraditional	Feminist	Total Self-Presentations for each Candidate (n)
Tulsi Gabbard	0% (0)	72.9% (70)	21.9% (21)	5.2% (5)	100% (96)
Kamala Harris	.08% (1)	46.3% (57)	39% (48)	13.8% (17)	100% (123)
Amy Klobuchar	3.7% (1)	81.5% (22)	7.4% (2)	7.4% (2)	100% (27)
Elizabeth Warren	17.9% (7)	69.2% (27)	12.8% (5)	0% (0)	100% (39)
Total Percent (n)	3.2% (9)	61.8% (176)	26.7% (76)	8.4% (24)	100% (285)

Table 4. Men's Self-Presentations on Twitter

Candidate's Name	Gender Traditional	Gender Neutral	Gender Nontraditional	Feminist
Joe Biden	N	Y	Y	N
Cory Booker	N	Y	N	Y
Pete Buttigieg	Y	Y	Y	Y
Julian Castro	N	Y	Y	Y
Beto O'Rourke	N	Y	N	N
Bernie Sanders	N	Y	N	N
Tom Steyer	N	Y	Y	Y
Andrew Yang	Y	Y	N	N
Percent (n)	25% (2)	100% (8)	50% (4)	50% (4)

* N = No (not present); Y = Yes (present)

Table 5. Men's Self-Presentations on Websites

Candidate's Name	Traditional	Neutral	Nontraditional	Feminist	Total Self-Presentations for each Candidate (n)
Joe Biden	2.1% (2)	72.6% (69)	17.9% (17)	7.4% (7)	100% (95)
Cory Booker	31% (13)	59.5% (25)	0% (0)	9.5% (4)	100% (42)
Pete Buttigieg	9.8% (5)	80.4% (41)	2% (1)	7.8% (4)	100% (51)
Julian Castro	1.8% (1)	60.7% (34)	0% (0)	37.5% (21)	100% (56)
Beto O'Rourke	6.6% (10)	79.5% (120)	9.3% (14)	4.6% (7)	100% (151)
Bernie Sanders	10% (5)	68% (34)	10% (5)	12% (6)	100% (50)
Tom Steyer	5.7% (2)	80% (28)	5.7% (2)	8.6% (3)	100% (35)
Andrew Yang	0% (0)	52.2% (24)	8.7% (4)	39.1% (18)	100% (46)
Percent (n)	7.2% (38)	71.3% (375)	8.2% (43)	13.3% (70)	100% (526)

Women's traditional self-presentations

As **Table 2** illustrates, half of the women used gender traditional self-presentations in their Twitter bios. For example, in her Twitter bio in June 2019, Elizabeth Warren labeled herself "former teacher & law professor," "wife," "mom," and "grandmother." In October 2019, Warren changed her "former teacher & law professor," labels to a "former teacher, and candidate for president." While at first glance, some of these labels appear traditionally feminine, there is a subtext that also shows a nontraditional side. The occupation of a "teacher" has historically been seen as a feminine profession. However, in addition to teaching elementary school children with disabilities (which would follow traditional gender roles), Warren was subsequently a professor specializing in bankruptcy law. The latter represents a gender-nontraditional field for women, especially in the era in which she worked in this capacity. Although the removal of the "law professor" label may indicate that she sought to obscure this nontraditional role, the addition of the "candidate for president" label suggests an attempt to blend traditional and nontraditional labels.

Warren was the only candidate to use the title "grandmother" in her Twitter bio. It is also interesting to note that her traditional labels "wife," "mom," and "grandmother" come secondary to her professional labels "Senator" and "candidate for president." Kamala Harris used a similar mix of traditional and nontraditional labels in her Twitter bio. She named herself "wife" and "Auntie," all traditionally feminine roles. Yet these gender labels are sandwiched between her career labels, including "senator," "candidate for president," and her nontraditional promise, "fighting for the people." The order and content of the labels suggests that both Warren's and Harris' self-presentations attempt to blend different approaches: although they include traditional gender labels, their bios de-emphasize them.

Turning to the websites, we find that traditional self-presentations were the least popular approach among the women (only 3.2 percent--n=9--of self-presentations feature a traditional perspective; See **Table 3**). Considering the proportion of traditional self-presentations on websites, there was a range from 0 on the low end (Tulsi

Gabbard) to 17.9 percent on the high end (Warren; See **Table 3**). Considering the percentage distributions, the white candidates, (Klobuchar and Warren), had a larger proportion of traditional self-presentations than the two candidates of color (Gabbard and Harris; see **Table 3**).

Many of the candidates mention their immediate family on their websites, including their husbands, children, stepchildren and/or grandchildren. For example, Warren stated: "Elizabeth and her husband Bruce have been married for 38 years. They have three grandchildren and a golden retriever named Bailey." Here, she mentioned the length of time that she has been married and draws attention to her status as a grandmother. The longevity of her marriage establishes Warren's good character and emphasizes the ways that she is reliable and consistent. This rhetorical construction conjures up an image of someone who will be long-term and sustainable in politics as well. Mentioning her grandchildren serves to highlight her approach to creating a positive future. References to her dog, who himself became a feature of her campaign, helps to establish her credibility as ordinary and relatable. Similarly, Harris talked about her husband and stepchild: "She is married to Doug Emhoff and a stepmother to Ella and Cole Emhoff." Likewise, Gabbard emphasized religious and racial diversity in her family as a strength when she said: "Tulsi's interfaith, interracial family is a reflection of the story of America, which taught her to accept and embody diverse perspectives and identities." These websites all illustrate the ways in which the women candidates emphasize their family roles and the importance of family in their lives. This emphasis also seeks to provide a personal connection to voters by using details from their family lives to humanize them and make them more relatable (See also Lawrence et al., 2016; McGregor, 2018; Meeks, 2017). Thus, women draw on traditional self-presentations, but sometimes do so in new ways.

Men's traditional self-presentations

Men's traditional self-presentations were represented through their display of stereotypical masculine gender roles, including masculine language or traits, such as using the word "fighter," swearing, or emphasizing their toughness or military experience. Overall, one-quarter of the men (n=2, see **Table 4**) used gender traditional self-presentations in their Twitter bios. For example, Andrew Yang described himself as an "entrepreneur" and "founder of Venture for America." His emphasis on success in business is a historically male-dominated field. Similarly, Pete Buttigieg described himself as an "Afghanistan vet" and "businessman." As we will explain later, while Buttigieg included a blend of traditional and nontraditional labels in his profile, his military service and business experience underscored his masculine self-presentation.

Only 7.2 percent (n=38; See **Table 5**) of men's website self-presentations took a traditional approach, making it the least utilized form of self-presentation. For example, Cory Booker stated: "As mayor, Cory took on some of the city's biggest challenges—*fighting* to curb crime, reinvigorating a dwindling local economy, and raising morale across the city . . ." (emphasis ours). Similarly, Bernie Sanders discussed his tough stance on policy, also using the word "fight" when he said that he would "*Fight* for comprehensive immigration reform to create a fair and humane immigration system" (emphasis ours). Buttigieg emphasized his previous career with the military and the impact it will have on his policy decisions: "Pete served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Reserve and took an unpaid seven-month leave during his mayoral term to deploy to Afghanistan. For his counterterrorism work, he earned the Joint Service Commendation Medal." Buttigieg was the only male candidate with military service experience and this description fits with stereotypically masculine work experiences. Thus, gender traditional self-presentations for men emphasized traditionally masculine roles in stereotypical ways. In contrast, the women's traditional self-presentations often put a new twist on their traditional family roles by blending them with other types of self-presentation. This finding provides some evidence that women's self-presentations were more multifaceted than men's.

Neutral Self-Presentations

In the middle of the spectrum of self-presentations, candidates emphasized gender neutral perspectives. Here, they downplayed gender, displayed a gender-blind approach, and focused on gender-neutral accomplishments or policy positions. This form of self-presentation was the most common in both the Twitter bios and the website bios for both male and female candidates. In the Twitter bios, all of the candidates included gender neutral labels (See the highlighted cells in **Tables 2** and **4**). One woman (Klobuchar) and two men (Sanders and Beto O'Rourke) chose to use solely gender blind labels in their Twitter bios. In website bios, a gender neutral approach was present for all of the women (61.8 percent of their self-presentations; n=176; See **Table 3**) and men (71.3 percent of their self-presentations; n=375; See **Table 5**). These gender neutral approaches are thought to have the most widespread voter appeal.

Women's neutral self-presentations

Amy Klobuchar was the only female candidate who uses gender-neutral self-presentations exclusively in her Twitter bio (See **Table 2**). She labeled herself a "senator" and "candidate for president" and nothing else. This

serious, straightforward and gender neutral tone aligns with her campaign more generally. Warren used the gender neutral "US Senator" and "candidate for president," although, as we have mentioned, "former teacher," a gender traditional label, was sandwiched between these labels. Harris started her Twitter bio with "U.S. Senator and candidate for president," before describing her traditional roles. In contrast, Gabbard began her bio with non-traditional labels and ended it with the neutral: "Congress. Candidate for President." Thus, although all of the candidates utilized gender neutral self-presentations in their Twitter bios, the presence of other labels and the order in which they appear suggest that candidates varied in their self-presentation.

Like the Twitter bios, all of the women used neutral self-presentations on their websites most frequently (See **Table 3**). Candidates featured lengthy paragraphs about gender neutral accomplishments during their political careers or discussed their policy positions. For example, Warren emphasized her leadership experience: "During the 2008 financial crisis, Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid asked Elizabeth to serve as Chair of the Congressional Oversight Panel to provide some oversight of TARP, the Wall Street bailout." Similarly, Gabbard described her significant accomplishments at a young age: "she campaigned for and was elected to the Hawaii State House of Representatives when she was 21 years old." This gender neutral accomplishment highlighted Gabbard's age rather than gender. Harris highlighted her policy accomplishments on her website: "She helped thousands of families stay in their homes and passed one of the nation's strongest anti-foreclosure laws." In addition, the candidates focused on educational attainment as another type of gender-neutral accomplishment. For example, Harris emphasized her education on her website: "Born in Oakland, Kamala Harris is a graduate of Howard University. She earned her law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law." Together, these examples focus on merit and illustrate the extent to which these women were qualified for political leadership through their accomplishments.

Men's neutral self-presentations

Considering the men's Twitter bios, Sanders and O'Rourke chose a completely gender-neutral emphasis (See **Table 4**). Like Klobuchar, Sanders simply used "senator" and "candidate for president" to describe himself. O'Rourke also fell into this category because he chose to present no self labels in his Twitter bio. In his unique profile, O'Rourke writes: "building a new kind of politics through a grassroots campaign for America - for everyone in America." Other men blended gender neutral and other approaches in their Twitter bios (See **Table 4**). For example, Booker took a gender-neutral focus, using "senator" and "candidate for president." However, Booker also identified his gender pronouns, "he/him," which, as we explain later, is classified as a feminist Twitter bio label. Similarly, Joe Biden begins with the gender neutral "Senator, Vice President, 2020 candidate for President of the United States," and then, as we analyze later, moved on to several gender nontraditional labels. In all, like the women, the men emphasized gender neutral Twitter bios and place them prominently at the beginning of their bio.

Turning to the websites, the men had a large proportion of gender neutral self-presentations (See **Table 5**). It is interesting to note that the men of color had a lower proportion of neutral self-presentations than the white men (See **Table 5**). In particular, Yang, who is Twiwanese American, had the lowest proportion of neutral statements, at 52.2 percent. This was followed by Booker, who is African American (59.5) and Castro, who is Latinix (60.7 percent). In comparison, white candidates had neutral self-presentations that ranged from 68 percent (Sanders) to 80.4 percent (Buttigeg).

For example, Tom Steyer wrote of his achievements: "In 2013, he founded NextGen America, a nonprofit group that combats climate change, promotes social justice and increases participation in our democracy through voter registration and grassroots organizing." Similarly, Buttigieg talked about his successful political career: "Pete is in his eighth and final year as Mayor of South Bend, Indiana. Pete was first elected mayor in 2011 at only 29 years old and re-elected in 2015 with 80 percent of the vote." The latter sentence emphasizes not gender, but electoral accomplishment despite his young age. Like the women, men also emphasized their educational attainment. Yang, for example, discussed his Ivy League education: "I studied economics and political science at Brown and went to law school at Columbia." Similarly, O'Rourke mentioned his Ivy League education, yet he framed it in terms of social class disadvantage, as he took out loans to pay for college. As he put it, "After graduating from high school, he took out student loans and moved to New York City to attend Columbia University, where he was a co-captain of the crew team and majored in English Literature." Thus, the majority of self-presentations on the websites were presented in a gender neutral way that emphasized the merit of the candidate.

Nontraditional Self-Presentations

At the next point on the spectrum, we find that candidates present themselves in gender nontraditional ways (See **Table 1**). In both the Twitter bios and websites, women were more likely to take a gender nontraditional approach than men. Half of the male candidates and 75 percent of the female candidates presented nontraditional gender labels in their Twitter bios (See **Tables 2** and **4**). On websites, women took this approach more frequently

than men (26.7 percent, n=76 of the women's self-presentations, compared to 8.2 percent, n=43 of the men's; see **Tables 3** and **5**). Additionally, the content of the nontraditional self-presentation differed. For women, this approach included taking a nontraditional stance on the traditional role of motherhood, using stereotypically masculine language, and nontraditional gender career experiences. For men, nontraditional self-presentations stayed solely in the domain of fatherhood.

Women's nontraditional self-presentations

Table 2 illustrates that three of the four women candidates used gender nontraditional labels in their Twitter bios. To differing degrees, all of the candidates except for Klobuchar blended nontraditional and other self-presentations. Blending allows candidates to break away from traditional female roles and claim masculine language to define themselves. For example, Warren used a very clever nontraditional label in her Twitter bio. She used the frequently-used pattern of the "mom" label, followed by a list of her children's names ("Amelia, Alex, Bailey"). However, she included "@CFPB" as a fourth child of hers. CFPB, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is a major piece of legislation that Warren spearheaded. Warren drew on a classic feminine trope of "mom," but added a humorous spin to show a nontraditional self-presentation.

Harris also included nontraditional self-presentations in her Twitter bio. After her neutral labels and the traditional label "wife," she uses "momala," which is the name her stepchildren call her. Harris had been open on the campaign trail about her role as a stepmom and her nontraditional family (Harris 2019). Harris also used her Twitter bio to declare she is "*fighting* for the people" (emphasis ours). The "fighter" label is nontraditional for women. Klein (2019) argues that while "men are assumed to be fighters. . . . Women have to overcome suspicions of weakness, which means they have to be much more explicit about their willingness to fight."

Gabbard presented the most nontraditional self-presentation of the women in her Twitter bio. She did not mention family in any capacity and instead lists "soldier" as her first label, representing her tour in Iraq from 2004-2005 and in Kuwait from 2008-2009. She also labeled herself "veteran" and "surfer," the latter of which acknowledges her Hawaian roots. Unlike the other women who used a blend of presentations, Gabbard sticks with only neutral and nontraditional self-presentations.

All of the women drew on nontraditional website self-presentations, although their usage ranges from 7.4 (n=2, Klobuchar) to 39 percent (n=48, Harris; See **Table 3**). Although we have seen that white women more frequently drew on traditional self-presentations on their websites, women of color had a high proportion of nontraditional website self-presentations than white women (See **Table 3**). Gabbard, with 21.9 percent of her self-presentations classified as nontraditional, describes her multi-ethnic and multi-faith family origins as follows: "A practicing Hindu, she is of Asian, Polynesian, and Caucasian descent." Harris, who identifies as African American and Indian, had 39 percent of her self-presentations classified as nontraditional. These proportions contrast with those of Klobuchar (7.4 percent) and Warren (12.8 percent), who are both white.

In website self-presentations, women used stereotypically masculine language, such as swearing or words like "fight" to describe their approach to politics. As already mentioned, these self-presentations were classified as traditional for the men. Nontraditional career experiences, such as work history in traditionally male occupations, were also included in this type of self-presentation. With the rise of women in politics--including their successes in the 2018 election and the number of women running for the Democratic nomination for president in 2020--women candidates were expressing themselves in unprecedented ways (Aronson, Oldham and Lucas, Under Review). That is, we are in a new era of self-presentation with women candidates moving in a new direction.

Harris, who had the highest proportion of nontraditional self-presentation (at 39 percent) states: "Throughout her career, Kamala has been a *fearless* advocate for the voiceless and vulnerable and a vocal and determined *fighter* on behalf of all people" (emphasis ours). In fact, all of Harris' nontraditional self-presentations centered on emphasizing her "fighter" stance to politics. Likewise, Klobuchar also used the word "fight" to talk about her policy positions and her persistence: "And she's been *fighting her whole life* to bring down the cost of prescription drugs" (emphasis ours).

Warren emphasized her nontraditional educational path as follows: "When [daughter] Amelia turned two, Elizabeth enrolled in a public law school that cost $450 a semester. Three years later, she graduated at eight months pregnant with her son Alex." This website self-presentation illustrated a nontraditional educational achievement during the 1970s. It is not only exceptional, but also gender nontraditional, that Warren was able to complete a law degree as a pregnant mother of a very young child. Although this example mentions motherhood and pregnancy, it turns gender traditionality on its head by linking these feminine roles with the nontraditional educational achievement of law school during a time when very few women attended.

Gender nontraditional self-presentations also included the "tough" self-presentation of Gabbard, who campaigned as a Major in the National Guard. Her military experience represents a traditionally masculine career path. As she stated: "Tulsi came home [from Iraq], forever changed, committed to *fighting* for peace and an end to regime change wars. Between her *two tours of duty in the Middle East,* Tulsi worked in the U.S. Senate as a legislative

aide to Senator Danny Akaka, where she focused on *veterans'* issues. … At 31 years old, Tulsi ran for Congress. … Holding close the memories of *her fellow veterans and the sacrifices made by her friends*, she was focused on *her mission* and knew she could not wait" (emphasis ours).

With its focus on her military experiences, Gabbard's self-presentation was the most nontraditional. In sum, the majority of women candidates drew on nontraditional self-presentations in both their Twitter bios and their websites and did so in a wide range of ways. In doing so, they illustrate a new era of campaigning as a woman.

Men's nontraditional self-presentations

Men were less likely than women to utilize gender nontraditional self-presentations in their Twitter bios, although half did so (see **Tables 2** and **4**). Of the men, Biden's Twitter bio carries the largest number of nontraditional labels. He described himself as "husband to @DrBiden," tagging his wife and acknowledging her doctorate in education. He also emphasised his family roles with "proud father and grandfather" labels. Biden places these nontraditional labels after the gender neutral ones, "Senator, Vice President, 2020 candidate for President of the United States." His bio concluded on a gender neutral, but humorous, note: "Loves ice cream, aviators and @Amtrack." Showing the importance of family, Julian Castro also listed his gender nontraditional labels before his traditional labels. He started his bio with "Father, husband," and then went into gender neutral "Texan, presidential candidate." Steyer also listed his family labels first, with "husband & father" preceding the more traditional label of "former investor."

The men used a nontraditional approach to websites at one of the lowest rates, at just 8.2 percent (n=43) of their website self-presentations (See **Table 5**). Biden, with the highest percentage (17.9 percent) on his website, provides very personal accounts of his struggles through family tragedy. He discussed the adversity he faced after the tragic deaths of his wife Neilia and daughter Naomi after a car accident that also injured his two sons: "Joe is sworn into the U.S. Senate *at his sons' hospital bedsides*, and begins commuting from Wilmington to Washington every day, first by car and then by train, in order to *tuck his sons in bed at night and see them get up in the morning*. He will continue to do so throughout his time in the Senate. For five years, Joe raises Beau and Hunter *as a single father*, with the help of his sister Valerie and his family." This self-presentation contains a great deal of personalization, as it involves emotional appeals to allow voters to identify with Biden's vulnerability and humanity (Meeks, 2017). This approach benefits men more than women (Meeks 2017). Furthermore, Biden's self-presentation emphasized his traditionally feminine role as a single father, his description also emphasized his commitment to his role as Senator.

Yang also discussed his role as a father on his website and emphasized the way that his vision for the future involves creating a better country for his boys. He said: "I'm the father of two young boys. I know the country my sons will grow up in is going to be very different than the one I grew up in, and I want to look back at my life knowing I did everything in my power to create the kind of future our children deserve." Similarly, O'Rourke talked about getting married to his wife and listed the names and ages of his three children: "On September 24, 2005, Beto and Amy became husband and wife. A year later, Ulysses O'Rourke (age 12) was born—followed soon by Molly (age 11) and Henry (age 8). They attend the same public school Beto went to as a kid." Here, O'Rourke focused on the roots he built in his home community, where his children will also be raised. In addition to highlighting family, this approach is nontraditional because it is often expected that ambitious men will follow job opportunities rather than remain in their own hometown.

Thus, although men used nontraditional self-presentations less often than other types, when they did so, it was quite meaningful; they described fatherhood tragedy, wanting the best for their children, and proudly introducing their family members. Although men's nontraditional self-presentations included family-orientations that focus on their status as fathers, it is important to note that they did not go beyond the fatherhood role in their nontraditional self-presentations. In keeping their nontraditional self-presentations on fatherhood, they highlight a protectionist stance that seeks to make voters feel protected. As we have seen, women's nontraditional self-presentations are more diverse.

Feminist Self-Presentations

On the most progressive side of the spectrum, candidates used explicitly feminist self-presentations. Feminist self-presentations are classified as such because they emphasize women's social and political interests as women and/or include an awareness of gender inequalities and patriarchy (Aronson, 2017). Women and men were equally likely to include feminist labels in their twitter bios (at 50 percent; see **Tables 2** and **4**, while men were more likely than women to utilize feminist website self-presentations (13.3 percent, n=70 and 8.4%, n=24, respectively).

Women's feminist self-presentations

While no candidates had overt feminist labels in their Twitter bios, six of the candidates (two women and four men; see **Tables 2** and **4**) included their gender pronouns. Warren and Harris were the only two women who listed

the pronouns "she/her." We classify this label as a feminist self-presentation because it aligns with feminist approaches to gender and signals support of LGBTQ+ issues.

Overall, 8.4 percent (n=24) of the women's website self-presentations are classified as feminist, with a range from 0 (Warren) to 13.8 percent (Harris; See **Table 3**). Typically, candidates emphasized women's issues in their policy positions. For example, Klobuchar stated her stance on domestic violence: "She is also the author of a proposal that would close what is commonly referred to as the 'boyfriend loophole' by preventing people who have abused dating partners from buying or owning firearms." Likewise, Harris stated her policy positions concerning women's rights: "As California's Attorney General, Kamala prosecuted transnational gangs that exploited women and children and trafficked in guns and drugs. She led comprehensive studies and investigations into the impacts of transnational criminal organizations and human trafficking." All of the women candidates, with the exception of Warren, focused on their social and political interest as women by taking a stance on legislation that affects women.

Harris also illustrated a feminist representations in her emphasis as a pathbreaking Senator. As she put it, "In 2017, Kamala D. Harris was sworn in as a United States Senator for California, the second African-American woman and first South Asian-American Senator in history." This emphasis on intersectionality was also common in the 2018 election, as women Congressional candidates' websites featured being the "first" woman elected from a particular ethnic or racial background or religion (Aronson, Oldham and Lucas, Under Review). The intersection of gender with racial or ethnic identities is an important element of feminist self-presentation.

Men's feminist self-presentations

Like the women, half (n=4) of the men listed their gender pronouns in their Twitter bios. Booker, Buttigieg, and Steyer all included "he/him" in their bios. Castro included "he/him/el" which emphasizes the intersection of his identity as male and Hispanic. While simultaneously confirming or reinforcing their male identity, including gender pronouns in their Twitter bio shows awareness of this social issue and emphasizes support for LGBTQ+ issues. In addition to listing his pronouns, Buttigieg also stated: "husband to Chasten." As the first openly gay candidate to run for president, labelling himself in this way illustrates both his personal interests and policy stance on LGBTQ+ issues in this feminist self-presentation. Buttigieg's husband Chasten is a vocal and active spouse on Twitter, with nearly 400,000 followers.

In our study of websites, we find that men candidates' self-presentations focused on women's issues 13.3 percent of the time (n=70), which is a greater proportion than women's feminist self-presentations. As Democrats, men may feel pressured to show voters that they are progressive and concerned with women's issues. This approach is especially the case when they are running against women, who may be perceived by voters as having an advantage on women's issues (Dittmar, 2015).

Although the men focus on women's issues at a higher rate than the women themselves, they did so in a traditionally masculine way. For example, in an interesting linguistic strategy, Castro stated that he will: "*Protect* victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking . . ." (emphasis ours). Here, Castro simultaneously emphasized the importance of women's issues while conjuring up images of male protection of vulnerable women. Like Castro, Sanders fused traditional and feminist self-presentation by using masculine language when explaining women's reproductive rights: "We must *fight* back together, and *defend* a woman's right to control her own body and economic future" (emphasis ours). Thus, men often presented women's issues in ways that also signal their masculine qualities to voters.

As the first openly gay presidential candidate, Buttigieg's statement about his family also fell under the feminist self-presentation category. Buttigieg talks about his educational achievements, husband and dogs: "A Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and a graduate of Harvard University, Pete lives with his husband Chasten in the same South Bend neighborhood where he grew up, with their two rescue dogs, Truman and Buddy." By presenting his marriage in this seemingly traditional way--living in the neighborhood where he was raised and emphasizing that his dogs are a part of his family--Buttigieg advances marriage equality as a feminist issue. He also said he will work to: "Close the 'boyfriend loophole' and *disarm* domestic abusers" (emphasis ours). Although addressing a similar issue as Klobacher, quoted above, Buttigieg's use of the word "disarm" is traditionally masculine. Thus, men emphasized that they will focus on women's issues in their policy decisions in order to be appealing to Democratic voters, who might be drawn to the women candidates (See also Dittmar, 2015). However, men's statements of these issues typically drew on traditionally masculine language ("fight," "defend," and "disarm") or conjured up images of protection of vulnerable women.

CONCLUSIONS

The 2020 U.S. Democratic presidential primary was unprecedented in the number of women running. In this article, we push the scholarship on gender and politics forward by examining male and female gender self-presentations in Twitter bios and candidate websites. Although politics has its own norms regardless of gender, the political sphere is ripe with expectations about how candidates "do gender" in their self-presentations (West and Zimmerman, 1987). In contrast to prior research, which emphasizes gender dichotomies in self-presentation, we argue that gender self-presentations can be classified on a spectrum that includes gender traditional, neutral, nontraditional and feminist self-presentations. Our spectrum provides a new theoretical framework for understanding candidates' gendered self-presentations. This area of research is undertheorized in previous studies of prior eras, yet it will be increasingly important in future elections as women continue to expand their role in politics and push the boundaries of typical self-presentation.

All of the candidates examined here blended gender self-presentations. For women, gender traditional self-presentations emphasize their family roles, while for men they focus on "tough" language or traditionally masculine careers. Perhaps reflecting the changing social context since Donald Trump's election, gender traditional self-presentations were the least utilized by both Democratic party men and women. Gender neutral or gender blind self-presentations, the most common approach for both women and men, de-emphasize gender and focus instead on accomplishments or policy positions. All of the candidates feature gender neutral labels in their Twitter bios and over 60 percent of women's, and over 70 percent of men's, website self-presentations were gender neutral. As a political strategy, candidates may think that this approach has the widest voter appeal.

Turning to the two areas that illustrate the greatest social change, we find notable gender differences in both the frequency and content of nontraditional and feminist self-presentations. Women candidates were more likely than men to utilize nontraditional approaches. Seventy-five percent of women's Twitter bios and 26.7 percent of their website self-presentations were nontraditional, compared to 50 percent and 8.2 percent of men's. The content of nontraditional self-presentations also differed. While men only discussed their fatherhood roles, the women were more multifaceted, drawing on masculine language and careers and flipping traditional gender scripts in unusual ways. These findings may suggest that as candidates, women have moved further outside of rigid gender roles than have men.

Considering feminist self-presentations, we find equal prevalence of the use of gender pronouns in Twitter bios (50 percent of both men and women). We also find that men's website bios more frequently mention feminist issues than women's (13.3 percent vs. 8.4%, respectively). Yet when they do so, men emphasized traditionally masculine language or emphasized that they will protect vulnerable women. This finding provides further evidence that female Democratic candidates have broken out of their gender roles in ways that are more visible than the male candidates.

Although a complete intersectional analysis is beyond the scope of this article, we found some racial and ethnic differences in self-presentation on websites. White women candidates were more likely than women of color to emphasize gender traditional self-presentations. In contrast, women of color more frequently than white women drew on gender non-traditional self-presentations. Similarly, men of color were less likely than white men to provide gender neutral self-presentations. Although more research is needed on the intersections of gender and racial and ethnic background, these findings suggest that candidates of color may draw on more diverse and less traditional gender self-presentations than white candidates.

There are several limitations to this study that should be addressed by future research. First, although we have been able to focus in depth on the 2020 Democratic Presidential Primary, we are limited in the number and type of elections considered. Future research should expand the approaches considered to develop a more systematic understanding of gender self-presentations in elections. In particular, it will be important to examine whether these types of self-presentations are unique to the U.S. or are relevant in other countries. Additionally, further research on other types of self-presentation, such as how candidates interact in debates and with supporters on the campaign trail, would allow for further development of these theories of self-presentation. In addition, a historical comparison with previous elections could help untangle the extent to which these self-presentations are unique to 2020. Additionally, although we have moved beyond a dichotomous understanding of gender self-presentation by presenting a continuum, this process may inadvertently reinforce a gender dichotomy. Future research should take care to develop nuanced analyses that move beyond gender comparisons. For example, although our examination has allowed us to consider some intersections between gender, ethnicity, race and sexual orientation, future research should deepen these comparisons. Finally, this analysis captures one moment in time. Since we conducted our research, the Democrats have selected Joe Biden as the 2020 Democratic nominee, and Biden announced in March 2020 he would select a female running mate. Future research should examine how the 2020 general election unfolds and whether gender self-presentation influences the election's outcome.

Despite these limitations, our findings reinforce other evidence, such as from the 2018 election, regarding transformations of women in politics (See also Aronson and Fleming, Under Review; Aronson, Oldham and Lucas, Under Review). That is, not only are women running for office and getting elected in large numbers, but their gender self-presentations in their campaigns are more diverse than men's. This finding may reflect the new candidates' resistance after Donald Trump's election, as they are challenging norms for women in politics. These candidates are defying expectations and starting to alter our expectations for how women in politics represent themselves, in digital media and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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'Putting Radiohead Next to Bach.' Perceptions of Cultural Hierarchy Unravelled with a Ranking Task

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ABSTRACT

Although cultural hierarchy is a social construction – the result of ever changing distinction practices by elites – the consequential division between 'high culture' and 'low culture' is often either taken for granted as a fixed opposition, or disputed because of waning boundaries. To what extent individuals of different status groups adhere to such hierarchy is not known, nor whether changed cultural taste patterns result in alternate perceptions. This article aims to unravel cultural taste, perceptions of and opinions on cultural hierarchy, by means of a ranking task with musical items among ninety people in the Netherlands. It shows, first, that perceptions of cultural hierarchy are still sound among many, regardless of egalitarian opinions. Second, many distinguish personal tastes – which are evidently diverse – from their perceptions of cultural hierarchy – on which a certain agreement exists. Third, this agreement is not absolute, as there are several deviations, that are related to educational level and age.

Keywords: cultural hierarchy, cultural taste, high culture, low culture, ranking method

INTRODUCTION

The concepts 'high culture' and 'low culture' are frequently used in the cultural field and the media, as well as in cultural sociology. They indicate a hierarchical organisation of cultural artefacts, in a more or less homologous relation with the social hierarchy of their audiences (cf. Bourdieu, 1984). Most users will share some common sense knowledge of these concepts' meanings – classical music is considered high culture, soap operas are low culture – even though these categories cannot be objectively defined and demarcated. They are social constructions, the result of distinction practices among upper and middle classes as well as valuation processes by consecrating institutions (Bourdieu, 1984, 1996).

The question arises, though, whether this implies that members of the upper and upper-middle classes fully realize the social status of their taste, in other words, to what extent they equate their own taste with high culture and their dislikes with low culture, or whether the picture is more complex. Do members of lower classes, in their turn, implicitly acknowledge their own inferior position in social and cultural hierarchy, as Bourdieu (1984: 372-396) claimed, or are they hardly aware of others' distinction practices? Perceptions of cultural hierarchy have never been empirically studied (cf. Robette and Roueff, 2014).

Such questions have become more salient in recent decades, as both social and cultural hierarchy have become more and more disputed. In many Western societies, including the Netherlands, social stratification as such came under fire on moral grounds, favouring more egalitarian and individualist stances (e.g., Wouters 2007; Van Eijk 2013). The significance of cultural hierarchy is contested, as boundaries between high and low are blurring among

both producers and consumers of art. When 'postmodern' artists deliberately mix items from high and low culture, when popular culture gains prestige among consecrating institutions (Baumann 2001; Van Venrooij & Schmutz 2010) and when 'highbrow' consumers turn into 'cultural omnivores' with broad, boundary-crossing tastes (e.g., Peterson and Kern, 1996), the relevance of the concepts 'high culture' and 'low culture' seems to vanish.

However, distinction processes as such did not cease to occur, as some early scholars on omnivorousness expected (Peterson and Kern, 1996; Ollivier, 2008). For instance, high–low distinctions are often made *within* popular genres, based on different modes of consumption (Holt, 1998; Jarness, 2015). The logical consequence of this ongoing process would be the continuation of cultural hierarchy, albeit with less clear demarcations and less agreement on the exact nature of high and low culture (cf. Van den Haak, 2018a).

Therefore, the question can be raised what effect such changes have on an overall cultural hierarchy. Might, for instance, a classic rock band such as The Beatles nowadays be equated with Bach or Mozart? And what about the status of young well-educated listeners' preferences within popular contemporary music genres such as hip hop and EDM? Naturally, this article does not aim to 'objectively' answer these questions, but instead looks at various people's perceptions of and opinions on cultural hierarchy. It asks the question *to what extent there is a shared sense of cultural hierarchy, how these hierarchical perceptions are related to personal preferences and dislikes, and how potential deviations from this shared sense can be explained.*

The questions will be answered by means of an innovative research design in this field: a ranking task on the specific domain of music. As part of in-depth interviews on cultural taste, distinction and hierarchy, a diverse sample of ninety people in the Netherlands was asked to rank thirty cards with the names of composers, musicians, singers and bands, both in order of their own taste preference, and according to their perception of high and low culture. In addition to an explorative quantitative analysis of these rankings, respondents' verbal clarifications reveal both their legitimations and their attitudes on the exercise as such.

After a further theoretical exploration and a discussion of the research methods, the results section will show that most respondents – regardless of their opinion on the concept of hierarchy as such – perceive a cultural hierarchy with regard to music, which to a greater or lesser extent deviates from personal taste rankings. The article will explore the shared sense of this hierarchy, as well as several deviations that are related to educational level and age.

THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN CULTURAL TASTE AND HIERARCHY

Cultural taste – here defined as individuals' preferences and dislikes for certain cultural artefacts – is related to cultural hierarchy in mutual ways. On the one hand, hierarchy shapes tastes. Individuals' preferences and aversions are strongly influenced by one's upbringing and school education, which are class related. The volume and form of their cultural capital inform their habitus, which in its turn shapes their preferences. This works both directly – young members of higher classes are taught the canonized works from art history – and, moreover, indirectly – they learn to value cultural items for aesthetic qualities that are deemed important, particularly to favour form over function and to detach from their initial emotions. Conversely, a working-class habitus leads to a 'popular aesthetic', with less emotional detachment and favouring function over form (Bourdieu, 1984).

On the other hand, tastes shape hierarchy. The habitus works in two ways: it is both 'a structuring and structured structure' (ibid.: 170). People with a high volume of cultural capital distinguish themselves with their tastes and lifestyle from those with less cultural capital, i.e. members of middle and lower classes as well as elites with relatively more economic capital. They acquire social status by means of their cultural preferences and practices, they recognise each other and thereby exclude others from their circles. Imitation practices by members of the middle and lower classes lead to further distinction, which continuously reproduces cultural hierarchy, regardless of dynamics in its exact form. This constant reproduction is further established through the recognition by middle- and lower-class people of their intermediate or inferior position, Bourdieu claims.

Hence, cultural hierarchy is a social construction, that in its turn greatly shapes people's everyday practices. It has such a strong discursive power that it can easily be perceived as objectively true and universal, as if objects possess actual qualities that make them 'high culture'. This misconception is strengthened by the alleged complexity of high culture, which contributes to the notion that it can be best understood by the well-educated, or perhaps solely by specialised connoisseurs. The alternative term 'highbrow', originally derived from late-nineteenth-century phrenological practices, even refers directly to one's intellectual capacities (Levine, 1988: 221-223). Furthermore, 'consecrating institutions', such as museums, quality newspapers and universities, have been attributed the power – the 'symbolic capital' – to decide which cultural disciplines, genres or specific artists are eligible to enter the canon of high culture (Bourdieu 1996, Baumann 2001). Hence, the status of cultural items results from complex power dynamics and interactions between different actors in the cultural field: producers, different types of intermediaries and art consumers (ibid.).

What we do not know, however, is to what extent people of different backgrounds actually *perceive* a cultural hierarchy, and how this is related to their personal preferences and dislikes. Notwithstanding a vast amount of sociological literature on taste patterns as such, in which cultural hierarchy is either presumed *a priori* (e.g., Peterson and Kern, 1996) or deducted from data on taste and distinction (e.g., Warde 2011) – with highly diverse outcomes (Brisson, 2019; Robette and Roueff, 2014) – , perception of cultural hierarchy has not been discussed. Although one might say that individuals with a high volume of cultural capital *practise* cultural hierarchy as they distinguish themselves from others, this does not necessarily occur explicitly and consciously, with the deliberate intent to place their own preferences on a pedestal (Bourdieu, 1984). We do not know to what extent they actually perceive their taste as having a high position in a cultural hierarchy.

Similarly, Bourdieu did not provide clear evidence for his claim that working-class people acknowledge their inferior position in this hierarchy. His ideas have often been contested. Rather than accepting high culture's status, another plausible attitude would be one of indifference – lower class people simply like or dislike certain tastes without attaching status consequences (Michael, 2017: 97-130) – or ambivalence (Bennett et al., 2009: 209-212; cf. Kuipers, 2006: 77). Moreover, they often distinguish themselves from higher classes on moral rather than cultural or economic grounds (Lamont, 2000; Van Eijk, 2013; Van den Haak and Wilterdink, 2019).

Finally, if people perceive cultural hierarchy, we do not know what it exactly looks like. People might attribute entire domains to either high or low culture, or make certain distinctions within such domains. Nor do we know what grounds their perceptions: are these related to social hierarchy, or to alleged characteristics of cultural artefacts, such as complexity and originality?

INCREASED COMPLEXITIES IN LESS HIERARCHICAL TIMES

What further complicates the abovementioned questions is the alleged waning of boundaries between high and low culture in the second half of the twentieth and the twenty-first century. Cultural hierarchy is increasingly being contested. In cultural sociology, this notion has been linked to the rise of 'cultural omnivores': literally people who like or consume everything, but mostly defined as those individuals who like a large diversity of cultural items, particularly transgressing boundaries between high and low culture (e.g., Peterson and Simkus, 1992).

This phenomenon is related to several processes. First, it can be linked with the decline of social stratification as such. In several Western countries strong and rigid hierarchies have been replaced by more egalitarian social relations. Associations between classes became less unequal, less authoritarian and less formal; in the Netherlands these changes were even more extreme than elsewhere (Wouters, 2007). The shift was caused both by increased resentment and active resistance by underprivileged groups *and* by an egalitarian and individualist ideology among – often younger – members of more dominant groups (such as the 1960s' counterculture).

Second, the participation in what is usually perceived as high culture declined (e.g., Van Eijck et al., 2002), and so did its symbolic value (Prieur and Savage, 2013). This 'desacralisation' of high culture is related to changes in the educational system, in which the old humanistic ideal of *Bildung* lost importance. Third, popular subcultures increased sharply since the late 1950s and eventually outgrew their original youth audience. Popular music is increasingly being taken seriously by consecrating institutions (Janssen et al. 2011; Van Venrooij and Schmutz 2010). Nevertheless, 'popular culture' has eclipsed low culture as a more common antonym of high culture.[1]

But what do these historical changes mean for the perception of cultural hierarchy? Does the increased significance of egalitarian opinions imply that hierarchy is no longer perceived at all, or do critics just reject what they do perceive? The assumed waning of cultural hierarchy makes the relation between taste, hierarchy and distinction (as a mediating mechanism) more complex.

First, the relation between *taste* and *hierarchy* as such became more complex. Cultural omnivores were often defined as – mostly high-status – individuals who combine high and low culture into a mixed taste pattern and who hence transgress these domains. Such *a priori* categorisations were particularly applied in some early omnivore studies (e.g., Emmison, 2003; López Sintas and García Álvarez, 2004; Peterson, 1992; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Van Eijck et al., 2002). Later, concepts such as 'high culture' or 'highbrow consumers' were inferred from taste patterns among certain status groups (e.g., Warde, 2011), for instance by means of factor, cluster or multiple correspondence analysis (e.g., Coulangeon, 2013b; Elchardus and Siongers, 2007; Prieur et al., 2008; Van Eijck, 2001).[2] Yet, if high status consumers have boundary-crossing tastes, the relevance of separate domains – high culture as the preferences of high status groups – disappears.

Second, the relation between *taste* and *distinction* became more complex. Omnivorousness was initially often interpreted as a high degree of openness and tolerance for others' tastes (Bryson, 1996; Ollivier, 2008; Peterson

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[1] Several scholars describe a triangle of high, popular and folk (low) culture (Schulze 1992; cf. Frith 1996: 36-42; Van Eijck & Lievens 2008).

[2] See for a critical overview: Robette & Roueff 2014 (cf. Brisson 2019).

and Kern, 1996), and hence as a near absence of cultural distinction. Later scholars, however, provided clues for the distinctive value of a broad taste as such (Van Eijck, 2000; Prieur and Savage, 2013) and of 'voraciousness' of cultural activities of whichever kind (Coulangeon, 2013a). Both interpretations make cultural hierarchy as a ranking of cultural artefacts irrelevant.

Third, the relation between *distinction* and *hierarchy* became more complex. Contemporary consumers not only distinguish themselves based on breadth and voraciousness, but also traditionally with their taste as such, yet *within* popular culture. It is *how* they perceive it what matters, rather than *what* they like exactly (Holt, 1998; Jarness, 2015; Van den Haak, 2018b). High status people apply an aesthetic disposition both to distinguish high from popular culture *and* to explain their preferences within popular culture, such as 'complex' hip hop or 'innovative' EDM (Thornton, 1995; cf. Bachmayer et al., 2014). Furthermore, new evaluation criteria might gain importance over time, as the mentioned 'aesthetic disposition' is historically situated; the product of a specific modernist discourse that may evolve (Hanquinet, 2018). Members of different status groups can even enjoy the exact same object with divergent attitudes, such as a serious versus an ironic one (Peters et al., 2018; cf. Friedman, 2012; Jarness, 2015). Classical music is not necessarily higher than hip hop, but higher status fans of classical music *and* hip hop make choices based on roughly the same logic within both genres. This does imply a sort of cultural hierarchy, yet with perceived complex and innovative items of *any* kind on top, which would lead to a less straightforward picture.

Due to this complex situation, the question to what extent people of different backgrounds perceive a cultural hierarchy, and if so, what this hierarchy looks like and on what grounds it is formed, becomes even more relevant. The perceived hierarchy might be more 'traditional' or map more closely on the current taste preferences of high status groups. Perhaps people are not willing to hierarchically rank cultural items, or do not understand such vertical categorisation at all. Besides differences between status groups, age might play a role, as younger cohorts could be more inclined to confer status to certain forms of popular music. This research provides new insights into concepts that are too often defined by researchers themselves.

DATA AND METHODS

The data presented in this article were collected in the context of a more encompassing research project, based on in-depth interviews with ninety people in the Netherlands. They were asked questions about their cultural likes and dislikes vis-à-vis significant others, within a wide range of cultural disciplines. This article examines the final part of each interview, a ranking task on the specific field of music, which is analysed in a quantitative yet explorative way. While ranking tasks are not unique in sociological research, they have not been used in studies on cultural taste; this study is inspired by classical Dutch research on the ranking of occupational prestige (Sixma and Ultee, 1983; Van Heek and Vercruijsse, 1958).

Respondents were requested to rank thirty items, printed on small cards, twice: in the order of their personal taste and according to their perception of a cultural hierarchy. The latter was phrased as: "Could you rank the items from high to low culture, as you think they are perceived in society?"[3] The task was preceded by open questions on respondents' associations with the concepts 'high culture' and 'low culture'. Half of the respondents, randomly assigned, were asked to begin with the hierarchical ranking and to perform the taste ranking second, in order to correct for possible follow-up effects: a hierarchy strongly influenced by taste. However, the sequence in which the two tasks were performed did not have an effect on the rankings.[4] Respondents were encouraged to put items unknown to them aside. The number of cards that were included in the taste ranking ranged from only 12 to all 30, with a mean of 23.4 and a standard deviation of 3.9.[5] On request, respondents were allowed to form small groups of cards, in which case the mean ranking of these items was coded.[6]

The Selection of Items

In studies on cultural taste, respondents are often asked to give their opinion on a selection of (musical) genres (e.g., Bryson, 1996; Peterson and Kern, 1996). However, genres are too broad and often diverse categories, while genre boundaries are both contested (Atkinson, 2011; Holt, 1997; Savage, 2006) and dynamic (Lena and Peterson, 2008). Other scholars avoid these disadvantages by asking questions on specific musical pieces or songs (Bourdieu,

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[3] In the first few interviews, respondents were asked about their perception of the items' status in society, but this was soon altered in order to avoid misunderstandings about the meaning of both 'status' and 'society'.

[4] The items' mean hierarchical rankings did not significantly correlate with the question which task was performed first. Furthermore, the mean 'deviation measure' (see section 'The relation between taste and hierarchical perception') is 0.21 when taste is asked first and 0.18 when hierarchy is asked first, which is not a significant difference either.

[5] The number of included cards correlates negatively with age (Pearson's r is -.57; p < .01), due to the large proportion of popular music items in the list. There is no relation with educational level or gender.

[6] For instance, when the upper 3 were grouped together, all 3 items were coded as "2". In those rare cases when cards were categorized in only 2 or 3 large groups, results were not coded.

1984; Bennett et al., 2009). This solution, though, might lead to more missing values than necessary, as one might not recognise a certain title by an otherwise familiar composer. Therefore, an intermediate position was taken, by using the names of individual composers and performers (singers, musicians, bands) from several but not all possible genres (cf. Nagel et al., 2011). This turned out to be a manageable solution for most respondents; only rarely doubts were expressed about an artist's diverse oeuvre (for instance, how to rank Metallica when disliking their music, except for their hit ballad 'Nothing else matters'?).

The selected items cover a broad range of music genres and are diverse with regard to several potentially relevant characteristics: time period, country of origin, gender, reputation in the field (based on features such as perceived complexity, craftsmanship, authenticity) and the degree of familiarity among a large audience. For instance, it features five classical composers, including the highly consecrated Johann Sebastian Bach, the more complex and less well-known Arnold Schönberg and the more popular and easily digestible Johann Strauss II. Naturally, this list is imperfect and by definition incomplete, while features such as complexity and authenticity cannot be attributed objectively. However, the analysis will be explorative rather than testing hypotheses on, for instance, the 'effect' of complexity.

In order to test respondents' trustworthiness and attentiveness, one fictitious name was included: J. Pirakovich. Only five respondents included this item in their rankings, mostly in intermediate positions. This item is excluded from further analyses. The list includes six items originated from the Netherlands, which will be further explained when necessary.

The Sample

Because the overall study was aimed at comparing demographic groups rather than generating a representative sample, a quota sample was designed. The quotas consisted of three birth cohorts (before 1945, 1945-'65, 1965-'85) and three status groups (well-educated with well-educated parents, well-educated with less-educated parents, less-educated with less-educated parents), resulting in nine quotas of ten people each, equally distributed over males and females.[7] Educational level was categorised 'high' when one has a university or higher vocational education (HBO); and low when one has at most medium vocational education (MBO). As parents' education did not turn out to be relevant for our current study, in the remainder of this article only respondents' educational level will be taken into account, measured on a 4-point scale.[8]

Online postal code and phone directories were used to draw a random sample in order to gradually fill the quotas.[9] The interviews took place in 2009 and 2010 in both urban, suburban and rural areas in the North-West of the Netherlands, including Amsterdam. The taste ranking was performed by 85 out of 90 respondents; the hierarchy ranking by 77. The somewhat higher number of missing values on the latter was caused by a diversity of issues, such as fatigue and the unwillingness or incapability to rank items hierarchically (discussed below). The oldest birth cohort is slightly underrepresented in the ranking task, compared to the entire sample.

RESULTS

Distinguishing Perception, Knowledge and Opinion

Before turning to the analysis of the rankings as such, the ranking practice itself must be discussed. As mentioned, only a few respondents did not rank the items hierarchically due to either lack of knowledge or resistance. Most others did perform the task, even though some of them shared this lack of knowledge or resistance. First, some respondents – relatively often with a low educational level – did not know the concept 'high culture'. Michiel[10] heard 'this term for the first time', Didi found it a 'strange description', and Noortje concluded that she is 'apparently not familiar with this subject'. In these cases, the assignment was rephrased as 'the status ranking in society', which more than once resulted in a ranking that closely resembled the rankings of more knowledgeable respondents after all. A similar resemblance was found among nineteen uninformed respondents who guessed the concept's meaning, as its separate components 'high' and 'culture' are not difficult to grasp.

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[7] Gender will not be discussed further, as significant differences between men and women are rare: with only two items in the taste ranking and one item in the perceived hierarchy.

[8] 1: academic; 2: HBO (higher vocational); 3: MBO (medium vocational); 4: below MBO.

[9] When, after some time, certain quotas remained difficult to fill, random samples were drawn from purposefully selected postal codes that, according to government statistics, contain high numbers from certain age groups and/or income levels (used as a proxy for educational level). Eventually, the average response rate was about 25%. Only the last fifteen empty spaces were filled by drawing upon the researcher's own diverse network, such as a friend's mother. See Van den Haak (2014: pp. 78-88) for more details on the sampling procedure.

[10] All names are pseudonyms; all quotes are translated from Dutch.

Table 1. Mean hierarchy scores, compared with mean taste scores

	familiar (N = 85)	hierarchy ranking (N = 77)			taste ranking (N = 85)[12]		
		position	mean score	standard deviation	position	mean score	standard deviation
J.S. Bach	85	1	90.5	20.2	2	66.9	32.5
W.A. Mozart	85	2	88.7	17.6	4	64.2	30.7
A. Vivaldi	81	3	81.1	20.8	6	63.7	31.5
*A. Schönberg**	*41*	*4*	*80.8*	*14.4*	*12*	*57.6*	*31.0*
Johann Strauss II	84	5	74.6	22.1	18	49.3	24.1
Jacques Brel	80	6	66.6	17.7	3	65.2	24.5
Ella Fitzgerald	69	7	65.5	19.4	9	60.2	23.8
The Beatles	85	8	64.1	19.4	1	69.7	22.2
*Glenn Gould**	*33*	*9*	*59.8*	*27.4*	*16*	*53.8*	*27.5*
John Coltrane	45	10	59.3	21.8	8	62.0	23.6
Aretha Franklin	66	11	58.4	16.6	7	62.4	21.2
Wibi Soerjadi	82	12	55.9	25.6	20	41.5	23.3
Ramses Shaffy	85	13	54.1	18.2	17	52.3	23.9
Pink Floyd	71	14	53.5	19.7	15	54.3	27.9
Rolling Stones	84	15	53.0	20.4	11	57.9	26.0
*Tori Amos**	*26*	*16*	*49.3*	*22.8*	*14*	*54.7*	*27.4*
Norah Jones	53	17	46.7	16.5	5	63.4	26.2
*Radiohead**	*35*	*18*	*41.9*	*25.5*	*10*	*59.3*	*36.3*
ABBA	83	19	41.5	23.6	13	57.4	28.0
André Rieu	85	20	40.2	26.9	23	35.8	26.5
Céline Dion	68	21	36.0	18.9	21	41.1	27.9
Tiësto	63	22	30.4	20.6	22	37.2	31.0
Marco Borsato	85	23	27.6	18.9	19	41.5	29.8
Metallica	57	24	26.4	19.7	25	34.3	30.4
Dolly Parton	72	25	25.3	16.7	24	35.5	23.4
Britney Spears	70	26	19.6	15.2	28	27.6	22.9
50 Cent	43	27	17.4	15.2	27	31.1	27.0
André Hazes	85	28	15.9	18.9	26	32.7	29.2
Frans Bauer	85	29	13.5	19.6	29	24.9	25.9

* The rows of the four items with which less than half of the respondents is familiar are printed in italics, as mean scores loose relevance when missing values increase.

Hence, perception of cultural hierarchy is not limited to those who are familiar with the specific concepts used in the phrasing of the task.

Second, many respondents disagreed with cultural hierarchy as such. The open interview question on associations with high and low culture, prior to the ranking task, was often met with resistance, particularly among well-educated people with egalitarian ideals (cf. Vander Stichele, 2007: 339-340). The use of the label 'high culture' is called 'arrogant', 'pretentious', 'elitist' and 'hot air'; the term 'low culture' is characterised as 'disparaging', 'discriminating' and 'mean' (see also Van den Haak and Wilterdink, 2019). However, most of them agreed to put aside their resistance in order to perform the ranking task anyway. Hence, perceptions of cultural hierarchy should be analytically separated from opinions on the matter.[11] The discourse of cultural hierarchy is pervasive, regardless of specific knowledge or negative feelings. After all, one must perceive something to be able to reject it.

The Mean Hierarchy

The left side of **Table 1** presents the mean hierarchy – ranked from high to low – as perceived by all 77 respondents who performed the ranking task. It must be kept in mind that the non-randomness of the sample, with a deliberate overrepresentation of the well-educated, makes this table only indicative. The first column, shows the number of respondents that included each item in their taste ranking, an indication of familiarity (which does not necessarily equate profound knowledge of the music as such). The scores indicate the mean percentiles of the items in the individual rankings, meaning that 100 is the highest possible score and 0 the lowest.

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[11] Cf. Elshout (2016) on a similar distinction with regard to occupational hierarchy.

[12] The eight respondents who did not produce a hierarchy ranking were nevertheless included in the analysis of the taste ranking. Excluding them would give only minor differences.

The hierarchy shows similarities with some *a priori* classifications in previous research: the top five is occupied by classical composers, followed by some items from the genres chanson, jazz, classic rock and soul.[13] At the bottom of the ranking one finds some Dutch language singers and some more or less contemporary popular music acts (hip hop, pop, country, heavy metal, EDM). Previous literature did not show distinctions within genres, such as rock or classical music. Within the latter, musicians are ranked lower and more dispersed than composers are. Pianist Glenn Gould (#8) is most renowned for his interpretations of Bach (#1); violinist and conductor André Rieu (#20) popularized light classical music such as waltzes by Strauss (#5).

Qualitative analysis shows several legitimations for this ranking. The most common one – like a lay sociologist – is a relation to the audience's perceived social status and size: high culture is believed to comprise what (small) groups of elites prefer. Second, seniority plays an important role, meaning that high culture has 'survived the ages'. Other arguments concern perceived attributes of the cultural items themselves, particularly complexity, morality, craftsmanship and innovativeness. Contrasting logics can play a role simultaneously, for instance by first positioning classical music on top for seniority reasons and subsequently considering the innovativeness and complexity of more contemporary acts.[14]

Hence, on average respondents recognise a cultural hierarchy that looks partially similar to usual classifications. But how is this hierarchy related to personal taste preferences, and how much agreement is there on the exact nature of and logic behind this hierarchy?

The Relation between Taste and Hierarchical Perception

Some respondents only slightly altered their rankings during the second part of the task. They recognised their own taste rankings as almost similar to their perceived cultural hierarchy. A good example is Yme, a 64-year-old retired manager in social work. On my request to rearrange her taste ranking to one 'from high to low culture', she realised that she did not have to change much: "God, my preference is indeed highly elitist then, ha ha!" She only moved up one item, from a low to an intermediate position.[15] Conversely, Jeroen, a 25-year-old driver, reversed his taste ranking almost entirely, for instance by significantly moving up the classical music items that he dislikes: "Well, that's the same list but exactly the other way round. Low is me, ha ha!" He personally prefers items that are generally perceived as low culture, even by himself.

The right part of **Table 1** shows the mean taste rankings, which enables a thorough comparison between both rankings. The three highest ranked composers in the hierarchy – Bach, Mozart and Vivaldi – are also favoured by many, but they must now compete with The Beatles (#1), Jacques Brel (#3) and Norah Jones (#5), some of whom appeared much lower in the mean hierarchy. Conversely, the highly ranked composers Schönberg and Strauss are personally preferred far less. Similar effects can be observed with the three included classical musicians. This shows that many can distinguish their own taste from their perception of a cultural hierarchy: classical music is often regarded as high culture, regardless of one's personal taste for this genre, and regardless of large differences in taste for individual composers. Conversely, certain highly beloved popular music items are perceived as less high in the hierarchy.

In contrast to the upper half, though, in the lower half of the table the differences between taste and hierarchy are much smaller. Dutch singer Frans Bauer is both liked least and perceived as the 'lowest' culture; the other items near the bottom hardly change positions either. Apparently, dislikes are often considered as low culture, whereas likes are not necessarily perceived as high culture. Many distinguish 'good' from 'high', but tend to see 'bad' and 'low' as one and the same (cf. Bryson, 1996).

In order to study shifts between the two rankings on an individual rather than an aggregate level, a deviation measure was developed. For each individual the mean deviation between the items in the two rankings was divided by the number of items included, resulting in a figure between 0 (similar rankings) and 0.5 (reverse rankings). This measure, with a mean of 0.19, shows a strong correlation with age (Pearson's r is -0.60; p < .001) and with educational level on a 4-point scale (Spearman's rho is -0.33; p < .01). This implies that the preferences of older and well-educated respondents most closely resemble their perception of a hierarchy, whereas less-educated respondents from younger cohorts more often perceive a gap between the two. This supports Bourdieu's thesis on lower status people's recognition of their inferior position ('low is me'), even though their opinion on the matter

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[13] This list shares most similarities with Elchardus and Siongers (2007), but there are deviations with, for instance, Peterson and Simkus (1992), who relate rock and 'soul/blues/r&b' to lower status groups. See Robette & Roueff (2014) for deviations between hierarchies when applying different methods.

[14] See Van den Haak (2018a) for a more detailed analysis of legitimations behind hierarchical perceptions.

[15] Five others did not replace any card, particularly respondents who were asked to perform the hierarchy ranking prior to the taste ranking.
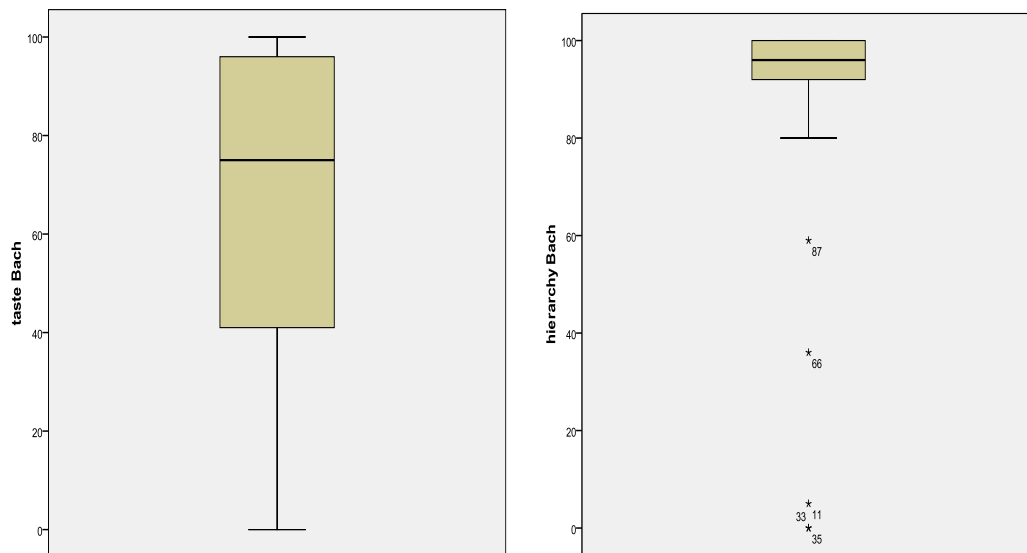
Figure 1. Box plots for the taste (1a; N=85) and hierarchy rankings (1b; N=77) for J.S. Bach

might be different.[16] The mean cultural hierarchy has a more or less homologous relation with the 'space of life-styles' that Bourdieu (1984: 128-129) sketched.

Agreement and Deviations on Cultural Hierarchy

As could be expected, the agreement on cultural hierarchy is much higher than the agreement on personal tastes. Most standard deviations are lower in the hierarchy than in the taste ranking, particularly near the top and bottom positions (cf. Van Heek et al., 1958: 25-28).[17] Let us take as an example the top item, Johann Sebastian Bach. The box plots in **Figure 1** clearly show that the large majority of respondents position Bach in one of the top positions (1b), whereas their taste for his music is much more dispersed (1a). The dispersion of the other items' hierarchical positions is less high than this extreme example, but still on average 60% of the cards lies within a range of 15% above or below the mean score for each item.[18]

Evidently, this agreement is not absolute. The remainder of this section will show how deviations are related to respondents' educational level and age. **Table 2** shows the rank correlations (Spearman's rho) between educational level and both the hierarchy and taste rankings per item. As the number of respondents is not high, particularly with less well-known items, only strong correlations are significant.[19] The items are again presented in the order of the mean hierarchy.

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[16] Naturally, many respondents occupy an intermediate position, for instance by preferring both classic pop bands *and* Dutch language singers and disliking classical music *and* contemporary pop, while producing a hierarchy similar to that of many others.

[17] Formally, the dispersion of a ranking variable cannot be measured with the standard deviation, but it nevertheless gives an enlightening picture (cf. Van Heek et al. 1958: 323 n23).

[18] The percentage of items within 15% above or below the mean ranges from 93.5% (Bach) to 26.0% (André Rieu, see below). 21 out of 29 items score above 50%.

[19] Formally, statistical significance is not applicable in case of non-random samples, but it does provide insight into the relevance of the correlations.

Table 2. Spearman's rho between educational level and the rankings of hierarchy and taste

	Hierarchy (N = 77)	Taste (N = 85)
J.S. Bach	.40***	.44***
W.A. Mozart	.30**	.37***
A. Vivaldi	.13	.37**
A. Schönberg	.21	.41**
Johann Strauss II	-.14	.02
Jacques Brel	.18	.17
Ella Fitzgerald	.22	.18
The Beatles	-.14	-.17
Glenn Gould	.48**	.42*
John Coltrane	.05	.11
Aretha Franklin	.03	-.06
Wibi Soerjadi	-.19	-.10
Ramses Shaffy	.10	.04
Pink Floyd	.09	.21
Rolling Stones	.08	.03
Tori Amos	.01	-.00
Norah Jones	.21	-.07
Radiohead	.23	.16
ABBA	-.33**	-.48***
André Rieu	-.32**	-.21
Céline Dion	-.22	-.48***
Tiësto	-.01	.03
Marco Borsato	-.16	-.39***
Metallica	.07	-.08
Dolly Parton	.08	-.11
Britney Spears	.01	-.04
50 Cent	.00	-.25
André Hazes	-.15	-.18
Frans Bauer	-.32**	-.38***

(The four items that less than half of the respondents included are printed in italics.)
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

For comparative reasons, let us first look at the taste ranking in the right column. In line with other research (Bourdieu, 1984; Peterson and Kern, 1996; etc.), many classical music items correlate positively with level of education: the three main composers (Bach, Mozart and Vivaldi) and the two less well-known items (Schönberg and Gould). Some other classical music items, however, do not correlate with educational level, nor do the jazz and *chanson* items. Four items correlate negatively with education: two of the Dutch language singers and two commercial pop items.[20]

Regarding the perceived hierarchies, however, four of these nine correlations do not appear. The correlations that do remain – though most of them less strong – regard Bach, Mozart and Gould positively, and ABBA and Bauer negatively. On the other hand, André Rieu is now added to the list. Qualitative analysis shows that less-educated respondents, without significantly liking him more, perceive this violinist and conductor as higher on the status ladder (perceiving him as an exponent of classical music) than well-educated respondents do (who regard his interpretations as simplifications and who associate him with his lower status audience). Different hierarchical rationales – in this case genre, complexity and audience – collide.

Hence, even within the low dispersion of the top and bottom items, there is variation that is related to educational level. At the top of the hierarchy, this can partly be explained with the explicit consecration of Bach as *the* most important composer by the (often well-educated) classical music lovers, whereas the (often less-educated) non-connoisseurs frequently group all composers together or rank them randomly.

The strong correlation with items at both ends of the hierarchy is partially caused by three less-educated individuals, who produced an entirely inverted hierarchy.[21] They can be recognized as the outliers at the bottom of **Figure 1b**. Their comments suggest that they interpreted the concepts differently, perceiving high culture as what is most popular among the general public. Considering the missing values among several other less-educated respondents and this group's underrepresentation in the quota sample, these exceptions to the rule must be taken

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[20] Not all items are linearly distributed, which means that some items are preferred or disliked more by respondents with an intermediate educational level. The same counts for the correlations with age.

[21] Excluding these three statistical outliers from analysis gives weaker correlations; Mozart loses statistical significance.

Table 3. Pearson's r between age and the rankings of hierarchy and taste

	Hierarchy (N = 77)	Taste (N = 85)
J.S. Bach	.04	.44***
W.A. Mozart	-.11	.48***
A. Vivaldi	.03	.45***
A. Schönberg	*.03*	*.22*
Johann Strauss II	-.19	.47***
Jacques Brel	-.10	.08
Ella Fitzgerald	-.30*	-.11
The Beatles	-.29*	-.29**
Glenn Gould	*-.12*	*.20*
John Coltrane	.13	-.01
Aretha Franklin	-.22	-.15
Wibi Soerjadi	.15	.51***
Ramses Shaffy	-.32**	.07
Pink Floyd	-.35**	-.31**
Rolling Stones	-.45***	-.41***
Tori Amos	*-.42**	*-.40**
Norah Jones	-.09	-.35**
Radiohead	*-.46***	*-.48***
ABBA	-.02	-.02
André Rieu	-.08	.22*
Céline Dion	.23	.12
Tiësto	-.01	-.38**
Marco Borsato	.13	-.35**
Metallica	-.24	-.43**
Dolly Parton	-.26*	-.15
Britney Spears	.13	-.38**
50 Cent	-.24	-.51***
André Hazes	-.05	-.50***
Frans Bauer	.06	-.11

(The four items that less than half of the respondents included are printed in italics.)
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

seriously. In a random sample, agreement on cultural hierarchy would most probably be less strong, as would the evidence for Bourdieu's thesis on the recognition of one's own inferiority.

Table 3 shows the correlations (Pearson's r) between both rankings and respondents' age. Again starting with taste, significant correlations can be found with no less than eighteen items. Six classical music items are liked more by older people, whereas many (though not all) of the popular music and Dutch language items are liked more by younger people. Even items that are mostly not familiar among the older cohorts, such as Radiohead and 50 Cent, show a strong age effect among those who do know them.

The correlations between age and hierarchical perceptions show a different picture. There is no correlation regarding the classical music items: although Bach is preferred much more by older cohorts, respondents of all age groups equally perceive his music as high culture. A similar effect can be observed in the lower half of the hierarchy: some Dutch language singers (André Hazes, Marco Borsato) and contemporary popular music items (50 Cent, Britney Spears, Metallica, Tiësto, Norah Jones) are liked more by younger respondents but perceived as equally low (or middlebrow) culture by all age groups.

Significant correlations between age and hierarchy do exist – sometimes even stronger than between age and taste – with regard to several popular music items that are perceived as higher on the ladder by younger respondents. First, this regards two relatively contemporary items (Radiohead, Tori Amos) that are perceived as 'authentic', 'complex' or 'innovative', compared to 'commercial' items that do not show an age effect. Respondents from the youngest birth cohort more often apply an aesthetic disposition than older respondents do, who favour classic canonical criteria such as morality and seniority (more on this distinction: Van den Haak, 2018a). Ronald, for instance, who was 35 years old at the time of the interview, explains his top position for Radiohead as follows:

> "There are only a few bands that have innovated and changed music and that gave it such a personal feel and artistic dimension, so I don't think it's unreasonable to put it next to someone like Bach. Because, in our time, they have been pioneering."

Ronald is quite extreme in this position, as the 10 academically trained respondents from the youngest cohort put Radiohead on average on the tenth position (eight places higher than in the sample as a whole), but the point is that he argues its top position as a possibility.

Second, one jazz item and five popular music items that are somewhat older (Ella Fitzgerald, Beatles, Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Dolly Parton, Ramses Shaffy) are also perceived as higher in the hierarchy by younger respondents. These artists were most popular before the youngest respondents were born. Apparently, younger generations are more inclined to retrospectively consecrate (Schmutz, 2005) the music from their parents' youth than individuals from their parents' generation are themselves. It takes some distance to canonise music.

CONCLUSION: A PERSISTENT BUT MORE COMPLEX CULTURAL HIERARCHY

This article explored the perceptions that people of different backgrounds have of cultural hierarchy, which casts light on the dual relation between taste and hierarchy as a social construction. Moreover, it investigated the salience of cultural hierarchy in an era when the boundaries between high and low culture are often said to have become blurred due to the rise of cultural omnivores. This was researched by means of a ranking task among ninety Dutch people, that compared hierarchical perceptions with taste preferences and dislikes within music.

It teaches us, first, that many perceive a cultural hierarchy, regardless of strong egalitarian feelings that dispute any form of hierarchy. Second, agreement is high on the nature of this hierarchy in broad strokes. Particularly the high status position of classical music and the low position of certain Dutch language singers and some contemporary pop acts are hardly debated. Third, this agreement exists in spite of significant taste differences. Although many perceive their dislikes as low culture, they often do distinguish what's good from what's high. Finally, this agreement is not absolute, as a minority of less educated respondents does not adhere to the dominant logic, and as younger generations tend to canonise 'classical' and 'alternative' exponents of popular culture more than older generations do.

These results imply that the relations between taste, distinction and cultural hierarchy have been disentangled. First, in previous research, hierarchical domains such as 'high culture' were often defined *a priori* or inferred from taste patterns, rather than put into question. This article showed that the perception of hierarchy can be distinguished from taste itself, but that the mean hierarchy overall corresponds with the taste ranking of well-educated respondents from older cohorts. Even most less-educated respondents, despite having opposite tastes, produce a similar hierarchy and hence recognise the inferior status position of their own tastes, as Bourdieu (1984: 372-396) claimed.

This means, second, that omnipresent notions of the blurring or even disappearing of high-low boundaries are overstated. Contemporary consumers might have broad tastes and they might resist cultural hierarchy and social stratification as such, but most of them still perceive a high-low ranking when asked. Hierarchical *perceptions* should therefore be differentiated from *opinions* on hierarchy.

Third, both concepts should also be differentiated from hierarchical *practices*, which still occur in the form of cultural distinction. As previous research showed, many keep distinguishing good from bad tastes (e.g., Holt, 1998; Jarness, 2015; Van den Haak and Wilterdink, 2019). Increased complexity in such distinction processes results in a more complex and diverse cultural hierarchy. Although the mean perceived hierarchy resembles traditional and common-sense high-low distinctions, there are many deviations, particularly caused by younger cohorts. Their inclination to single out more complex, original, innovative and authentic items within broader genres in popular culture, leads to a higher status for these items, both in reality (as the socially constructed result of distinction processes) and in their perception. Unlike sometimes believed, this is perfectly in line with the thinking of Bourdieu (1984), who stated that individuals with a high volume of cultural capital are inclined to enjoy *all* kinds of cultural items in an aesthetic way. Similarly, consecrating institutions are able to actually confer status to such items. This does not make cultural hierarchy more coherent, though.

Future research could unravel taste patterns and hierarchical perceptions in a more systematic way, by means of a larger and more random sample than in the qualitative research of which the presented ranking task was a part. Most importantly, this should include more respondents with a lower educational level, as this group was severely underrepresented in the current sample (both due to deliberate choices in the overall research and due to selective non-response). Some of the less-educated in this study were not able to perform the ranking task, whereas three others produced an opposite hierarchy, based on an alternative logic. A more thorough inclusion of this significant group would probably lead to a little less agreement on cultural hierarchy and hence some more deviation from Bourdieu's ideas on their acceptance of others' superiority. Anti-elitist and anti-snobbish attitudes have become widespread in recent times (e.g., Schwarz, 2019), in line with populist discourse.

Future studies could adopt the method of including survey items on the level of artists rather than too broad genres or too narrow artefacts (songs, musical pieces), but including at least two examples per genre is strongly recommended. In the current study, several genres, such as hip hop, were represented by only one item, which

prevents us from further interpretation of more detailed distinctions based on aesthetic qualities such as perceived complexity and originality.

This study suggests that both Bach, The Beatles and Radiohead *can* be perceived as high culture, even though this might go against traditional common-sense notions. Along with the emergence and ageing of new well-educated generations, the exact nature of cultural hierarchy will continuously change, without losing its general principle (cf. Hanquinet, 2018). This is something different than the blurring of high and low, even though many interpret the mixing of art forms and the broad tastes of omnivores as such. Defining high culture with rigid genre boundaries does not help us understand the dynamic nature of cultural taste and distinction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Hashtag in Digital Activism: A Cultural Revolution

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ABSTRACT

The last few years have seen a rise in activism and online technology has caught on this wave of change. More than ever, conversations are driven, gatherings are optimised, and thoughts are shared through a disproportionally small tool compared to its impact: the hashtag. Despite extensive academic research on the hashtag's role in the development of social movements, hitherto there has been little written on its cultural importance. This article aims to address this specific gap in the analysis of digital activism tools by examining the cultural dimension of the hashtag in digital activism. The research relies on the #MeToo movement as the case study for a discourse analysis of the conversation surrounding the hashtag in written media online. Set within a cultural studies perspective, the article discusses the symbolic role played by the hashtag in the emerging myth around the movement through the #MeToo narrative shaped by the victims, supporters or opponents of the movement. Looking at the hashtag's representation and mechanics, the article then allows for the reading of the hashtag as a cultural object that perpetuates the movement's political agenda in the public sphere and bridges personal and collective experiences under the #MeToo myth. Essentially, the article aims to contribute to the broader conversation on the place of digital tools in our construction of reality by theorising that hashtags in digital activism can be read as a driver of change due to their cultural impact on the public imaginary around social movements prevalent on social media.

Keywords: discourse analysis, hashtag, digital activism, #MeToo, cultural studies

INTRODUCTION

Over the past eight years hashtags have come to capture the zeitgeist of our time. From #RefugeesWelcome to #JeSuisCharlie and more recently #MeToo, the hashtag has surpassed its initial role of labelling online content on Twitter and has become evocative of a collective narrative, shared ideals and greater conversations around social movements globally, establishing them in the public imaginary. How something so small and seemingly banal as a hashtag can become such an easily recognisable element for people to feel connected to is worth investigating. This paper sets out to do this by examining the cultural dimension of the hashtag in digital activism.

Discourse has historically played a key role in bringing people together to discuss societal problems and push for political action. However, from the Women's Suffrage to Civil Rights social movements this perpetuation of ideas was mostly bound to the physical space, embodied by speeches, marches or demonstrations and represented by signs or posters. The rise of the Internet and use of social media platforms during the Arab Spring protests in 2011 opened up the online space to protesters and followers alike. People around the world have since been using hash-tagged words or phrases to facilitate digitally networked protests and spread a specific cause on social media in what is now known as hashtag activism. As a versatile way of managing tasks and amplifying social agendas, it has enabled activists to "act as their own media, conduct publicity campaigns, circumvent censorship, and coordinate nimbly" (Tufekci, 2017: xxvi). It facilitates discussions about social issues with real effects in society in

a virtual space whose retrieval, unless otherwise restricted, need not be time or location bound. Since protesters are using the hashtag to unite and amplify their messages, challenging the status quo, they are essentially transforming hashtag-led discourse into a form of virtual resistance amplifying the often still present physical one. As an increasingly visible example of the broad phenomenon of digital activism, hashtag activism lends itself to the current debates of optimist, pessimist, or persistent theorists (Joyce, 2010).

Optimist theorists support digital activism for its technological potential in uniting dispersed groups of people under one cause, allowing them to push for collective action more effectively than in the past (Shirky, 2008). By enabling efficient communication between grassroots and institutional groups, it helps shape public expression and build awareness on social issues, directly benefiting democracy (Karatzogianni, 2016). Critics, however, see digital activism as online support lacking real change in what is called 'slacktivism' or 'clicktivism' (Anschuetz, 2015). They criticise it for favouring a detached position of the user from the reality of the social problems and for relying extensively on stories that struggle to drive meaningful action. Finally, the persistents can be optimistic or pessimistic about activism, but disregard digital technology as significant for its functioning. They view the future of activism as a blend of digital and offline practices, dependent on the ability of activists to leverage the digital tools' effectiveness (Hill, 2013).

Despite a rich literature on digital activism, few accounts have in fact focused on hashtag activism specifically. When discussing the use of the hashtag in digital activism, most papers rely on an analysis of the technological logics and mechanics of the hashtag. While some of them look at the role of hashtag in network formation through technological studies on social influence (González-Bailón, 2014) or information virality (Wang, Liu, and Gao, 2016), others explore the linguistic patterns of hashtag formation on Twitter (Posch, Singer, Wagner, and Strohmaier, 2013) or its political and communications functionalities (Davis, 2013). Thus, most of the conversation on digital activism, and hashtag activism in particular, seems to focus on two key areas: the technological role of the hashtag as a mechanism for driving movements and the legislative, real-life change brought by digital activism. Reasonably, a better understanding of the hashtag's mechanics could make social movements more efficient and potentially more effective in changing societal structures through policy or legislation. However, the cultural impact of digital activism remains for the most part ignored.

Two notable exceptions are the works of Yang and Bruns & Burgess. Yang (2016: 14) examines narratives as a neglected form of agency in digital activism and argues that "the capacity to create stories on social media by using hashtags in a way that is collective and recognised by the public" can have moral, political, and social implications. Bruns and Burgess (2011) discuss the use of hashtags in digital movements from a media studies perspective, touching upon the cultural workings of imagined communities online as representative of the ad hoc publics formed around a specific hashtag. While these works approach original cultural questions on hashtags, a more complex analysis of the symbolic dimensions of the hashtag through its use, representation and perception in digital activism remains for the most part insufficiently explored. Gerbaudo and Treré (2015) blamed this on a favouring of quantitative analysis in digital activism over a qualitative one that would get to the roots of cultural and symbolic processes.

This paper aims to address this specific gap by examining the cultural role of hashtags in digital activism: what they stand for, how they are represented and how their image is perceived and passed on. At the core of this analysis lies the work of Roland Barthes on the creation of myths. In his most popular work, *Mythologies*, Barthes (2009) examines how popular ideas are stripped of their meaning - often political in nature- and then repackaged and imbued with new meaning in order to create myths that carry different political implications in an accessible form for mass consumption. Applying these mechanisms to digital activism, hashtags are emerging as key elements of social movements but once these movements burst into popularity, hashtags take on a life of their own and shape back the movement they helped build. Less interested in the political realm discussed by Barthes and focusing more on the cultural mechanisms, this paper will examine the transformational journey of the hashtag from a tool facilitating action to the face of a movement to eventually becoming a cultural object for public consumption.

Perhaps one of the most mediatised examples of hashtag activism in recent years, the #MeToo movement will serve as the case study for this paper. #MeToo emerged as a response to the sexual harassment scandal involving high-profile Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein and saw numerous celebrities speak up about the abuse they experienced at the hands of the film mogul, leading to him being brought to justice. A general sense of unrest regarding women's rights and a rising feminist sentiment helped the movement become viral through a simple phrase: 'me too'. This led to the highly circulated #MeToo hashtag whose cultural impact changed the conversation around sexual violence – encompassing harassment, assault or misconduct allegations – and encouraged women to speak up about their experiences. Several academics have written about #MeToo examining its impact in driving feminist digital activism (Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller, 2018) or analysing the issues it raised while making feminism a popular topic (Tambe, 2018). While the role of #MeToo in gender, sexualisation or feminist studies is important, this article will not discuss the movement as a form of feminist activism. Rather, the article uses

#MeToo to explore the broader cultural mechanics of the hashtag in digital activism. This is due to the emblematic role played by the hashtag in the public imaginary and its widespread adoption around the world and across numerous industries (Google Trends, 2018).

Thus, the paper aims to theorize that the hashtag in digital activism can be read as a myth whose cultural impact helps perpetuate the movement's political agenda in the public imaginary. Relying on a discourse analysis of #MeToo coverage in written media, the first part of the paper is mostly anchored in language, offering a semiotic analysis of the symbolic role played by the hashtag, its meaning and the emergence of the myth around the movement through the #MeToo narrative communicated in the media. The second part of the paper then opens up the discussion to a larger body of cultural studies concepts. By looking at how the hashtag's place, representation and mechanics evolve in culture, the paper advances the reading of the hashtag as a cultural object that bridges personal and collective experiences under the #MeToo myth.

THE RECKONING

Figure 1. Milano, A. (Alyssa_Milano). 15 October 2017, 9:21 p.m. Tweet

Methodology

In October 2017, the #MeToo phrase-turned-hashtag was trending not only on Twitter, but also in the media. In under half a year, it evolved from a mere online tool into the emblem of a revolutionary movement against sexual harassment. The research relies on discourse analysis as the most suitable way for a cultural exploration of the hashtag as a myth and draws upon online media articles over the first six months of the unfolding of the #MeToo movement given the large following it received. Using online media publications to analyse a social media phenomenon is perhaps not exactly desirable as it can limit the understanding of the role of the hashtag among the communities actively employing it. Nevertheless, it makes a qualitative assessment of the #MeToo discourse possible where the high volumes of daily #MeToo tweets would have been difficult to analyse at a macro level through solely qualitative work. The research can never do justice to the cumulative number of varied and complex responses, but it will highlight some dominant tropes in the #MeToo discourse. The impact of media discourse on building the myth around #MeToo in the public imaginary is, however, the main strength of this approach. This follows through on Kligler-Vilenchik's (2011) observation that collective memory is best shaped at the intersection of the media memory and the public memory agendas, the moment when the past events most salient in the media also become those perceived as most important by individuals.

A Google Trends (2018) analysis over this period reveals how the spikes in search activity for #MeToo match the change in media discourse leading to three main stages: confession, recognition, and backlash. The beginning

saw a careful sharing of personal stories in the online public sphere through the use of the hashtag as a confessional tool for driving conversation. The hashtag supported countless stories of sexual harassment, putting, in the case of actresses, new abusers under scrutiny and questioning the ethics of the film industry. Media coverage of this momentum led to a recognition phase. TIME's Person of the Year was awarded to the collective of women who spoke up. Time's Up initiative was created to support sexually abused women in taking legal action. These acknowledged the power of the movement, spreading it to women of all walks of life. However, as the movement became popular, a generalised use of the hashtag for both minor and major accusations led to a backlash. The discourse then started to focus on the failures of the movement and the threat posed to sexuality and interpersonal relations.

The body of research consists of fifty-eight articles in English published between October 2017 and March 2018. These were gathered based on their popularity and relevance from the first two pages of Google search and news results for the key terms 'metoo', '#metoo' or 'Me Too movement' over those six months and in line with the three distinct stages above. The materials were filtered to have an Anglophone focus including only articles from US, UK, Canada or Australia. Relying on online readership volume and search popularity, the body of selected articles is naturally skewed towards US online publications due to the greater traction of the movement and its coverage there. The scope was then narrowed on only those articles that had a mention of the hashtag #MeToo in either their title or referencing it as the main topic of discussion within the body of the article. Overall, the articles compose a robust body of research covering traditional and alternative publications and encompassing opinion, news, features and investigation pieces.

This qualitative assessment does not claim to be comprehensive, but it will hopefully help address the cultural impact of the hashtag from a cultural studies perspective. From the final body of articles, the analysis used a semiotic lens to focus on mentions of the hashtag and of the two sides of a #MeToo story (the abuser and the accuser) to understand both the direct use of the hashtag and of the narrative surrounding it. For the hashtag, the emphasis was put on identifying the descriptors (adjectives or nouns) used to refer to the movement under the '#metoo' hashtag and the actions (expressions containing verbs) assigned to it through personification. For the surrounding narrative, focus was similarly put on analysing the descriptors used to refer to the women and men involved in the movement and the action language assigned to them. These words and phrases were then taken and analysed on a spectrum spanning from utopic to neutral to dystopic connotations in line with the three key stages of the media discourse. Utopia is understood as the "expression of the desire for a better way of being" (Levitas, 2010, p.9), a society where voiced #MeToo ideals are achieved at both a personal and institutional level through justice. By contrast, dystopia is representative of an Orwellian universe where language highlights the potential threats associated with the abuse of power through the movement's agenda. The contrast between utopic and dystopic connotations is reflective of the supportive or antagonistic perspectives surrounding the movement. While the utopic associations have mainly been drawn by media publications, journalists or individuals recognising the cultural and political importance of such a feminist clout, the dystopic ones have appeared as a form of backlash led by a reluctance to recognise the positive groundswell of #MeToo or by a critical perspective over the unexpected popularity of the movement. This is best understood through Professor Banet-Weiser's (2019) work on the relationship between popular feminism and popular misogyny, "where feminism is active in recognising structural inequalities, and misogyny reacts to feminism in increasingly violent and visible ways".

#MeToo: A Symbol for the Movement

A decade ago, social worker Tarana Burke started a local movement called 'Me Too' out of empathy for sexual harassment victims, declaring that "I know exactly how you feel. That happened to me too" (Google Trends, 2018). Despite her activism, the phrase remained hidden from mainstream culture. However, actress and activist Alyssa Milano's visibility as a celebrity made #MeToo immediately popular and, eventually, the two movements merged around the same iconic phrase. Based on Saussurean semiotics, 'me too' is a sign connecting a signifier and a signified. The phrase represents an acknowledgement of other women's experiences relating to one's own, creating a larger space for identification and a bond between the addresser and the addressee(s). It encompasses solidarity, empathy and self-awareness. Burke's understanding of the term as being "a bold declarative statement that 'I'm not ashamed' and 'I'm not alone'" and "a statement from survivor to survivor that says 'I see you, I hear you, I understand you and I'm here for you or I get it'" (Santiago and Criss, 2017) presents a two-level construction that works as both a personal and interpersonal declaration. Firstly, the phrase on its own has a personal cathartic function of sharing past experiences in order to heal whilst joining the larger conversation to amplify the subject. Secondly, it shows one's support for other women with similar experiences, setting a precedent for future statements.

Following Milano's tweet, women started adding their stories of sexual harassment next to the phrase. This changed the dynamics of 'me too' from subject to enabler of background stories, from a declaration to a confession. As a supporting element, the phrase turned into the hashtag #MeToo, encompassing the concepts and emotions

A.	UTOPIC	NEUTRAL	DYSTOPIC
D E S C R I P T I O N	#MeToo revolution; Bold declarative statement; Rallying cry; A too-perfect meme; Watershed; A sense of blinders being taken off; 'Click' moment; A tsunami; A dam breaking; A transformative moment; Reckoning; Revolution of refusal; A badge of honour; Epiphany; A display of female power; Pro-sex movement just laying the tracks; A version of due process; Righteous exposure of hideous abuse of power; The pink wave crashing over Donald Trump; An umbrella of solidarity; The Post-Weinstein Megaphone of Social Media; Movement for women's empowerment	#MeTooism Acknowledgement; Attempt; #MeToo moment; Statement from survivor to survivor; Social movement; Lens; Confession; #MeToo campaign; A movement that has no formal name; Iteration; Reality or an ideology; Sense of unrest; Period of renegotiating sexual norms; Selective force; A show; A movement of sound, of voices, of volume; Slogan; Old idea	#MeToo bubble; Reversion to attitudes about women; Sex panic; Moral panic; Petition to be forgiven; An unedifying clamour to be included in celebrity suffering; A campaign of public denunciation and summary justice; A conflagration: the monstrous, the cruel, and the simply unlucky; Anti-sex movement gone off the rails; McCarthyism; Witch-hunt; Hysteria, moral panic, hatred of sex, hatred of men; Generalized revolution against the patriarchy; A symptom of a broken legal system; A binary battle; Vigilante justice; Feminism hijacked by melodrama The affirmative-consent and preponderance-of-the-evidence regimes; Revictimization; Emblem for female helplessness; Symptom of something that's wrong
A C T I O N	Takes something that women had long kept quiet about and transforms it into a movement; Uncovering the colossal scale of the problem is revolutionary in its own right; #MeToo revolution spared Woody Allen; The force that is ending his political career is greater than the truth; Catalyzed a movement; Give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem; Using the power of empathy to stomp out shame	Launched a movement; Shift the burden of proof from the accuser to the accused, eliminating the presumption of innocence; Reflecting a collective experience of trauma and injustice	Invites a crackdown; Confused justice with vigilantism; Drive users into escalating states of outrage while exhausting us to the point where we cannot meaningfully act; Inflames a climate of hysteria in which the sexual harassment of women comes to be presented as a routine part of life; Creating a "totalitarian" climate that unfairly punishes men for flirting "insistently or clumsily," infantilizes women and undermines sexual freedom; Chains women to the status of the eternal victim; Turning a bona fide moment of moral accountability into a series of ad hoc and sometimes unproven accusations; Serves to blur the boundaries between rape, nonviolent sexual coercion, and bad, fumbling, drunken sex; Criminalize bad sex and trivialize rape; Encouraged puritanism

Figure 2. Language used to refer to the movement under the #MeToo hashtag as both an object of description and a subject of action

relating to it. Its new representative status as the name of the movement clarified the purpose of any stories shared on Twitter. If initially the phrase needed to be contextualised, its increasing usage allowed it to stand on its own as a symbol: a word with a multitude of meanings. Furthermore, its popularity made journalists wonder if #MeToo could evolve from 'a meme' into 'a social movement'. From being 'simply an attempt to get people to understand the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault in society' #MeToo quickly became 'a rallying cry against sexual harassment'. The hashtag eluded the reality of its mechanics and turned from a tool of transmission into a representation of the movement. Although initially considered a mere "part of the picture, but not all of it" (Zacharek, Dockterman & Sweetland Edwards, 2017), the hashtag becomes merged with the social campaign through its symbolic status. The movement is then evoked whenever someone states 'me too', writes #MeToo or shares a '#MeToo story'. This increases the perceived power of the hashtag, lending itself to both utopic and dystopic associations as seen in **Figure 2**.

Utopia is seen as "imaginative, normative, prescriptive, and future-oriented; but it is also very often present-oriented in its descriptive and explanatory depictions and criticisms of utopia's other, the present" (El-Ojeili and Hayden, 2009: 2). On one side, the parallels drawn between #MeToo and natural disasters highlight an exaggerated potency of the movement. Comparing #MeToo to 'a tsunami' or "a dam breaking, the cumulative effects of harassment claims over decades" (Bennett, 2017a) emphasizes the movement's power outside of human control. Similarly, framing #MeToo as an 'epiphany', 'revelations' or 'a confession, a petition to be forgiven' is reminiscent of spiritual power, divine acts and the hashtag's image as an icon. By detaching the movement from reality and driving it towards a higher purpose, the fight against sexual harassment is seen as part of a supernatural dimension reflective of unfettered human hopes. On the other side, terms like 'reckoning', 'revolution of refusal' or 'pink wave' are utopic in showing a hopeful radical change, yet they are rooted in the everyday dimensions of feminism and women's rights marches. Through such metaphors, the movement comes to occupy an ideological dimension. Being referred to as '#MeTooism' or 'greater than the truth' emphasizes the movement's agenda against sexual harassment and its loyal supporters.

If the utopic dimension presented the hashtag as empowering women to militate for their rights, the dystopic dimension of the backlash period deals with the threat to sexual liberation and fair justice posed by the generalised use of the hashtag. Describing the movement as the '#MeToo bubble' or a 'conflagration: the monstrous, the cruel, and the simply unlucky', the dystopic dimension focuses on detachment of #MeToo accusations from the

reality of those experiences. Although the hashtag can also encompass exaggerated accusations, describing the movement as 'hysteria, moral panic, hatred of sex, hatred of men' overtly frames #MeToo as a form of female hysteria. By presenting women as 'puritan, Victorian, fragile, religious, childish, helpless, hysterical [..] naïve' in their support for #MeToo, the press shapes the narrative of a progressive movement through an obsolete imaginary. The dystopic parallels deny the place of #MeToo in a legitimate feminist narrative by considering it 'feminism hijacked by melodrama'. This frames the movement not as real feminism, but as 'a campaign of public denunciation and summary justice' and sees victims' stories as emotional tools undermining the real potential of the movement.

The stark contrast between what the hashtag actually is in its neutral form and the ideology created around it illustrates the connection between form and meaning. The hashtag essentially is transformed into what Barthes (2009: 135) calls "ideas-in-form", an enabler of mythology, and hence of the #MeToo imaginary. The mythical dimension is not only formed through descriptors, but also by personifying the hashtag as a subject of action. Working as a metonymy, the hashtag comes to stand for all women behind the movement, encompassing their stories and actions. Personified as having agency, the hashtag "takes something that women had long kept quiet about and transforms it into a movement" (Gilbert, 2017). In the process, the focus is redirected from women, with the aim to increase the visibility of the hashtag and its primary role in the movement. However, this undermines the various actors involved (activists, supporters, victims, critics), as everything falls under one trending hashtag. Using #MeToo alongside verbs generally evocative of a human agent such as 'the movement chains women to the status of the eternal victim' or 'a 'totalitarian' climate that unfairly punishes men [...], infantilizes women' emphasizes the uncommon power of the movement, but also its shortcomings as a blanket term. Hempel highlights that such phrases further criticise #MeToo as a dominant rather than enabling power, blocking people in cathartic "states of outrage while exhausting" and keeping them from acting meaningfully (Hempel, 2017).

To an extent, #MeToo can be seen as guiding human behaviour. It has become so emblematic of sexual harassment and women's struggle that media can rely on contextual understanding without mentioning its name. It is implied in phrases such as 'the force that is ending his political career' or 'turning a bona fide moment of moral accountability into a series of [..] accusations'. This leads to the myth being constructed by using the hashtag as a cohesive discursive element, a symbol for feminism, whose sole mention in conversations can largely evoke the movement and allocate a new dimension to the phrase 'me too' than it had in the past. According to Barthes (2009: 141), "since myth is a type of speech, everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse." In this case, the movement's mythical dimension is further defined by the narrative tropes surrounding the symbolic place held by the #MeToo hashtag.

#MeToo: Turning Reality into Myth

Throughout the movement, the concept of power has been central to the discourse on sexual harassment and the relationships between men and women. Power and language or discourse have been historically presented as intertwined by theorists such as Barthes and Foucault. In #MeToo, power has mostly been framed as a social construct representative of the socio-economic status of men in higher-up positions compared to women, their decision to abuse it and the power difference between victims. Sexually harassed women have been a marginalized minority until celebrities used their platform to amplify the subject. Therefore, the balance of power relates to notions of empowerment and disempowerment, social status and knowledge of victims' experiences. According to Garber (2017a), the #MeToo discourse presented "a recognition of structures, of hierarchies, of power dynamics: the logic of systems, applied to the intimacies of harassment and abuse." Thus, power has functioned on a spectrum: as it shifted from men who abused and were kept accountable to women who were abused and spoke up. The increasing power in women's hands went from being framed initially as a utopic quest to being turned into a dystopic generalisation in the backlash period.

Given the abuse encountered by women, power has been initially presented as a masculine privilege. Visual titles such as "Harvey Weinstein ripped a generation of actresses from society" (Milano, 2018) popularized an unequal power distribution between a strong individual and a weak collective. However, the hashtag shifted this by lending its power and visibility to women, facilitating "a feed dominated by women discussing their experiences of harassment and assault" (Gilbert, 2017). By giving women a space to safely challenge abuse, the hashtag moved power from an established sphere of money and authority to a rising platform of truth and agency. Unlike masculine power which has historically gone unchallenged, a recent display of female power like #MeToo invited 'a crackdown'. Depending on journalistic perspectives, the coverage of the newly gained power of women has been utopic as 'women speaking truth to power [..] encourages other women to stand up' or dystopic as they 'take revenge against individual men while doing nothing to topple the patriarchy'. This has led to a conundrum for women, wherein despite being praised for speaking up, they are criticised and cast out if overstressing these issues.

B.		UTOPIC	NEUTRAL	DYSTOPIC
D E S C R I P T I O N	W O M E N	An army of voices; Silence breakers; Whistle blower; Amplifying advocates; A sisterhood of women sticking together; Whisper networks; Designated guardians, entrusted with policing men's bad behaviors; Feminist heroines	Accusers are celebrities, with status, fame, and success commensurate with his own [Weinstein's]; Influencers; Messenger; Victims; Feminists	Sexually infantilized victims; A Twitter mob of thousands; Victimhood status; Hit squad of privileged young white women to open fire; The feminazi #MeToo hive-vagina takes over, the hysteria mill rattles into overdrive, and boom; Poor little things who are dominated by demon phallocrats; Feminist camp; Puritan, Victorian, fragile, religious, childish, helpless, hysterical [..] naïve [..] bloody-minded; Snowflakes; Targets; Castrating villainesses; Leaders of a ravening mob; An overzealous mob
	M E N	One bad guy; Idols; Calling the poor guy a monster and a rapist; Another fallen soldier in the sex wars; Innocent men are being mowed down	Harasser; Perpetrator; Rapist	Monster; Sexual predator; Dream crushers
A C T I O N		Survivors don't owe you their story; Women speaking truth to power [..], then it encourages other women to stand up; Women should no longer have to bear the brunt of the burden and shame that comes with sexual assault; Everyone wants to smoke out the serial predators and rapists Life for women is presented as a battleground where we are all only one bad joke, one wolf whistle or one stare away from being assaulted; Women who blew the whistle on a culture of harassment; [Women] are radically redefining consent; By coming together and speaking in one voice, women can tip the balance	Men have admitted inappropriate behaviour; Women are exposing the truth and men are losing their jobs; When men hold most of the power it's all too easy for them to abuse it; [Women] are demanding to be heard, and even more fundamentally to be prioritised	[Women] policing sexuality; [Women] get dinged for complicity if they don't police it vigilantly enough, and risk being cast as castrating villainesses if they issue sentence; How violently present the victim is forced to be in the narrative, and how utterly passive the perpetrator; The countless anonymous strangers who have forced their way forever into their targets' memories; How One Harasser Can Rob a Generation of Women; Their collective anger has spurred immediate and shocking results; Women are angry, temporarily powerful—and very, very dangerous Some women using the moment to take revenge against individual men while doing nothing to topple the patriarchy; [Women] conflating major crimes with minor ones; Women torching men for failing to understand their 'nonverbal cues'

Figure 3. Language forming the narrative around the movement through descriptions of accusers and abusers and their action

It is such subjectivity that has driven the #MeToo narrative into the mythical realm through evocative parallels as seen in **Figure 3**.

Dyer (1977) argues that we make sense of the world through classification systems and wider categories, such as the narrative tropes used here through action-language. The phrases 'a hegemony as deeply rooted as the patriarchy' or 'our terror of female power' capture the political context of the movement in which women are seen as challengers of established societal norms. Terms like 'tip the balance', 'targets' or 'conflating major crimes with minor ones' evoke the existence of a sense of justice, an external form of accountability, that would oversee the relations between victims and abusers in order to decide the truth. The terms 'survivors', 'battleground', 'torching men', and 'witch-hunt' are referring to a war-like situation relying on brute force or a medieval judiciary system set outside of an objective truth zone. Could then justice in #MeToo be on the side of those who hold the power? To a degree, as these evocations derive from a power spectrum, but they are also closely connected to public views on sexuality. Criticised for surpassing the movement's positive groundswell by going into policing sexuality, Traister (2017) remarks that women are "entrusted with policing men's bad behaviours, they will get dinged for complicity if they don't police it vigilantly enough, and risk being cast as castrating villainesses if they issue sentence." This paradox frames justice as a subjective practice wherein women are singled out regardless of whether they support a toxic climate of sexuality or militate against sexual abuse. Alongside being referred to as 'castrating villainesses', women are demonized through the trope of the villain during the backlash period, whilst men are described in a much simpler manner as 'one bad guy'.

Derrida (1981: 41) highlighted that there is a relation of power in binary oppositions where "one of the two terms governs the other", an equally visible example in #MeToo. Initially, men were dystopically described as 'monster', 'sexual predator', and 'dream crushers', whilst women were utopic 'survivors', 'whistle blowers', or 'feminist heroines'. During the backlash, the situation reversed to men being described as 'one bad guy', while women were dystopic 'leaders of a ravening mob'. As the movement evolved, superiority or inferiority descriptors shaped the parallels victim-abuser and accuser-accused into utopic or dystopic metaphors. As a result, a stereotypical game emerged that designed to exclude and condemn (Dyer, 1977) temporarily benefiting one side of the narrative until it gets reversed through a backlash. However, the lexical field of masculine denominations, despite its utopic-dystopic connotations, remained embedded in the pragmatism of men's actions with limited allusions to an imaginary narrative as done for women. Nolan (2017) remarks "how violently present the victim is forced to be in the narrative, and how utterly passive the perpetrator", a similarly problematic inequality with

vocabulary. Imitating the language preponderantly used by #MeToo critics in the backlash, journalist Laurie Penny (2018) talks about "another fallen soldier in the sex wars" and "the feminazi #MeToo hive-vagina" to prove the point that while men are described through a warfare lexicon, women's ideals are framed as an ideology. The abuser is presented losing the 'sex wars', a concept evocative of feminist debates used to designate the ongoing tensions between men and women's approaches to sexuality. Women accusers are called 'feminazi', applying the pure race ideology to the feminine gender and hyperbolizing the oppression of men at the hands of women. The 'hive-vagina' term discredits the collectivity of the movement by reducing it to a mock group-mind driven by female sexual desires. This image of a normative mentality alienates women from the reality of their experiences and discourages identification.

Yet the mediatic focus on women in the #MeToo narrative, be it supportive or antagonistic, has also shaped a key mythical element: the collective. The phrases 'a Twitter mob of thousands', 'hit squad of privileged young white women', 'a sisterhood of women sticking together [..] feminist camp' are suggesting the collective nature of #MeToo as a sign of the movement's potency and unity. Similar to the men-women binary opposition, the collective of women is framed as dominating in numbers and visibility compared to the abusers. Despite an existing bias against women coming from a reticence to give full validation to such a sudden portrayal of female power, the media coverage has nevertheless managed to turn the initial minority of sexual harassment victims into a majority, influencing the public perception of the movement.

Broadly, this discourse analysis uncovers the symbolic status of the hashtag, evocative of concepts such as feminism and sexuality and driving a narrative based on socio-cultural notions of power and binary oppositions. On a lexical level, it highlights the way language is used by the media to frame the reality of the movement into a utopic and dystopic imaginary. One article insightfully remarks that "perhaps the most terrifying thing about dystopia is how perilously close it can come to utopia" (Fallon, 2017), highlighting how easily the positive imaginary of a social movement can be transformed into a negative one. Barthes (1983: 113) notes that motivation is necessary to the creation of myth, as "there is no myth without motivated form". By constantly moving #MeToo into different versions of an imaginary, media keep the event present in the public mind. The perceptions of #MeToo are thus not arbitrary, but rather they are equally shaped by the place of the hashtag in written media that we have discussed and its representations in popular culture that we will further examine.
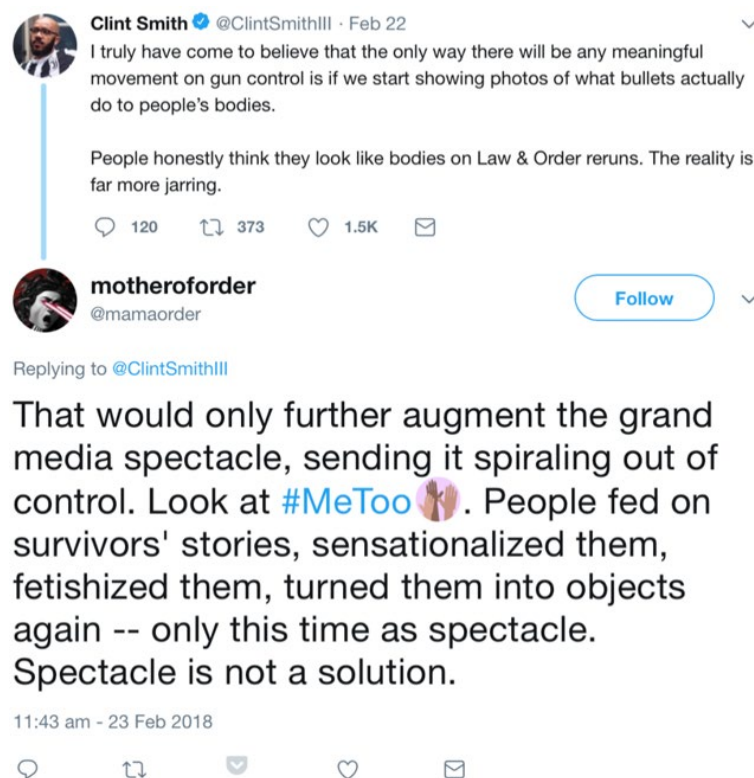
THE AFTERLIFE

Figure 4. Motheroforder (@mamaorder). Reply @ClintSmithlll, 23 February 2018, 11:43 a.m. Tweet

Hashtagging: from Individual Agency to Social Validation

The media discourse has shaped the #MeToo myth, offering it an aura of fascination as a revolutionary and equally controversial movement. This has prompted people to actively engage in the perpetuation of the myth through the hashtag. As a 'too-perfect meme', this cultural token, shared by imitation or by natural flow of associations online, has created a ritual. As with other online movements, participating in the conversation requires that any tweet containing a relevant story, opinion or criticism to be followed by the hashtag. The hashtag's construction thus emphasizing 'the personal and the anecdotal' transforms the ritual into a form of claiming agency on an individual level. For sexual assault victims, the use of #MeToo is a statement of an individual's capacity to engage with the social structures that have marginalized them with the goal of challenging this position. For the larger public, it allows them to engage in the conversation in order to challenge or support the movement's agenda and in this way, strengthen or undermine its actions.

Through its ubiquitous ceremonial role in the millions of instances of this ritual, the hashtag got to play a political role as well, due to its success comparable to political movements and advocacy hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter or #WomensMarch. However, whereas these started as politically loaded phrases, #MeToo emerged as a personal action manifested in the public sphere. This reduces the movement to a closed group, a familiar dimension of mutual support between 'me' and other women in similar situations, whilst the hashtag's ceremonial role introduces a third collective actor, the online public, which is allowed not only to observe, but also to intervene in the conversation. Paradoxically, the hashtag enables both an individual ritualistic dimension in #MeToo and a necessary transgression of it that despite breaking the personal space, offers more momentum to the movement.

The virality and political influence of the hashtag in pushing stories that bring abusers under public scrutiny, however, transformed its ceremonial use from a representation of agency into one of validation. Its usage as an informal yet socially demanded form of proof validating victims' accusations, created a social pressure that reduced women to their stories of abuse as their complaint became their identity. The cultural tension between the agency inspired by the hashtag on an individual level in fighting against sexual assault and its public validation, led to critic Daphne Merkin's (2018) observation that "publicly, we say #MeToo" whilst "privately, we have misgivings." She argues that although women are seen supporting the principle of the movement in the public sphere, they actually feel doubtful about its potential to change reality. Therefore, whereas the hashtag initially truly represented a reckoning, its increasing popularity led to it being used as a token for conversation, more or less representative of everyone's values. Nevertheless, its ceremonial dimension also works like 'a badge of honour', allowing women, supporters and critics actively seeking inclusion into the #MeToo universe to be recognised as part of it by contrast to the abusers who are passively included in the conversations. Its symbolic dimension makes people see it as a representation of a shared set of norms and conventions around the movement.

Reflective of individual agency and public validation, the ceremonial dimension of the hashtag concomitantly drives membership to a cultural group. Talking about the role of religion in social cohesion, Durkheim (1982) highlights that mythology is essential to the existence of a cultural group through its reflection of norms and beliefs in which individuals are socialised and which are expressive of the collective consciousness. By perpetuating the mythical dimension of #MeToo, the hashtag introduces the movement in the public imaginary through its narratives. Using the hashtag for expressing opinions, supportive or critical, grants people membership to a larger cultural group which shares an interest in contributing to the #MeToo conversation. The narrative tropes of feminism, women's rights and sexuality connected to #MeToo have actually extended the movement into "a moment reflecting a collective experience of trauma and injustice" (Haribhakti and Shah, 2017) which facilitates this larger identification with the movement. Without having necessarily experienced sexual assault, the cultural group relates figuratively to the trauma of these experiences, acknowledging it as a social problem which they aim to tackle. In fact, this group serves as a larger space for the existence of the mythicized collective of women victims seeking justice. At the core of the movement, the members of this smaller group not only share an interest in the movement, but also the realities of sexual abuse, using the hashtag to speak up. This allows the creation of an imagined community in which the members "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991, p.6). In reality, the communion is formed around the fight against sexual assault as a victim of such an event. The hashtag acts as a common space for the countless accounts shared online, unifying them and becoming a totem for the imagined community.

Representing the Movement: A Collective Spectacle

Three months into #MeToo, TIME Magazine offered their Person of the Year award to the collective of women who were assaulted and spoke up, further stressing the existence of an imagined community as part of the #MeToo myth. The yearly distinction is awarded to the person or group of people who sparked the most important discussions in the world. In a year significantly marked by feminist rhetoric, the women behind #MeToo received

the title of "Silence Breakers". TIME's article (Zacharek et al., 2017) accompanying the distinction told a story of solidarity and collective strength for shared experience that led to an important conversation about sexual assault. This image permeated the public imaginary and transformed #MeToo into a movement of togetherness. As an imagined community, the narrative although anchored in the real forces of the thousands of women who spoke up against sexual harassment, also relied on the metaphorical portrayal of #MeToo "as a movement of sound, of voices, of volume" (Garber, 2018b). Terms such as 'an army of voices', 'whisper networks' or 'amplifying advocates' used the realm of vocal resonance to emphasize the impact of women breaking the silence.

Through this recognition, speech in #MeToo has come to reflect an act of power in which women are taking agency over their experiences, changing trauma into justice through discourse. Given the overwhelming number of tweets shared under the same hashtag, the speech that gets heard is actually the one from the people who are most visible on the social platforms, in the media and in the public sphere. This reinforces Foucault's idea of power linked to discourse as a form of knowledge and the inherent inequality between authoritative and silenced discourses (Pinkus, 1996). Despite some intersectionality on Twitter, #MeToo has been "predominantly white, cisgender and heterosexual in focus, relying on the public performance of trauma as absolution" (Duck-Chong, 2017). Publications mostly spread the image of famous actors, directors or producers as perpetrators and discussed the accounts of famous actresses. The hashtag became powerful through association with celebrities, which helped propel the myth even further. Thus, the beautiful-stars-abused-by-a-producer narrative found in the Weinstein case helped mythicise, albeit in a sensationalist manner at times, the crude reality of an issue faced by women around the world. The visibility of celebrities made the hashtag salient in the public perception and expanded the movement to more low-key sexual harassment stories like the comedian Aziz Ansari's case. It also helped bring forward less visible people such as activists fighting on behalf of communities experiencing sexual abuse on a regular basis. However, relying on celebrities' images in order to do this created the image of a 'show of solidarity' between the privileged and the less privileged. This captured the public imagination and created a public spectacle meant to support the cause of #MeToo.

At 2018's edition of The Golden Globes, actresses offered their platform to the promotion of this social cause by wearing black dresses and a "Time's Up" pin. Representing the launch of a new initiative providing funding and legal assistance to victims of sexual abuse, the event built on the momentum of #MeToo and put it back in the spotlight. Although the event acknowledged the work of activists such as #MeToo originator Tarana Burke, it also transformed the movement into a media spectacle. The actresses wanted the focus to be on their and their activist guests' political statements, but the public fascination lingered on their presence. If until then the public gaze was laid upon each actress individually, now the public fascination was set around them as a collective. Through considerable mediatic coverage, this form of entertainment worked as a visibility trigger for #MeToo.

Alongside Tarana Burke's speech at the opening of New Year's Eve ball drop in Times Square or former actress and activist Rose McGowan's unconventional media interviews, the myth of #MeToo was further perpetuated, turning by association the hashtag into an object of desire and attention. Thus, the hashtag becomes an object for display and assertation as part of the visible dimension presented by celebrities. As a cultural object, it captures Baudrillard's (2006, p.58) theory of new technologies that work "as erratic novelties, drawing their fascination from their complicity with myth, with the future, with the imaginary, and not at all from their possibility of changing the present." With some people using it as a way to be part of the public discussion in order to gain individual visibility, the hashtag enters the sphere of consumption as a myth, an object, a story that seems cut from the reality of women's everyday issues with sexual harassment and abuse.

Debord (1992) presents the thin line between spectacle and reality in his work by highlighting that if reality is continuously turned into a spectacle, then the spectacle itself becomes reality. In the case of #MeToo, this happens through the change in status of the hashtag from a tool into a symbol. The moment the hashtag is linked not only to the myth perpetuated by media coverage, but also to the celebrity realm which prompts public fascination, it ceases to function solely in the real sphere and starts occupying the imaginary one. The recurrent display of the movement as a mediatised spectacle or public manifestation brings it gradually into the mainstream. The hashtag's initial role of challenging common beliefs about sexual assault becomes normalised and the spectacle is seen as part of reality, escaping public fascination through lack of novelty. Thus, treating the hashtag as an object of consumption of imaginary narratives has contrasting effects. On one hand, it subverts its status as a sign. This compromises its understanding as a symbol of protest, by fetishizing it, turning it into an object to be displayed, rather than to be acted upon. On the other hand, by displacing attention from the overwhelming details and complex emotions surrounding the everyday unfair treatment of women to the myth of women's assertion of their rights, it subverts the taboo status of sexual assault and establishes #MeToo in the collective consciousness.

Mechanics of a Hashtag: Archiving the Imaginary

Journalist Megan Garber (2018b) discusses, in an article covering the backlash of #MeToo, the political power of narrative order. She emphasizes that the framing of events influences significantly public perception and

selective vision grants certain actors and instances a greater visibility than others. Thus, the way the #MeToo story is told and the presented order of events have an effect on the perception and perpetuation of a certain narrative over another. The hashtag is a space of selective vision, a collage of various perspectives assembled based on a mix of personal recommendations and trending topics defined by Twitter's algorithm (2019). Therefore, no one receives the same body of tweets, in the same order or framed similarly when retrieving them through the #MeToo hashtag. The myth can be readily changed if, for example, dystopic perspectives appear more often than utopic ones or precede neutral accounts, creating a skewed image of the movement. This is particularly important since the hashtag acts as a mnemonic device in the recalling of the #MeToo myth. The moment you say #MeToo you automatically bring into discussion concepts of sexuality, abuse, power, celebrity and women's rights in the workplace and over their bodies. If initially the utopic and dystopic connotations have been trans-coded into the hashtag, assigning it new layers of meaning and transforming it into the symbol of a myth, now the hashtag is the one trans-coded into culture in order to embed the #MeToo myth into the public sphere. Even though it aims to offer a preponderantly definitive account of what has been discussed on that topic on the social platform by continuously and immediately updating its meaning, accessing the whole archive in order to have an overview of all discussions is out of reach for most individuals. Therefore, the perpetuation of the myth in the public imaginary is easily influenced by any inclusions or omissions through the hashtag.

Essentially, the hashtag's archival function has a direct impact on its output in culture. Nora's (1989, p.13) exploration of the archival nature of modern memory can be applied to the hashtag as well, as a modern archive of new media. Its role in culture can then be understood through the "materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" which it carries. The hashtag, through its archival nature, is present and visible as it incorporates the whole of #MeToo. As a cultural object, embedded through its association with the spectacle and myth of the movement, it is used as a reference in culture in order to lend its gained popularity to other cultural objects. Brands have tried to capitalize on the momentum of #MeToo by using the hashtag and its evocation of the movement in their advertising. For example, Hard Candy Cosmetics has unsuccessfully tried to trademark the "#MeToo" symbol for its makeup line, whilst property website Zoopla has been accused of trivialising the movement in an advert. The appropriation of the phrase for driving conversation around brands shows the cultural importance of #MeToo. However, this poses a problem for the place of #MeToo in culture. Given that whatever is shared through the hashtag is conserved as an archive, any irrelevant associations alter the representation of the movement.

The hashtag thus works as a palimpsest, in that it has been altered since its initial use but among the countless new layers of meaning it has gained, it still bears visible traces of its earlier form. Huyssen's (2003) use of the term in analysing a city is applicable to the cultural impact of the hashtag. Comparable to a wax tablet in which writing is both an act of production and elimination, the hashtag imitates the mechanics of a palimpsest by offering different and overlapping discursive registers, identified in the media discourse. It reunites religious, ideological, natural connotations, concepts about feminism and women, about masculinity and sexuality, about individual trauma and collective reckoning all under the same short phrase. However, for the myth to live in culture as an object of fascination, priority is given to recurrent concepts already in the public sphere such as feminism and sexuality and to sensationalist connotations and cultural icons which complement the mythical dimension of the movement by bringing another layer of symbolism to it. Norman Klein (1997, p.13) remarks when discussing the existence of an imago, "in order to remember, something must be forgotten." Despite the simplified version of the #MeToo myth perpetuated in culture, the hashtag remains nevertheless an overwhelming repository of emotions, stories and recollections. Through its symbolic role and archiving potential, it is both the place in which the myth is stored and a site of representation. The tremendously high number of tweets and articles shared under the mere #MeToo hashtag illustrate so many perspectives that they paradoxically inflate the hashtag with meaning whilst making it meaningless. The salient concepts remain in the collective imaginary, whilst the details around them get lost under hollow iterations of the hashtag. As a representation of the movement, the hashtag resembles an imago, Klein's idealized representation void of meaning. In the case of #MeToo, the hashtag endures as the emblem of a revolutionary fight against sexual abuse. It individualises what captures the public fascination and blurs everything else. It is an overly constructed image that remains a shadow, a myth full of meaning enduring as an ideal.

Barthes (2009: 171) notes in his theory that there are two types of myths: "strong myths and weak myths; in the former, the political quantum is immediate, the depoliticization is abrupt; in the latter, the political quality of the object has faded like a colour, but the slightest thing can bring back its strength brutally." As an ongoing movement, the #MeToo myth is indecisively lying in the middle. Nevertheless, the hashtag acts as an essential part of both the movement's cultural and political quantum, using its symbolic status to establish its political agenda in culture. Through its ceremonial dimension, the hashtag makes the shift from personal to public sphere, transforming individual agency into the collective representation of the social cause. The emerging imagined community of women survivors furthers the mythicization of #MeToo and grants it increased visibility. Linked to

positions of privilege and mediatised spectacles, the hashtag becomes a cultural object for consumption whose mnemonic function establishes its cause in the public imaginary. This allows the hashtag to endure in culture as an idealized image of the movement. Despite taking on countless connotations, it is important to note that the hashtag manages to keep clear and unchanged its initial goal of fighting against sexual assault.

CONCLUSION

At the end of 2017, following the movement's stirring recognition of its transformational potential and foreseeing its looming backlash of generalised accusations, journalist Jessica Bennett (2017b) wrote that "taken together, complicity, feminism and the technological boost of a hashtag seem to have made for a perfect storm and a cultural awakening at once." The cultural awakening is created here not only through the often praised virality of social issues on digital platforms, but more importantly through the hashtag's capability of collating various forms of imaginary constructions into a collective narrative that it further represents in front of the public. Its symbolic status allows the perpetuation of the myth surrounding the movement as a form of cultural object, to be desired, supported, criticised, debated, and consumed by everyone. While transforming a social movement into a spectacle poses threats of trivialisation and passivity, the public fascination with iconic representations and desire to perpetuate mythologized stories keeps it alive. The hashtag captures public attention, establishes the movement in people's minds and maintains the social issue relevant in culture.

The discourse analysis of #MeToo media coverage used here emphasizes the symbolic role of the hashtag in creating a myth around the movement and establishing it in the public imaginary. Journalist Sarah Solemani (2018) highlighted that "dreaming, imagining, longing are not just pastimes of the aimless poet but the secret weapon of every purposeful social reformer." It seems that the reading of the hashtag as a cultural object, reflective of a certain period in time and its socio-economic and cultural struggles, has been mostly deemed unimportant in the greater narrative of real-life change in society. However, this depends on how change is defined, and this article is based on the belief that real-life change can in equal measure stem from the shift in public perception and people's mentality on a certain topic driven by the stories, narrative tropes and social imaginary of hashtag activism. Given the ongoing nature of the movement at the time of writing, future research would benefit from exploring the cultural dimensions of the hashtag by analysing its recollection in the collective memory and potential for changing mentalities. Finally, this could potentially uncover the hashtag's role in permeating cultural memory as a cultural object recalling decisive events and establish it as the driver of collective memory around social issues in the long-term.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Portraits of Activism: ACT-UP in Retrospect

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ABSTRACT

We present members' recollections of their ACT UP participation from the early years of the AIDS epidemic. ACT UP had a major impact on public opinion, government action, and the design and conduct of clinical trials. While the historical setting was distinctive, lessons can be learned for contemporary social movements.

We interviewed 125 members of ACT UP, using a semi-structured interview including both scales and open-ended queries. We asked the following: Why did they join? What did they do? Why did they leave? What do they most miss? What were the best and most difficult aspects? Major findings include the following:

Members sought, and found a community of like-minded people sharing a primary goal: to find treatments and end the epidemic. In terms of what they missed, many spoke of the camaraderie, support and group cohesion.

Communication choices have expanded since the early days of ACT UP's weekly meetings; new technologies have multiplied. Nevertheless, ACT UP remains a model in terms of its sustained local social networks, publicity-generated attention to a focused agenda, meticulous preparations for actions and public relations, and educated recommendations for solutions. Inclusion of voices of those whose welfare is at issue can be a powerful tool for change.

Keywords: ACT UP, activism, collective action, AIDS, social networks

INTRODUCTION

In the 1980s, a new, lethal, and stigmatized disease was rapidly spreading in the United States, predominantly among gay men, injecting drug users, and blood donor recipients. In response to public opprobrium and government indifference, an activist movement was founded to fight both: the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, or "ACT UP." Its years of peak impact were 1987-1992. In a previous report (Rabkin, McElhiney, Harrington and Horn, 2018), we presented findings from interviews, including standardized measures for assessment, with 125 former ACT UP/New York members, during which we examined trauma sequelae as well as post-traumatic growth. We now describe interviewees' experiences and memories from those years, using their voices, to add to the literature on participatory social movements and social change. Perhaps lessons can be learned that may inform contemporary activists seeking to influence public opinion and government policy.

The incentive to undertake this project has been a growing awareness that members of the New York flagship chapter of ACT UP had participated in an extraordinary movement. ACT UP was a highly visible and influential

advocacy group, evolving from a tradition of civil disobedience; multiple chapters soon were established nationally and overseas. Participation generally included protracted exposure to conflict (both ideational and physical), and had dramatic impact on government policy and research, increase in services such as AIDS-related medical care, housing, and health insurance. In the process, ACT UP altered the perception of the LGBTQ community, both of its members and the general public. Today, those who were engaged in the early years are all "long-term AIDS survivors," whether HIV+ or not.

BACKGROUND

ACT UP was formed in March 1987 at what was originally called the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center. The meeting attracted "a large crowd of mostly gay men - the curious, the frightened, and the furious," as Crimp with Rolston noted (1990: 27). Some came to the group with experience in activism from participation in the gay or women's rights movements or in early AIDS activist groups (e.g. the Lavendar Hill Mob), while others were completely new to activism. Others had experience with AIDS through volunteering at service or advocacy organizations such as the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), which was founded in 1982 (Kayal, 1993). Its initial rallying cry was, "Drugs into Bodies," referring to the desperate need for effective and accessible medications (France, 2016). Following traditions of earlier activist groups, its central characteristic was to be "a democratic, open group committed to direct action as a means of ending the AIDS crisis" (Smith and Siplon, 2006, p. 26). It had no formal structure, spokesperson or permanent director. During its peak years, there was a general Monday meeting attended by hundreds (Rimmerman, 1998). All plans, demonstrations, budgets and even signs and tee shirt designs were discussed (often at length) at these meetings, and approved or rejected by majority vote by those members who had attended three or more meetings (Slezak, 2008; Smith and Siplon, 2006). Standing committees handled ongoing needs and functions, such as finance, media, graphics, and legal resources. Others were content-based (e.g. Needle Exchange, Treatment and Data, Youth Education Life/Line [YELL], and Housing). A third type represented specific groups (e.g. Latino/a Caucus, Majority Actions, Women's Caucus). Many members were active in initiating and preparing for demonstrations, sometimes in small affinity groups, while some remained on the periphery, self-described as "foot soldiers." Although numerically fewer, women played an important role. As Cvetkovich (2003) noted, "The lesbians in ACT UP had a crucial and visible role, disproportionate to their numbers, because so many of them came to ACT UP with previous political experience and contributed organizing skills" (p. 174). While actively involved in all major demonstrations, committees and affinity groups, they were particularly focused on women and AIDS, effectively changing the CDC definition of AIDS to include infections specific to women.

ACT UP was known for its confrontational but non-violent demonstrations ("actions, demos, zaps"), in New York City, Washington D.C. and elsewhere. They were intended to protest, bear witness, and target political enemies in order to bring attention to key issues (Evans, 2016). Overall, targets were selected, actions were carefully planned, and follow-up was provided for both participants and media representatives.

Some members of one of ACT UP's subgroups, Treatment and Data, left in January 1992 to form a new organization, Treatment Action Group (TAG). Their departure was a culmination of ongoing disagreement about strategies and tactics; the activist and research wings parted ways (Crewe, 2018). Other committees already had spun off to pursue focused agendas, becoming Housing Works and the Needle Exchange Program. By then, initial progress for people with AIDS had been made in terms of access to health insurance and medical care, approval of a few drugs to treat or prevent HIV-related infections, housing, passage of the Ryan White CARE Act in 1990, and both local and national acknowledgement of the epidemic as such. However, deaths continued to escalate, and no cure was in sight.

ACT UP has continued to the present, with a substantially lower profile, a fraction of the size, and fewer large public events. Seven men in our sample continued to be active members when interviewed. Recently, ACT UP New York has been focusing on the New York State plan to End AIDS by 2020, issues of long-term survivors, uptake of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and policies and strategies to address escalating methamphetamine use in the local community.

For this project, we interviewed former ACT UP members to address the following questions: 1) Why did they join ACT UP? 2) What did they do as members? 3) Why did they leave; 4) Since leaving ACT UP, do they miss anything? 5) What were the most rewarding ("positive") and most difficult aspects of membership?

METHODS

Design of Questionnaire

As described elsewhere (Rabkin, McElhiney, Harrington and Horn, 2018), we constructed a semi-structured interview and developed code sheets. Format included both checklists and open-ended questions, developed on the basis of pilot interviews with key informants (mental health professionals prominent in HIV research or treatment, and a former ACT UP member) as well as feedback from a community advisory board, all of whom were former ACT UP members. Two of the authors (MMc and MH) were members of ACT UP. The interview covered background information, ACT UP participation between 1987-1992, and current work, social ties, health and mental health. Interviews lasted about 90 minutes (the consent form was sent by e-mail in advance). In addition, six validated self-report scales were administered; these results were reported earlier (Rabkin, McElhiney, Harrington and Horn, 2018). Our study included only members of ACT UP/New York.

Data Analyses

Quantitative analyses included t-tests and chi square analyses. With a mixed-methods approach, we used both open-ended queries and checklists. For analysis of qualitative data, we used the method of Consensual Qualitative Research developed by Hill and colleagues (2012) to categorize the content of the spontaneous responses. The first step was to identify broad domains that emerged in the responses and to create possible categories. Three independent raters then assigned responses to the categories and met to reconcile discrepancies, if any, in their classifications. Responses are presented according to category on **Tables 2**-**4** for the categories that included greater than 10% of responses, other categories with their respective responses are not shown. For the four checklists, we compared responses by gender, by HIV status (men only), and by age (using a median split of 28). Only statistically significant results are reported (p < .01).

For queries that include both open ended responses and checklists (why they joined, what they miss, and "positive" aspects of ACT UP), we present open-ended responses both in the text and then by category of response. The checklist responses are presented in bar graphs. For the query about why they left, we did not include an open-ended query so results are presented in a bar graph alone. For the query about "What was difficult about being an ACT UP member", for which there was no checklist, we present illustrative examples of the most common responses based on qualitative scoring alone (**Table 5**). The verbatim excerpts, often vivid, are included to amplify the quantitative findings. **Tables 2**-**5** are organized by themes emerging from qualitative analyses, independent of the checklists.

PROCEDURES

Recruitment Methods

There was no official membership list, and no way to obtain a random sample of survivors. Instead, using purposive and snowball sampling, outreach was conducted by former ACT UP members, including co-authors and colleagues, and members of a community advisory board, who contacted others and posted notices on the ACT UP Alumni Facebook page. Local participants were interviewed in person, while 26% (N=33), living in 14 other states and 3 foreign countries were interviewed by telephone, with consent forms and self-reports sent by e-mail or fax.

The study was approved by the New York State Psychiatric Institute-Institutional Review Board. Interviews were conducted between June 2013 and March 2015. All participants provided written informed consent after the risks and benefits of study participation were discussed and any questions addressed.

RESULTS

Sample

We interviewed 125 former ACT UP members, including 102 men and 23 women (demographics are shown in **Table 1**). All but one in each group identified as gay. Sixteen men (15%) were people of color, as were three women. Mean age when joining ACT UP was 28 (median = 28, range = 13-50). When interviewed, 41 men (no women) were HIV+. Of those who were HIV+, 29% (N = 12) already knew it when they joined. An additional 41% (N = 17) learned their HIV+ status while members, and 29% (N = 12) tested positive after 1992.

When interviewed, 80% of respondents were working full-time or part-time, 12% were receiving disability benefits or were unemployed. The range of current income ranged from under $15,000 (10%, usually on disability or public assistance) to over $100,000 (18%). Eighty-five percent had college or graduate degrees.

Table 1. Current demographic characteristics

	Male HIV+ N = 41	Male HIV- N = 61	Female* N = 23	Total N = 125
Age, M (Range)	55 (45-73)	54 (44-74)	52 (37-68)	54 (37-74)
Ethnicity, N (%)				
White	35 (85)	51 (84)	20 (87)	106 (85)
Black	0	2 (3)	3 (13)	5 (4)
Hispanic	6 (15)	7 (11)	0	13 (10)
Other	0	1 (2)	0	1 (1)
Education, N (%)				
Less than college	7 (17)	9 (15)	3 (13)	19 (15)
College	15 (37)	25 (38)	7 (30)	47 (38)
Graduate training	19 (46)	27 (44)	13 (57)	59 (47)
Income, N (%)				
Under $30,000	11 (28)	13 (22)	5 (22)	29 (24)
30,000-75,000	14 (35)	22 (37)	9 (39)	45 (36)
76,000-99,999	4 (10)	11 (18)	3 (13)	18 (15)
$100,000+	11 (27)	14 (23)	6 (26)	31 (25)

*All HIV-

Table 2. Why did you join ACT UP?

Personal and collective action about the AIDS Epidemic

Being in ACT UP changed the epidemic from something that was happening to me to something I could do about it. I have political agency. I can fight for beliefs.

Fury, desperation. It seemed like I had to. I liked the militancy of it and the attention it was getting and the effect it was having.

To identify as an AIDS activist, a different identity that was strong, tough. I felt at the point of a spear.

No way I could stand by and not do something when all my friends were dying.

This was the most exciting phenomenon in the gay community. In the midst of a genocidal epidemic, how could I not be involved?

The People

It was the most vital group of people I'd ever seen. Entrance table was full of literature and there was a buzz everywhere.

I admired the strength and image of faggots DOING something for themselves.

I went to a meeting and it was the most compelling thing I was ever introduced to. The energy in the room, the way it worked.

The meetings were amazing ... attractive, articulate people talking about what needs to be done!

Getting to be around some of the most brilliant minds of our age. Realizing ideas – conceiving large ideas and making them happen.

Camaraderie/Community

I was at the community center and went to a meeting. It was like a religious experience. It was a feeling, a deep sense of community.

I was looking for a gay community. To find people I could be gay with. And I found the meetings the most intense experience I ever had. So much energy in the room.

Friend brought me. I walked into that room and I suddenly got permission to be angry. It was a brotherhood, falling in love with and protecting each other. Everyone's back was covered.

I was young and afraid and seeking a community.

They helped me come out. I belonged there. I was home. They took my fear. I was scared since 1985.

Anger at the Government and Public Indifference

I was filled with rage about homophobia and AIDS and completely embraced the ideology of ACT UP.

A combination of Koch + Reagan. We saw that the disaster was not represented in the media in the full force of the disaster.

At meetings, the energy was unbelievable. I thought, 'these guys have their shit together.' They seemed to be kicking butts; we were angry about the political climate. The goal was to wake up the country and leadership.

I stayed with ACTUP because it was a groundswell of support to bring our anger to the media.

Anger at Reagan and lack of government response. It was the excitement and great pleasure of being with people who felt like I did, outraged at the government, felt we should do something about it.

Life before Joining ACT UP

Before joining ACT UP, 68% of respondents were working full-time, 13% part-time, and 19% were in school. More men had jobs (73% vs. 34%) while more women were in school (43% vs. 10%, X^2 = 21.41, 3df, p >.001). Most (74%) previously had been engaged in activist groups (e.g. anti-war, civil rights, feminist) or community groups (e.g. lesbian-gay college clubs) with a trend for more women than men to have had such prior experience (X^2 = 3.33, 1df, p = .07).

ACT UP Years

Why did they join?

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about why they joined ACT UP, and then were offered a checklist of six possible reasons (they could select more than one). For example, one respondent said, "It was the single most important thing I could do. We were in the middle of a holocaust and these people were trying to fix
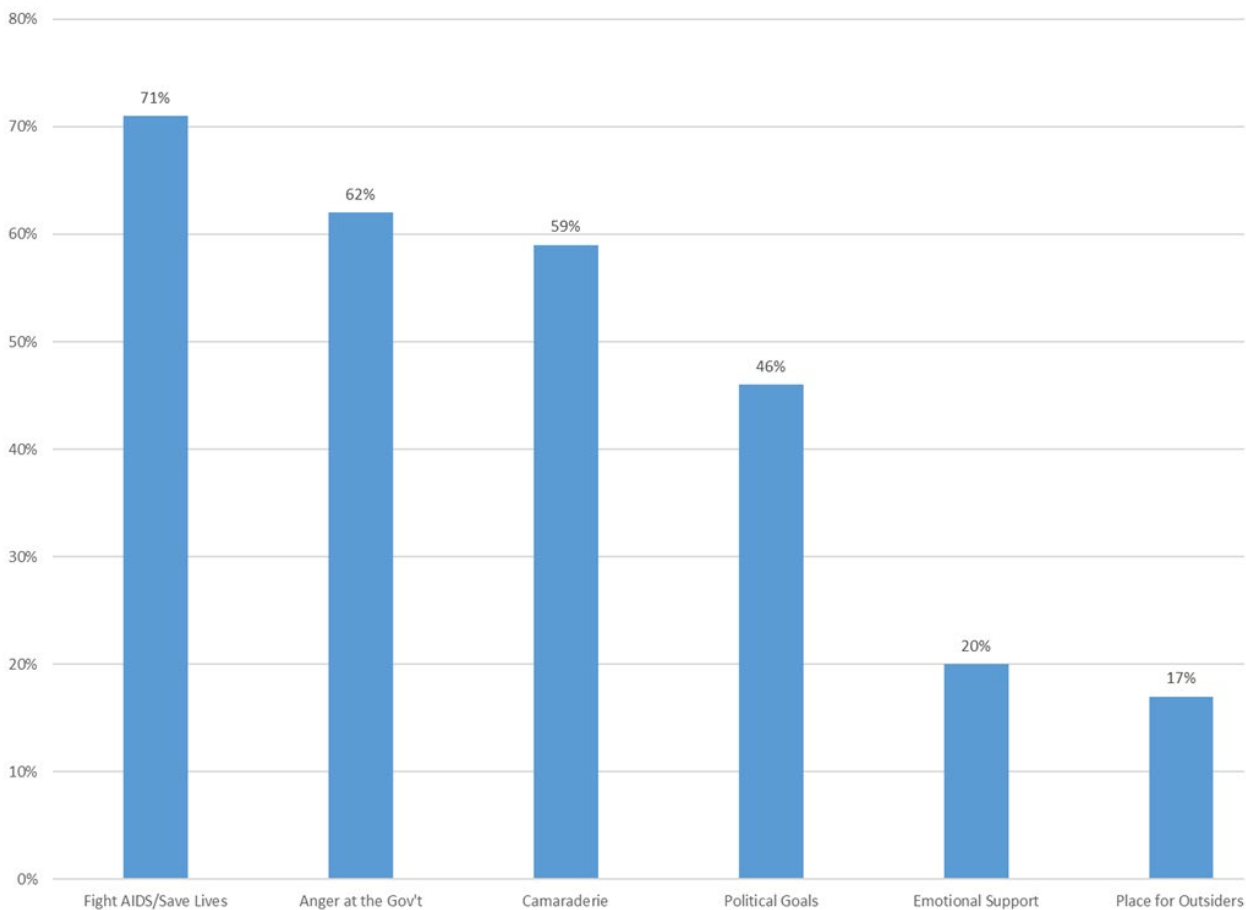
Figure 1. What made you decide to join ACT UP?

it." Another said, "My friends were dying and I was grieving. [In ACT UP] I could take this and put it into anger... It was die or do something." And another: "Witnessing incredibly disparate people coming together and forming a coalition focused on a practical goal" (other open-ended responses are shown in **Table 1**).

On the checklist, 71% (89/125) endorsed *Fighting AIDS/Finding treatment/Saving lives* (see **Figure 1**). Other reasons for joining included *Anger at the government* [*for lack of attention to AIDS*] (62%) and *Political goals* (*such as justice, health access equity, gay and minority rights*) (46%). *Political goals* was endorsed more often by women (74%) than men (40%, X^2 = 14.18, 1df, p = .001). *Camaraderie* was endorsed by 59%, more often by younger (71%) than older members (45%, X^2 = 8.9, 1df, p = .003). *Emotional support* motivated 20%, more often by HIV+ than HIV- men (X^2 = 14.18, 1DF, 0 = .001). One motive for joining we had not anticipated (and thus did not include in the checklist) emerged from the qualitative responses: *The people*. For example, one respondent explained, "When I saw the passion and brilliance in the room, I knew I had to join."

What did they do?

We asked about degree of their engagement between 1987 and 1992, attendance at the main Monday meeting, participation in demonstrations and actions, arrests, and involvement in standing committees. In addition, we asked about the personal experience of the epidemic.

Average duration of participation (for the 118 study participants who had left ACT UP) was 4.3 years (SD = 1.83). Eighty-five percent of members joined before 1990 and 78% left before 1993.

Interviewees were asked to rate the frequency of their attendance at Monday meetings and were given the choice of: *Regularly, Often, Occasionally* or *Rarely*. The overwhelming majority (115/125, 92%) indicated attending *Regularly* (one member observed, "it was like going to Mass"). Ninety-eight percent (122/125) took part in demonstrations: 87% (109/125) in more than 10, and another 10% (12/125) participated in 5 to 10 demonstrations. Seventy percent (87/125) were arrested at least once while demonstrating, including 55% arrested more than once. Committees had various functions and time commitments; 81% of our study members (N=101) belonged to at least one. Other activities also occurred under the ACT UP umbrella, such as a speakers' bureau, ACT UP delegate at AIDS conferences, and a presidential election group.

Against the backdrop of their ACT UP involvement, members were living through the epidemic itself: personal illness, caregiving, funerals of partners, friends, and other ACT UP members. In the 1980s and early 1990s, 30%
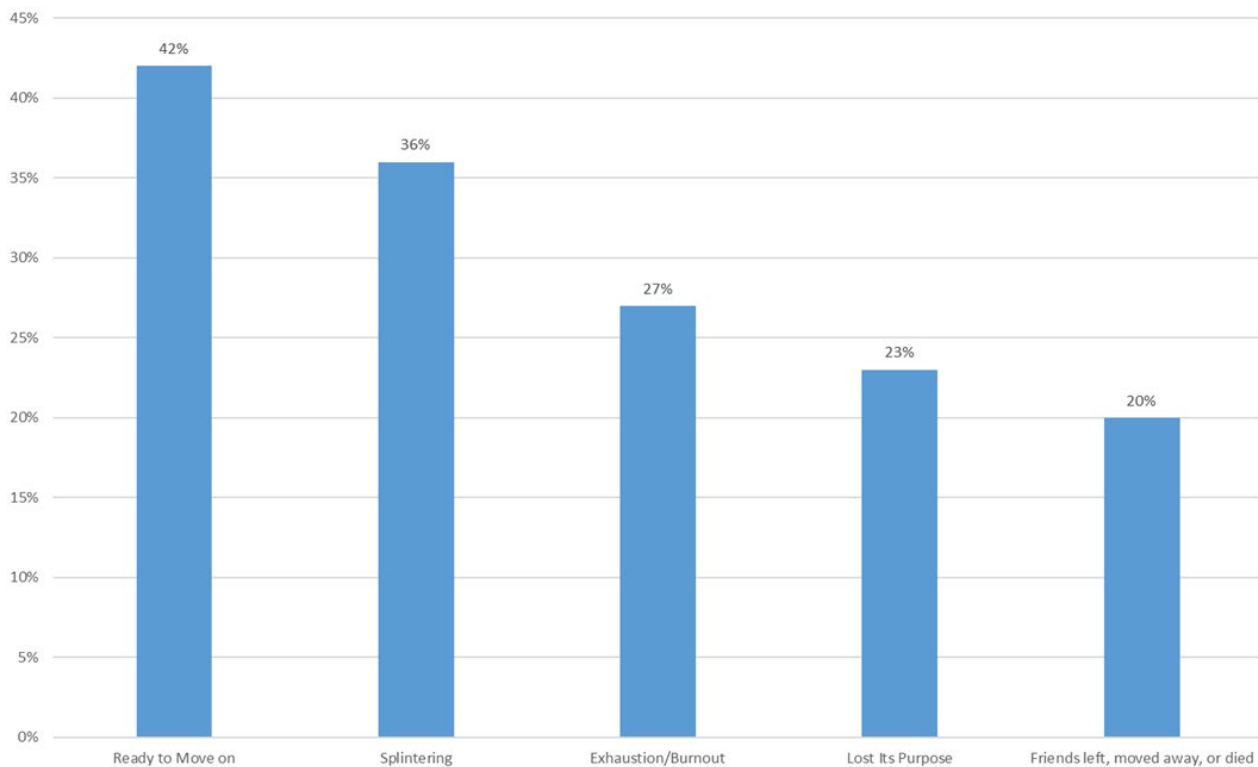
Figure 2. Why did you leave ACT UP?

(37/125) of interviewees were primary caregivers for sick partners and friends, and nearly half (61/125) were members of care-giving teams. We asked about the experience of cumulative losses through 1996 when the first effective medications, protease inhibitors, were marketed. Fifty-six (45%) recalled attending funerals *Frequently* or *Constantly*, and 36 (29%) attended funerals *Occasionally*. Eighty-five participants (68%) reported losing more than 5 friends to AIDS, and 27 men (26%) lost a partner.

In short, the vast majority of ACT UP members personally experienced the human costs of the epidemic, and intermingled care-giving, funeral attendance and ACT UP engagement. As one noted, "We lost half our friends, but we were a community and supported each other. It was an awful tradeoff."

Why did they leave?

When asking about reasons for leaving ACT UP, we offered a seven-item checklist but not an open-ended query. Respondents could endorse more than one reason. The most frequent reasons were *Ready to move on* (to school, careers, personal lives) (42%) and *Splintering of the organization* (36%). Other reasons were *Exhaustion and burnout* (27%), *Lost its purpose*, (23%), and *Friends left, moved away or died* (20%) (**Figure 2**). There were no differences by gender or HIV status, but older members at the time of joining ($\geq$ 29 years old) were more likely than younger members (< 29 years old) to indicate leaving because *Friends left, moved away or died* (33% vs. 12%, $X^2 = 8.17$, p = .004).

**After ACT UP**

What do they miss?

We asked, "Since leaving ACT UP, do you miss anything?" After recording their response, we then offered a check-list. Common themes concerned loss: of a cause, of community, of activism. It is noteworthy that many provided "compound" responses containing more than one theme. For example: "Vibrancy, urgency of illness, the direct impact on changing things, being gay, being an activist. Everything was important - what I wore, what I ate, where I went - everything was a political statement." Another said, "ACT UP was a home. I spent five years many nights a week engaged in a community." Other examples: "I miss the vitality, the ability to do something right away and have it matter. There was energy and clarity in that." Another said, "I miss the collective struggle of large numbers of angry gay people and the creativity, the fierceness" (see **Table 3** for additional examples).

Table 3. Since leaving ACT UP, do you miss anything?

Loss of Community
Tremendously. I never found a community with so much passion, commitment, engagement.
I miss the connection I had with people in it, the shared understanding of what was wrong with the world and how to fix it. And the passion I had at the time.
I miss the sense of community. After college, it was the only time in my life when I belonged to a community. I felt connected to people which was by far the best thing about it.
Friendships, relationships, the sense we were doing something significant and making changes, moving forward and doing and succeeding and community involvement.

Loss of a Cause
Yes, totally - I miss a sense of mission - life has seemed bland since. Nothing else has compared.
Everything was so clear then - Black and white - Good and evil. We were so clear - I miss it. It made the world easy to negotiate. I also miss the excitement.
The sense of accomplishment, making things happen, working with friends. Was probably one of the high points of my life in terms of community and doing something that matters.
Everything. Loss of a cause, friendships. There was a kind of fulfillment. I was so young, 22, when I joined. It was the most optimistic thing I've ever done in terms of making a difference in the world.

Activism
Yes. It was a time when everyone cared about the same thing; that sense of being part of radical politics, and the sense of danger- now I have such a stable middle class life I can't imagine being arrested.
I miss being part of a group of people who with concentrated effort, planning and bravery can make a difference. It's a kind of nostalgia. I miss it because I forget the difficult aspects.
Yes, the teamwork, the socialization. We would gather on a street corner before a demonstration, would do the demo, do support, go out together afterwards.
I miss the collectivism, the fight, the commitment.
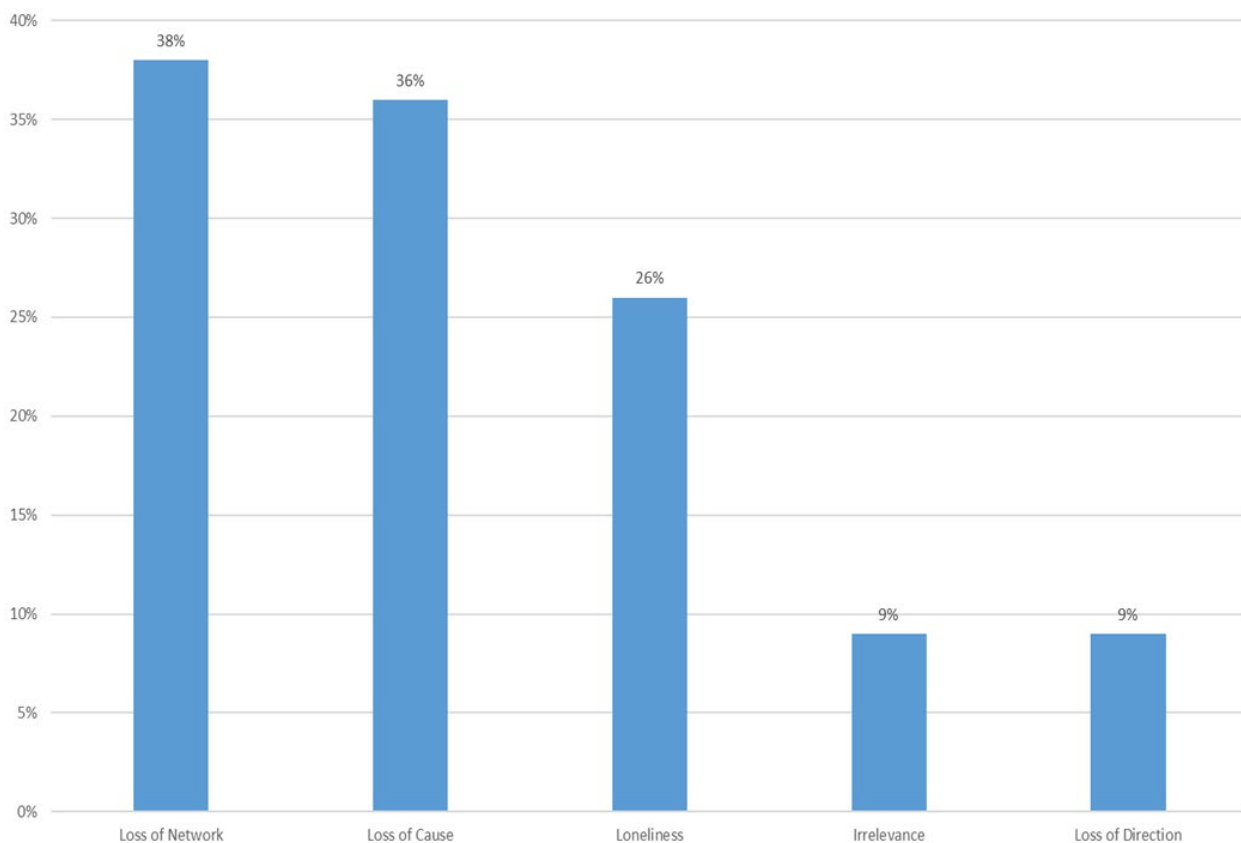
Figure 3. Since leaving ACT UP, do you miss anything?

On the six-item checklist, of the 118 members who left, *Loss of network* (38%) and *Loss of a cause* (36%) were the most frequently endorsed. A related reason was *Loneliness* (26%). No other reason was cited by more than 9% of respondents (see **Figure 3**). There were no differences in response associated with age, gender or HIV status.

A significant minority (25/118 = 21%) said they did not miss their ACT UP years. For example: "I still felt connected to activism. I took ACT UP with me. It never left me." Another, with less positive memories, said, "Not really. We lacked the capacity for self-criticism. The epidemic changed but ACT UP didn't evolve." Others: "I needed to move on and get away from death," or simply, "no."

Table 4. In what ways was ACT UP a positive experience?

Community
Incredible sense of community: like-minded, angry, ready to take on the Powers That Be.
An incredible sense of camaraderie, being part of an army trying to change the world. I was a participant in an activist community in a time of community crisis.
It made me proud to belong to this community: people were doing something meaningful, not just fuck, drugs, die.
A sense of being part of the gay community. I was no longer alone and isolated.
Cathartic benefit of collective – to dispel fear, grief, rage, and to see the impact and change.
Saving Lives/Making a Difference
Being part of the process to get drugs and treatment for people, we knew would save lives.
We were doing something concrete. We were productive in terms of accelerating the scientific process.
Making a difference in the outside world and feeling like we saved lives.
Because of the crisis it was pragmatic and focused on real problems with real results.
It was so damn effective.
Personal growth
I found my voice and the courage to act in spite of fears – a tremendous sense of empowerment.
It showed me how I can be my best me. Now I don't have anything to prove to anyone.
ACT UP forced me to confront HIV despite my fear of death, and that was empowering.
It pushed the limits of how much I could be involved in activism – it pushed my limits of what I was able to do.
Empowerment. It taught me I could do things I had no idea I could do.

Most Rewarding? Most difficult? Recall of Consequences

Rewarding aspects

We asked, "In what ways was ACT UP a positive experience?" First we recorded spontaneous answers, and then offered a checklist of options. For the former, the most common theme for positive aspects of membership concern *Community* (**Table 4**). One respondent said, "Just to be with people who 'got' what I was experiencing, who knew what it was like to feel you're on a conveyer belt leading to the grave and not knowing how near you are to the end of the belt." Other examples: "The people I met, being with so many smart, talented people," and "Friendships with people you trusted and who always would be there for you." Similar responses were recorded in queries about "reasons for joining," and "what was missed," as shown in **Tables 2** and **3**: members found what they came for.

The second general theme was *Saving lives/Making a difference*, doing something that matters: "Our ability to implement change. It was exciting. We changed the fabric of American culture, medicine, views of LGBT, activism – we changed everything."

A third prominent theme was *Personal growth*. "ACT UP changed my outlook, my sense of what I could accomplish, my view of the world, view of myself. Empowerment. It taught me I could do things I had no idea I could do. It taught me there are other people like me: smart, spiky, angry, fiercely committed. We had an effect."

Figure 4 shows the percent of responses to the checklist items (more than one could be selected). The most commonly endorsed items largely overlap with the open-ended responses: *New or stronger social/community ties with others in ACT UP*, *Empowerment* (personal growth) and *Fighting for one's life or one's community survival*. Participants who were younger when they joined ACT UP (< 29 years old) were more likely to endorse *Social ties* (90% vs. 66%, X^2 = 10.61, p = .001) and also *Collective identity* (83% vs. 50%, X^2 = 15.11, p<.001).
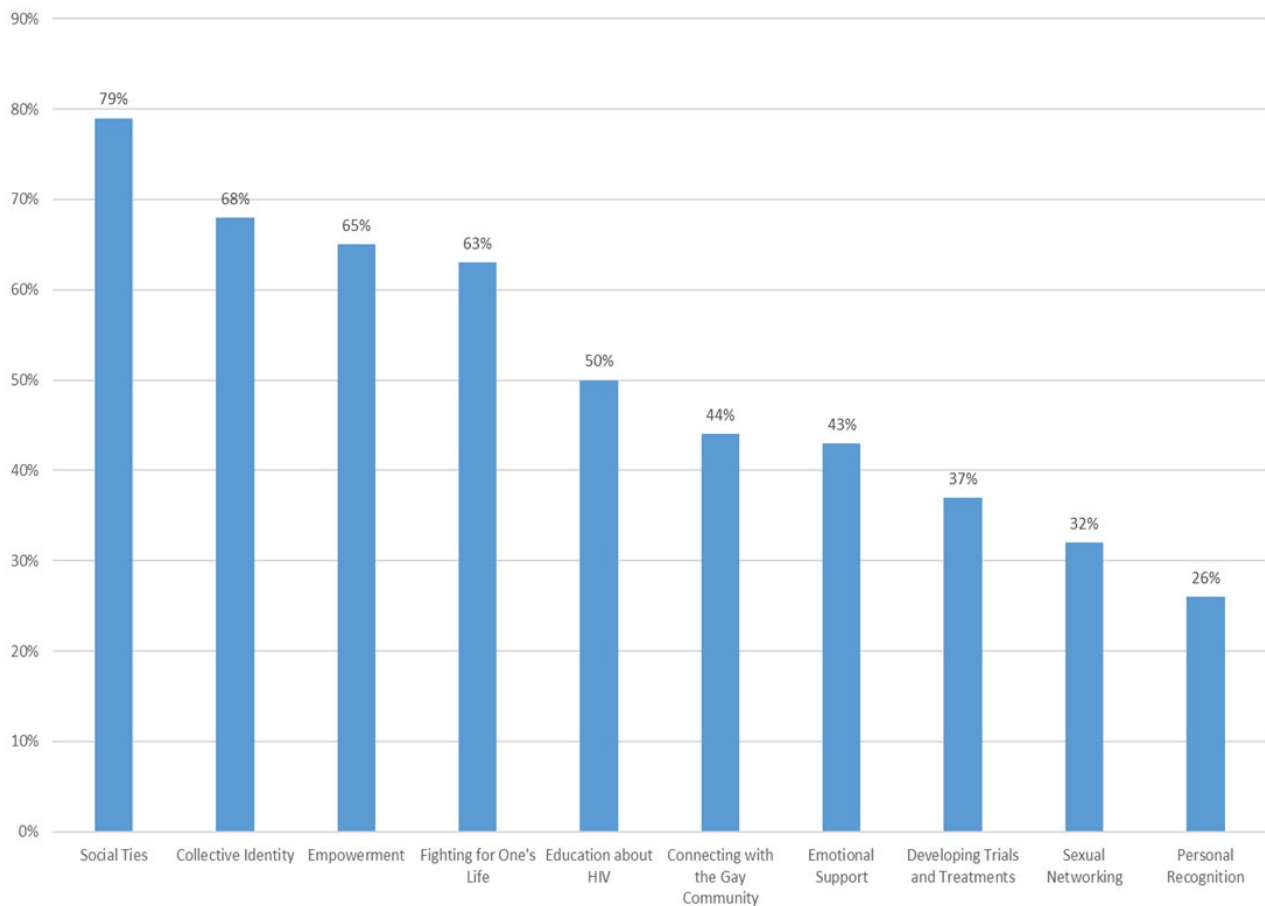
Figure 4. In what ways was ACT UP a positive experience?

Table 5. What was Difficult about being an ACT UP member?

Conflict
A lot of crazy people screaming.
Lack of negotiating, no effort at consensus, just shouting down differences.
People attacked you viciously if you didn't adhere to the party line.
Persistence of emphasis on "grass roots" style where everything and everyone promoted hugely different agendas.
The unwarranted Monday meeting attacks after an action or demonstration; after putting in so much work.
Loss and Death
People dying, we couldn't save them, the drugs weren't there.
Watching people die when you're fighting to save their lives.
The losses. Having to tolerate the intolerable. It was emotionally excruciating.
People were sick and dying, and being mad and angry left no time to be sad. We had no energy to be sad.
Overwhelming tide of death.
Time Commitment
My involvement in ACT UP stopped my career because I was so involved in ACT UP.
I had a really hard time with balance between ACT UP and having a life. I never had time for other interests.
It really did suck up my time and didn't leave me time to plot out my future.
It was very consuming. I had no separate life.
I would have focused on career earlier.

Difficult aspects

We asked, "what were the most difficult aspects of being an ACT UP member" (without a checklist). **Table 5** provides illustrative examples of each.

Half of the members' responses cited *Conflict*. "Screaming at each other. People go for blood. They can be nasty – how people treated each other was awful," and "so many people were a pain in the ass, all the P.C. spirit." The meetings themselves were often described as agonizing to endure: "tedious meetings: democracy is messy." And "lack of negotiating, no effort at consensus, just shouting down differences."

Themes of *Loss and death* were often reported. Members who had died during the previous week were remembered at the beginning of each meeting. Deaths of partners, friends, and ACT UP acquaintances were

painfully common. As one man put it, "When I was 20, I went to 30 funerals." One respondent spoke of "an endless well of sorrow; death and death: watching so many people get sick and die."

Finally, there was the long-term impact of the *Time commitment*. Between Monday meetings, committee meetings and related work, smaller "affinity" groups, and trainings for demonstrations as well as the demonstrations themselves, there was little time left over for personal and vocational activities. Some noted the effect on their career trajectory: "My involvement in ACT UP stopped my career because I was so involved in ACT UP.; "it was a time sink, not moving on with life."

Other negative aspects of ACT UP that several respondents mentioned cliques: "There were the cool kids, the cooler kids, and the coolest kids. I wasn't one of them." Others were discouragement: "We were doing everything in our power to save the people we loved but were unable to save them"; and exhaustion: "you can't keep that level of anger up your whole life."

Participants' Concluding Observations

At the end of the interview, we asked if there was anything the respondent wished to add; everyone had something to say. While we can't begin to capture the richness and diversity of their comments (here and elsewhere in the interviews), some themes that did not emerge earlier include the following:

"When I meet young people today, I feel badly that they didn't have the experience where they gave themselves passionately and completely to something, as I did in ACT UP. For two years it was my life."

"I believe the people in ACT UP experienced something extraordinary. When people fight the good fight and the fight stops, there's a problem finding meaning in ordinary life and rejoining the real world which really isn't compelling."

"I've always thought there was something wrong with me and that others have moved on over their grief and I have not. I get annoyed about people pushing resilience. I get it but if you're not feeling so resilient, hearing that is not helpful.

"The [dominant] members were upper class mostly white men who lived in a community of privilege and felt it was their birthright. And when that was taken away, they had the resources and wherewithal to fight back."

"Underneath the bravado there was a loving community in ACT UP... Something about being with other people who are fighting for their lives gives a whole different tone to the movement, which is missing when activism is for the benefit of others."

DISCUSSION

In its first five years, ACT UP/NY achieved a major impact on public opinion, government action (e.g. the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act, August 1990), and the design and conduct of clinical trials sponsored by federal agencies and pharmaceutical companies. This influence, together with its ability to galvanize public attention through vivid demonstrations, established ACT UP an extremely effective new social movement. It can also be argued that subsequent progress such as expansion of health care, patient education, empowerment, and collaborative decision-making were positively influenced by ACT UP. As Epstein noted, "the AIDS movement is…the first social movement in the United States to accomplish the mass conversion of disease 'victims' into activist-experts" (1995: 414).

In his 1989 article, "Silence, Death, and the Invisible Enemy: AIDS Activism and Social Movement "Newness," Gamson points out the unique challenges confronting ACT UP, which was waging battles on two fronts: one with a clear, visible enemy - government agencies and drug companies, and the second with an abstract, invisible enemy – the stigma and "abnormality" associated with gay identity. He suggests that understanding ACT UP, and social movements like it, "hinges on the answer to a pivotal question: Who is the enemy?"(p. 357). In retrospect, one might argue that ACT UP succeeded on both fronts, despite the existing tension between AIDS politics and Gay politics.

Even considering the particular circumstances of ACT UP in the late 1980s, its strategies are generalizable. Those engaged in addressing contemporary social issues, such as gun control and the opioid epidemic, may find the strategies and activities of ACT UP's members useful, as noted in a recent New York Times editorial ("An Opioid Crisis Foretold," New York Times 4/18/18).

In 2011, Manganiello and Anderson prepared a report, "Back to basics: HIV/AIDS advocacy as a model for catalyzing change" (2011), with similar conclusions. They interviewed a broad range of participants, including federal government officials (both administrators and scientists), as well as several prominent ACT UP members. Their goal was to understand how and why ACT UP had such influence. They proposed five features (p. 8): attention (demonstrations); knowledge and solutions (e.g., Treatment and Data Committee); community (including HIV+ and HIV- members, and the friendship networks as well as activist work); accountability (follow-up); and leadership (in government as well as within the activist community). They emphasized that protests and

demonstrations are effective in gaining public attention, but do not in themselves cause change. The critical ingredients include identification of systemic problems at both the political and scientific level, self-education about change strategies, and articulation of proposed solutions delivered by "informed stake-holders" (p. 12). While acknowledging the "unique moment in time when the illness and death of thousands of people catalyzed action [AIDS deaths in the 1980's]," they argue that the AIDS activism of that time "is instructive for advocates today. It also provides hope and shows what is possible even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Change is possible" (p. 3).

Participation in the early years of ACT UP was intensive, partly because of the limited communication options then available (mail, phone calls, photo-copied hand-outs, face to face meetings) as well as the immediacy of the AIDS crisis and the imminence of disease and death both to individuals and the larger affected community. For many members, ACT UP was the focus and center of their lives, every day. In our study, becoming part of an accepting activist community with a shared goal of survival (as individuals and as a community) was a prominent reason for joining ACT UP. Other reasons included emotional aspects including anger and connection with others or camaraderie. This is consistent with Gould's (2002) conclusions after interviewing ACT UP/Chicago members that the "emotion work" of social movements is vital to their development and persistence. She describes the "emotional common sense" of turning grief into anger, and anger into action. She summarizes as follows:

> Activists' transmutation of pride, responsibility, and shame, along with their tethering of grief to anger, provided thousands of lesbians and gay men with a new emotional common sense that helped to animate and sustain their support for militant AIDS activism (p. 189).

The sense of community, serving as an agent for change, was identified as a major benefit of membership, and is the main characteristic that its members most miss in retrospect. A central feature appears to be group affiliation and support, as articulated in Junger's (2016) concept of "unit cohesion," derived from observations of military combat. As Halkitis (2013) noted, coming together "provided social support and cohesion and a buffer against isolation, loneliness and potential despair" (p. 117). More generally, activism as such has been found to contribute to psychological well-being (Klar and Kasser, 2009).

Social media, e-mail correspondence, list-serves, tweets and video-conferencing are tools of connection people now employ. Among contemporary activists, some work largely alone to protest particular conditions, circumstances, or events. Others gather for ad hoc protests, often without forming stable networks (e.g. Washington DC marches). As such, participants are less likely to have the benefits of long-term connectedness, friendships, and cohesion. The time and intensity that ACT UP members devoted to their mission in the early years may be replicated infrequently today. However, new communication opportunities can be applied to political movements.

An example of the integration of existing and innovative strategies is provided by students who survived the Parkland (Florida) shooting massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February 2018. In the aftermath of extensive news coverage during which surviving student spokespeople were interviewed, a group of these students employed a hashtag, #NeverAgain, organized a march on Washington in March 2018 ("March for our Lives,") to promote gun control legislation, and went on a cross-country bus tour to 75 cities (New York, 2018) to register young voters.

To these established methods, used by other direct actions groups such as ACT UP, the students used enhanced communications. Its leaders have six-figure Twitter followers. A group member asked a local t-shirt designer (and former student) to design a t-shirt, (to sell in order to help fund the tour). The t-shirt had an American flag (like that of the NRA) and a QR (a variant of bar code); when viewers click on it using a special app, it goes directly to an on-line voter registration page now available in 38 states. The intermediate goal of registering students to vote is in the service of their major focus - regulation and restriction of guns. The Parkland students reported that by August 2018, 10,000 people had registered as a result of t-shirt sales (LeVine, 2018).

Study Limitations

One limitation is sample composition. We used personal and internet networks to contact potential participants, as described above. However, the sample cannot be considered representative of the membership in ACT UP's peak years since there was no master list of members, a substantial portion of members have died, and there is no systematic method for contacting surviving members even if we knew who they were. However, the demographics do resemble those reported by Elbaz (1990). He distributed a survey to 500 members at Monday ACT UP meetings in June and July of 1989, with a 90% response rate. In brief, 80% of members were gay white men, more than 60% were college graduates, and were predominantly young (25% were under age 26, 50% were ages 26-35). When they joined ACT UP, 25% of the men knew they had AIDS. Professionals and artists constituted nearly 50% of the membership. Another possible limitation is that former members who were not thriving were less likely to participate, although some with current psychological problems did so (Rabkin, 2018).

Another limitation stems from our choice to cover multiple areas of inquiry, including times before and after 1987-1992, as well as the nature and extent of experiences in these ACT UP years. Consequently, we could not investigate a given area in depth. For example, we didn't ask in detail about the extent to which their ACT UP experiences influenced participants' politics, careers, or subsequent activism, although we did elicit broad patterns.

From a methodological perspective, the approach of the questionnaire was geared towards areas concerning mental health, which reflects our backgrounds in psychology (MMc, MRF and JR), and specifically our interest in the questions posed by the late Spencer Cox, a prominent member of ACT UP, who suggested possible negative consequences of community activism ("Living on the Edge: Gay men in mid-life, and the impact of HIV/AIDS," Medius Institute for Gay Men's Health, unpublished). This perspective should be kept in mind when considering the results and conclusions of this report.

In summary, although ACT UP/New York 1987-1992 was characterized by circumstances and communication methods specific to those times, we think lessons can be learned by social movements today: sustained local networks, publicity-generating attention to the agenda, meticulous preparations for actions and public relations, and educated recommendations for solutions and sustained follow-up. Finally, inclusion of voices of those whose welfare is at issue can be a powerful tool for change.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Rural Development Projects, Schooling and Territorial Transformations: A Case Study in Indigenous Communities of Andean Argentina

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes, in four Andean indigenous communities in northwestern Argentina, the dynamics of transformation of pastoral territoriality that are occurring in recent times. A conceptual device developed by another author – the distinction between two-dimensional and zero-dimensional forms of tenure (Ingold 1987) – is used to identify the demarcation criteria underlying different native terms to designate the domestic group places. The territorial transformations that are taking place today are identified fundamentally in two family investment priorities: in building new houses, or in installing fences for the enclosure of plots. Both investment targets point to the growing economic role of rural schools as a factor that drives local economical circulations. For domestic groups with schooled children, the priority becomes to get employment at school. For domestic groups in the fission stage, the priority is to intensify local agricultural and livestock production in order to take profit of the money circulation circuits and input demands of local schools. In both cases, territorial dynamics tend to focus livestock mobility in more circumscribed and less strenuous transfer ranges, and these dynamics are expressed through modifications in the native categories used to name spaces and places.

Keywords: territorial transformations, schooling, pastoralism, domestic groups

INTRODUCTION

Pastoral societies have been emblematic cases for the study of the articulation between the territoriality of modern States and that of other livelihoods (Barth, 1976, Scott, 1987; 1998) that challenge the capacity of States to establish legible criteria for the modernization of their populations (Scott, 1998): although in all cases they do so from a disadvantageous subaltern condition, which is unstable in the long term. According to this, Andean pastoral societies have been, and continue to be, analyzed as societies in a severe and irremediable process of retreat or even disappearance, due to the expansion of capitalist logics and the hegemonic interventions of modern national States (Medinaceli, 2005). Consequently, some rapid territorial transformations that are taking place nowadays in traditionally pastoral Andean communities, have been analyzed in terms as alarming as 'disaster' (Jacobsen, 2011) or 'catastrophe' (Parker-Gibson, 2015), although not all scholars necessarily agree with this alarmist position (see for instance Kerssen, 2015; Walsh-Dilley, 2016; Winkel et. al., 2015).

In the case of Argentina, in recent years there has been a revival of studies on the Andean pastoral territorialities, both in terms of their continuities and their transformations (Benedetti & Tomasi, 2014). Some studies have been forced to address the rapid processes of change provoked by mining investments (Abeledo, 2018; Lencina, Peralta & Sosa Gómez, 2018; Puente & Argento, 2015; Schiaffini, 2014), and, to a lesser extent, also by rural development

actions promoted by the State (Cowan Ros, 2007; 2013; Quiroga Mendiola, 2013). Statistical measurement tools manifest firm but inconclusive trends regarding the vitality of pastoral communities. On the one hand, censuses show an intense concentration of the population in departmental capital towns, and a parallel demographic stagnation or decrease in rural areas (Longhi & Krapovickas, 2018). Likewise, the monetary incomes of rural domestic units coincide with the low importance of agricultural and livestock products, since they depend much more on salary or State incomes (Paz et. al., 2012; Quiroga Mendiola & Ramisch, 2013). However, some authors suggest that the recent shrinking of labour force markets in Argentina, would have stimulated a reinforcement of rural domestic production in different livestock-herding communities (Paz, 2006), including Andean ones (Hocsman 2011). Some quantifiable information seems to be in line with this viewpoint, such as the increase in the number of camelid livestock in the Argentinian altiplano in recent years (Echenique et al, 2015).

Consequently, the information seems to be contradictory, suggesting in some aspects the decline and in other aspects the vitality of pastoral livelihoods in Argentinean Andes. The impact produced by certain contemporary transformations – specially, mining investments – is of such an overwhelming scale, that it promotes an approach to its effects through a simplified dichotomous model: either pastoral societies become something else, or they perish. This model, although effective in alerting to the impacts that global changes produce in traditional societies, threatens nevertheless to give entity to the naïve classical anthropology perspective of the folk society, whose cultural ontology, focused on an ethos of equilibrium and stasis, would be in a passive situation of cultural erosion provoked by the interference of external factors. This is of course far from being what actually happens. Andean pastoral communities are active agents of the territorial transformations that are taking place, and they activate this agency through a creative use both of the modernization devices offered by the State and of the elements available in their own cultural frameworks for the interpretation and interaction with the territories they inhabit: that is, through a creative manipulation of their own traditional ontologies. My hypothesis is that these societies make active decisions to reconfigure their own territoriality by taking advantage of certain modernization – that is, hegemonic – devices when they are useful, without giving up the specificity of their own pastoral – that is, subaltern – livelihoods. This creative manipulation of hegemonic devices configures territorialities in ways that become confusing when the information is analyzed in dichotomous terms of prevalence or decay of traditional livelihoods. To contrast this hypothesis, I will study in this opportunity the relationship between pastoral territoriality and elementary schools.

In order to apprehend certain non-hegemonic senses of space and place, I have already suggested in another work (Cladera, 2013), what I consider a fruitful set of models of tenure that Tim Ingold (1987) has designed for understanding a completely different kind of social reality. Ingold proposes to rethink the sense of territoriality as a communicational interaction between different social groups for the mutual awareness of the resources that are being used, in order to avoid overexploitation. If the establishment of spatial rights is no longer an exercise of monopolization, then the circumscription of areas of exclusive right by certain collective or individual social subjects – a modality that the author calls two-dimensional tenure – does not necessarily constitute the only possible way to demarcate spatial rights. Another possible modality is the one he calls zero-dimensional tenure. This criterion is established on the recognition of a certain spatial marker – say, a geographical feature, a site, a house, a pond – as the reference point from which the right of a given social subject emanates. The surrounding country cannot be delimited and does not exclude other social agents –whether they be human, animal or spiritual–, because what belongs to someone is not an area but the place. Throughout this article, I will try to illustrate how these two different conceptions of tenure give meaning to the various native categories employed for referring to places, as well as the current directions into which these senses are intentionally being transformed.

METHODOLOGY

The source of information I am using in this article consists of my ethnographic fieldnotes taken between 2007 and 2012 as part of my participation in a Rural Extension Team. Complementarily, I will also use data from a survey conducted during a shorter period – from October 2009 to October 2010 – within that technical fieldwork experience, as part of the formulation requirements established by a project funding programme.

The Rural Extension Team combined the activities of professionals from two national agencies – the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) and the Programa Social Agropecuario (PSA) – and three different disciplines – agronomists, anthropologists and master builders – with the aim of improving the quality of life of the indigenous communities of a region called the Zenta mountains, or "*Sierras del Zenta*". Indigenous communities there have been historically submitted to a social and economical exploitation system widespread in Hispanic-American peasant societies: the hacienda model (Assadourian, 1982; Mörner, 1975). These communities were confined to large estates of colonial origin: Finca Santiago (125,000 hectares) in the current province of Salta; and Finca Rodero y Negra Muerta (164,500 hectares) in what is now the province of Jujuy. For most of the 20th century, indigenous communities were forced to work the sugar cane harvest in the tropical lowland sugar mills of

Salta and Jujuy to afford the leases for their homelands (Rutledge, 1987; Weinberg, 2004). Since the 1994 constitutional reform recognizing the pre-existence of indigenous peoples in Argentina, the Zenta communities have made significant progress in asserting their rights to their own lands, obtaining in several cases – though not all – their own community property titles. The official recognition of community territories was seen by both the communities and our Rural Extension Team, as an opportunity to improve traditional rural livelihoods.

The surveys were implemented to fulfill the requirements established by a financing program called PROINDER (Project for the Development of Agricultural Smallholders: http://www.ucar.gob.ar/index.php/proinder), in the formulation of four social promotion projects. Therefore, the surveys did not originally come from a research programme. Each of these four projects took place in one of the four indigenous communities of Varas, Palca de Aparzo, Cianzo (in the province of Jujuy) and Volcán Higueras (in the province of Salta), summing up a global universe of 75 Domestic Groups (DG, from now on). No DG received funding twice; therefore, each beneficiary unit corresponds to one different DG. These surveys focused on three questions: a) the number and age of the members of the DG, b) the number and species of livestock the DG managed, and c) the purpose for which the funds received as a subsidy would be used, and the reasons why the DG believed that such a choice would improve its quality of life.

Table 1. PROINDER Projects executed in the Zenta region – years 2009/2010

| community | DG | Investment to which the DG allocated the project funds | | | | | | | | The DG has school children? |
		Services: stores, acommodation	Housing	Fences	Livestock	Workshop	Greenhouse	Agric. Tools	Water supply	
cianzo	1		X							Y
cianzo	2		X							Y
cianzo	3		X							Y
cianzo	4		X							Y
cianzo	5		X							Y
cianzo	6			X						N
cianzo	7			X						N
cianzo	8				X					N
cianzo	9				X					N
cianzo	10				X					N
cianzo	11				X					Y
cianzo	12				X					N
cianzo	13				X					N
cianzo	14					X				N
cianzo	15						X			Y
cianzo	16						X			Y
cianzo	17								X	N
cianzo	18							X		N
cianzo	19							X		N
cianzo	20							X		Y
palca aparzo	21	X								Y
palca aparzo	22	X								N
palca aparzo	23		X							Y
palca aparzo	24		X							Y
palca aparzo	25		X							Y
palca aparzo	26		X							Y
palca aparzo	27		X							Y
palca aparzo	28		X							Y
palca aparzo	29			X						N
palca aparzo	30			X						N
palca aparzo	31						X			N
varas	32	X								Y
varas	33	X								Y
varas	34		X							Y
varas	35		X							Y
varas	36		X							Y
varas	37		X							N

Table 1 (continued). PROINDER Projects executed in the Zenta region – years 2009/2010

| community | DG | Investment to which the DG allocated the project funds | | | | | | | | The DG has school children? |
		Services: stores, acommo-dation	Housing	Fences	Livestock	Workshop	Green-house	Agric. Tools	Water supply	
varas	38			X						N
varas	39			X						N
varas	40			X						N
varas	41			X						N
varas	42			X						Y
varas	43				X					Y
varas	44					X				Y
volcan higueras	45	X								Y
volcan higueras	46		X							Y
volcan higueras	47		X							N
volcan higueras	48		X							N
volcan higueras	49		X							N
volcan higueras	50		X							N
volcan higueras	51		X							N
volcan higueras	52		X							Y
volcan higueras	53		X							Y
volcan higueras	54		X							Y
volcan higueras	55		X							Y
volcan higueras	56		X							Y
volcan higueras	57		X							N
volcan higueras	58		X							Y
volcan higueras	59		X							Y
volcan higueras	60		X							Y
volcan higueras	61			X						Y
volcan higueras	62			X						N
volcan higueras	63			X						N
volcan higueras	64			X						Y
volcan higueras	65			X						Y
volcan higueras	66			X						N
volcan higueras	67			X						N
volcan higueras	68			X						N
volcan higueras	69			X						N
volcan higueras	70			X						Y
volcan higueras	71				X					Y
volcan higueras	72						X			N
volcan higueras	73						X			N
volcan higueras	74								X	N
volcan higueras	75								X	N
TOTAL	**75**									**Y=39 N=36**

The original information obtained by the surveys was poor and incomplete for a variety of reasons, including the intelligibility of the information-gathering device for an unfamiliar population; the mistrust of older adults regarding questions about their possessions, evoking times when they had to pay leases for their land; or the mismatch between the native and the institutional meaning of certain terms – *casa, hogar, vivienda, familia, ganado, propiedad* –, whose local semantic complexity will be analyzed precisely in this paper. If this initial survey can be used in this opportunity, it is in a simplified manner, taking only two aspects of the responses: the presence or absence of school-age children, and the purpose for which the funds received by each DG were assigned. The table with this information (sorted by each of the four communities, but not disaggregated by name, in order to respect intrazability) is added as an annex table.

The information that is analyzed here is the result of an exercise of what Bourdieu has named 'participant objectivation' (Bourdieu, 2003), over experiences in which I have worked as a rural extensionist. For him, the objectivity of social research is not achieved by the rigor with which a certain statistical methodology is deployed in a social field – since the underlying social inequality can easily become symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1999: 528-529) –, but by means of the process of objectivation, as an exercise of epistemological vigilance over the

researcher's own preconceptions. It is within this framework that I have built the article, not so much because I have deliberately chosen it, but above all because the limitations of statistical methods have manifested themselves recurrently throughout the social experience being analyzed.

FAMILY FARMING LIVELIHOODS IN THE STUDY AREA

Each DG carries out a multiplicity of economic activities, both agricultural and non-agricultural. These activities vary from one DG to another, but respond to a common model, which includes the following activities:

- the production of crops on small irrigated and non-irrigated agricultural units, for self-consumption as well as for sales or barter in local fairs of the cities of Humahuaca and Iruya (especially potatoes, broad beans, fodder wheat and alfalfa, and in some areas, also corn); occasionaly they can also sell some crops (peas; broad beans; gladiolus flowers) to small vegetable transport venturers who resell in the province's large grocery markets.

- the raising of large flocks of sheep (from around 60 to over 200) owned by different members of extended families, but herded by only a few family members (mainly women or children), using a system of seasonal transhumance according to yearly availability of natural pastures.

- the rearing of small quantities of cattle (from 15 to 30 or 40) in the eastern slopes, which roam freely between the temperate medium slopes during the rainfall season, and the humid lowlands in the dry winter. Cattle are visited and monitored monthly by their owners, and gathered annually to be moved from one environment to another.

- small but very important monetary incomes perceived by at least one of family members, whether from disability pensions, mine or sugar mill retirements, or children-related universal allowances.

- and finally, seasonal or yearly wage labor, which has become more and more complicated to achieve due to the economic deregulation imposed in recent decades by the neoliberal model.

As observed, communities from the Zenta mountains have very diversified income systems, combining production for self-consumption, local barter, sale of farm products in large markets, and sale of labor, as most family farming societies do all over the world (Bosc et. al. 2015). In this case, such systems take place on a very diversified environmental terrain – from warm rainforest to dry and cold higlands – creating a complex cultural mosaic of family management and movements in different territories throughout the year. However, this territorial complexity is expressed in simple and conventional Spanish terms to refer to landscape and places: *valle, cerro, puna, monte, casa, puesto, estancia*. In other work, I have analyzed these local semantics more extensively (Cladera, 2013). Here, I will only focus on one of those observations: the fact that the use of a specific term to refer to a place, also implies a certain conception of how to delimit family tenure within it, whether in a zero-dimensional or in a two-dimensional sense.

On the one hand, DG in the Zenta mountains graze and cultivate by using sites irrigated by springs on the slopes or rivers at the bottom of the valleys. These sites, connected to each other by irrigation canals, are mutually delimited through stone walls (*pircas*) and fences. These plots are called *rastrojos* when used for cultivating, and *potreros* for grazing. The sum of all the *rastrojos* and *potreros* that follow one another forms a *paraje*. Each *paraje* has its own local name, but the individual plots do not.

Traditionally, the choice of the place for the erection of the family homestead was related to the largest or best irrigated *rastrojo* that the family had. To avoid dampening the foundations, the *casas* (houses) were built on top of the irrigation canals, so water had to be carried daily from the canal to the *casa*. One semanticly important aspect is a double meaning that the word *casa* has in the region, an aspect already analyzed by Tomasi (2014). Indeed, *casa* is the generic denomination of a set of contiguous rooms erected by successive family generations, but it is also used for each constructive unit (or room) that comprises the set; each belonging to a different member of the extended family.

According to this, the building of the *casa* of a young family member is one of the two situations in which the traditional system of reciprocal exchange of work, called *minga* or *mingueada* is still in force in the region (the other activity consists in the sowing of potatoes). The customary norm of the region indicates a preference for virilocality (the phrase synthesizing this norm is "*the man takes the woman to his homeland*"). Although exceptions to the rule are much more frequent than effective enforcement, this cultural principle establishes a procedure by which it is expected that when a child reaches the age of majority or when he gets engaged, his relatives and neighbours will help him to build a new *casa*, which, as we have seen, will at the same time increase the size of the family's *casa*.

On the other hand, DG also graze and cultivate by using another kind of landscapes: mountain slopes without irrigation. In this case, sites consist of small seasonal residences with a room and a cooking place adjacent to one or two pens, for the overnight keeping of sheep. Some of these pens – the ones with several years of use, therefore sufficiently fertilized – are used for high altitude dry farming crops that complement those obtained from the generally more temperate *rastrojos*. Each site formed by these housings and pens is referred to as a *puesto*. The surrounding periphery, where sheep and goats spend the day grazing, is called an *estancia*. In many different ethnographic situations I've confirmed that *estancias* are almost never delimited from other grazing areas. Whenever
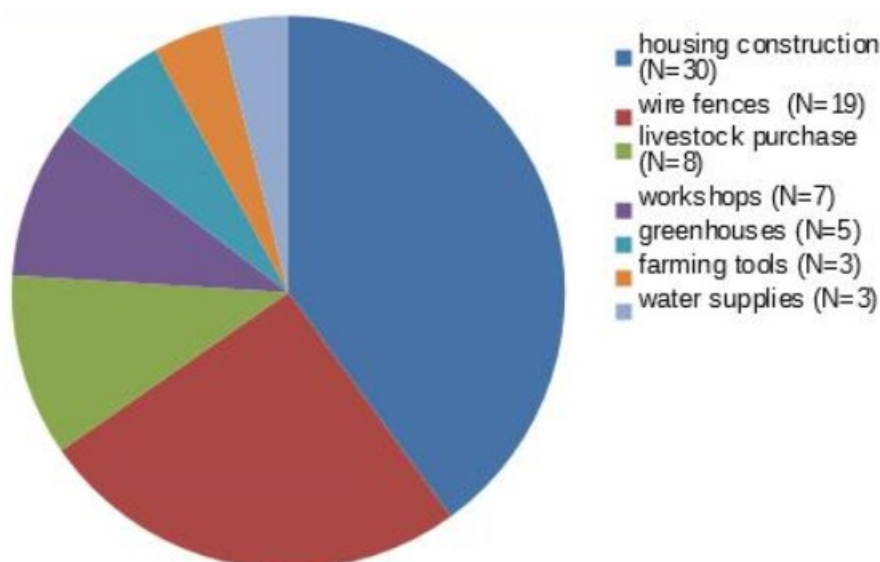
Figure 1. Allocation of funds received by PROINDER projects in the four communities analyzed

I asked where the *estancia* ended, the answers I received were dubious, and no specific delimiting landmark would be mentioned. Moreover, whenever I asked for the name of the *estancia*, the answer would always refer to the *puesto*, for it is the *puesto* that is named. That nomination is thus expanded to the surrounding *estancia*, not the other way round. If a new family settles somewhere, it is from that moment that the new place enters the collective mental map with a name of its own. Thus, whenever I asked a shepherd located in a specific *puesto* to explain to me which places would follow in a certain direction, a long list of site names would take place: every named site, every mentioned "*lugar*", would be invariably associated in its very verbalization, with a shepherd family, in phrases such as: "*después de aquí viene Piedra Negra, que es puesto de Juan Pérez; luego viene Campo Largo que es puesto de José García*". Literally: "after here comes Piedra Negra, which is Juan Pérez's *puesto*; then comes Campo Largo, which is José García's *puesto*". There's no particular named place that does not have a corresponding shepherd's name, otherwise it would simply not be mentioned, except for certain geographical features which acquire an agency comparable to that of shepherds: *lagunas* (lagoons), *abras* (mountain passes), and *cumbres* (peaks) (Cladera, 2013).

Thus, two different types of tenure are expressed in the Zenta Mountains through two different terms to identify the places managed by families. On the one hand, irrigated places are called *rastrojos* and *potreros*, they are clearly delimitable in space, they are chosen for the building of *casas*, and lack specific proper names except for the irrigated *paraje* within which they are situated. They therefore constitute plots appropriated by means of a two-dimensional conception of tenure. On the other hand, grazing and dry-farming places situated in the mountain slopes are called *puestos*, they are explicitly named, and cannot be delimited since it is the very *puesto* as a point in space that radiates territoriality towards the surrounding environment, the *estancia*: constituting a zero-dimensional conception of tenure.

Each DG has at least one *rastrojo* and at least one *puesto*, but the most frequent situation is that a family has three or four of each. Both landscapes are occupied at different times of the year by different members of the family, depending on a multiplicity of factors, among which are dates for agricultural tasks, and the availability of pastures for livestock.

SPACE-TIME ARTICULATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOLING AND THE TRANSHUMANCE LIVESTOCK CYCLE

Figure 1 shows the aim for which the 75 family project funds were requested and applied. We have decided not to breakdown by community, but to present only the overall results, which constitutes an appropriate disaggregation of the information given the objectives of the analysis:

A first glance to this graph shows that two ends comprise more than 65% of the family funds requests. For 40% of families, the main concern to be solved was to improve or build one's own home. The second item selected (some 25%) was the purchase of inputs (smooth and barbed wire, posts, turnstiles, etc.) for the installation of perimeter wire fences. As we can presume, both items manifest intentional transformations of former domestic territorial dynamics, which must be analyzed. One of the arguments most frequently used to explain the choice of a certain item was related to the school. Because of this, I decided to test the correlation between the choice of an item, and the presence or absence of school children within each household unit. The analyzed social universe

allows such an approach, as half of the DGs – 39 – had school-age children at the moment of the surveys, and the other half – 36 – did not.

When we look at the cases of domestic groups that opted for housing funds, 73.3% had school children. On the contrary, in the case of domestic groups that chose to fence their lands, only 26.6% had children in school. We could simplify the data by saying that, in general terms, DG without schooled children prefer to close their productive places with fences, and families with schooled children opt for improving or building houses.

The elementary school has been the first State reference located directly in rural communities, as a consequence of Argentina's early efforts to disseminate secular schooling as the main tool for separating Church and State, and for consolidating Spanish as the unique and uniform national language to the detriment of local native or immigrant languages, such as, in our case of study, Quechua. The eldest school of the region was founded in 1910 in Palca de Aparzo; the school of Cianzo was founded around 1930, and the schools of Varas and Volcán Higueras were erected in the early 1970s. In fact, today one of the aspects of the community's collective identity in this region is the elementary school, along with the Catholic chapel, the cemetery, and the community *corral* for the annual donkey *rodeos*.

As in many traditional rural livelihoods, DG must solve the problem of the incompatibility between young students' schooling fulfillment requirements on the one hand, and the material conditions of domestic reproduction (Meillassoux, 1999), on the other. Schooling requires a rearrangement of the available family resources, since daytime livestock herding is a task usually assigned to children in many pastoral societies (FAO, 2013). Second, schools also demand a rearrangement of family mobility practices, since children obviously have to remain in the same place where classes are given.

During the first years of fieldwork, I had the opportunity to witness some transhumant mobility practices undergoing profound modifications and that during the successive years ceased completely, but that are referred to as ancestral practices – those that preceding generations used to do ("*como hacían los abuelos*"). Those traditional practices of mobility involved the transfer of the entire domestic unit from one *puesto* to another, including men, women, children, cattle and sheep, to make sure that the availability of fodder resources was never critical. Therefore, traditionally, people would live the rainy half of the year in their temperate midslope *puestos*, and the dry half of the year in the humid eastern lowlands, cultivating two different plots simultaneously, one at each place. Both plots needed to be checked as they grew, therefore a periodic displacement of some family members from one *puesto* to the other was necessary (Cladera, 2010).

Such a territorial model manifests as an evident difficulty for schooling activities. Many different strategies have been employed to solve (or at least decrease) this tension between domestic mobility and the school cycle.

The first solution has consisted in the transfer of the school itself along with the families. I have not witnessed the practice personally, but a strategy like this apparently was used in another large estate adjacent to the study area – Finca San Andrés, in the province of Salta – until the mid-1980s, according to testimonies recovered by other scholars (Brown et.al., 2007; Luñis Zavaleta, 2004). These testimonies manifest that the teachers moved with the shepherd families to the humid lowlands between May and June, and that they would return back to the temperate midslopes in October or November (see Luñis Zavaleta, 2004: 78).

A strategy of this type was very fragile and would eventually become intolerable for State administrative criteria, or for the vocational continuity of teachers. With the "foundation" of permanent villages in the lowlands (Luñis Zavaleta, 2004), these practices of "school transhumance" fell into disuse.

Another option is not to move the school, but the student's enrollment, from one school to another halfway through the school year. This practice is known locally as "*pedir el pase*" ("requesting a pass"). In my first year entering the territory, there was still one family in Volcán Higueras that had implemented this type of strategy until the previous year. But, the reasons for abandoning the strategy were many: because of the administrative burden on parents to ask for a pass each year; because of the drastic enrollment reduction at mid-year in one of the schools and the consequent difficulty in justifying its expenses; because of the inevitable decline in children's educational quality; and so on. When I met him, the father of this family unit was applying for a temporary job at the Volcán Higueras School, so that he and his family could stay in this community throughout the year.

So far we have seen two strategies in which the domestic reproduction conditions were dominant (Godelier, 1976) over those demanded by State institutions. That is to say, in these situations there was a predominance of livestock practices over schooling, even forcing the latter to adapt as much as possible to the former. This was historically unstable, for it was intolerable for the State administration. Over time, various indirect operations have been acting to reverse the priority relationship: the school is gaining prominence, forcing livestock practices to subordinate themselves to it and families to see how they can solve the subsistence problem that ensues.

A third possible solution is that the school has hosting conditions to keep its students during the whole week; that is, a boarding school. In Spanish, these *institutiones* are known as "*escuelas-albergue*" (lit. "shelter-schools"). Two of the four local schools in the study case are boarding schools, and several families with one or two school children use these facilities. However, if a family has only one or two children at school, it is almost always because
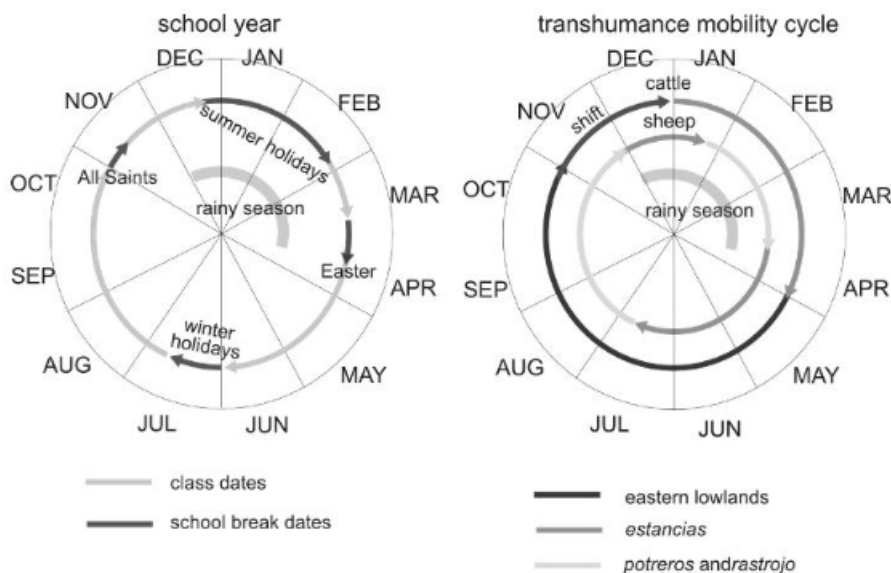
Figure 2. Comparative annual calendars of the school year (left) and the current transhumance mobility cycle (right)

it constitutes a family unit in its replacement stage (Fortes, 1969). In the Andean systems, the youngest son or daughter must take care of the parents in their old age, in exchange for which he or she will inherit the grazing territories when the parents die (Mayer & Bolton, 1980). In the Zenta region, this task is exercised mainly by a grandson or granddaughter who lives with his/her grandparents. There's a specific native word used in the Zenta mountains to name this child: *el pichule* if he is a boy, or *la pichule* if she is a girl.

But when a DG has a high number of children in school (as is the case with families in their expansion stage), the pressure for parents to remain close to their children is accentuated; therefore, other solutions must be sought. The most definitive solution is to reduce livestock transfers as much as possible. In the case of sheep grazing, a strategy may be to carry out short distance transfers between nearby *puestos* at different heights over the same mountain slope. But cattle will have to remain alone and only sporadically visited in the eastern lowlands during the winter months. In any case, schooling becomes a dominant activity over livestock, and, consequently, the quantity of livestock and the quality of the products obtained from it are diminished. Therefore, this creates an unsolved subsistence problem. In order to reduce it as much as possible, DGs seek to integrate school and livestock activities into a uniform task schedule, as shown in **Figure 2**.

The graph on the left shows the school year and the school breaks. The graph on the right shows today's annual livestock movements cycle. As observed, many date coincidences are identifiable. These coincidences are not casual.

We observe that the first days of the summer holidays can be used by teenage girls or by elementary school children to help their mothers to transfer sheep from *potreros* to *estancias* for a short period during which lambs are born and people can milk sheep and make cheese and other products. Almost at the same time, teenage boys help their fathers to move cattle from eastern lowlands and slopes to *estancias*, where they will remain grazing during the whole rainy season. Another alternative is to transfer cattle during the short schoolbreak of All Saints Fest (1st and 2nd November), which is usually a provincial holiday. After the milking period, DGs return with their sheep to their *potreros*, towards the end of January, still coinciding with the holidays.

A second sheep transfer requires returning them back from *potreros* to *estancias,* to take advantage of the last remaining grass*,* and simultaneously transfer the cattle from *estancias* back to the lowlands. These transfers happen during Easter's school break.

Finally, winter holidays are used to transfer sheep again from *estancias* (where there is no available pasture left) to *rastrojos*, where they will spend the coldest and driest period feeding on crop stubbles and alfalfa.

As it can be seen, the transhumance cycle that is performed today is not determined exclusively by sheep and cattle fodder needs, but it rather constitutes a creative strategy to coordinate as much as possible schoolbreaks with livestock transfers. However, the more the family is conditioned by the school year, the less time they can devote to livestock, making their livelihoods more vulnerable. The only alternative that ensures the continuity of the family unit in its territory is the one offered by the school itself.

ON HOUSING PROJECTS: SCHOOL JOBS AND "YOUNG" DOMESTIC GROUPS

In some of the family projects, the choice to invest in housing was due to the necessity to keep children closer to the school so that they could go and return during the day, something they cannot do if they have to return to their family's traditional *puestos*, sometimes several hours away from school.

But in most situations, the choice had to do not only with the former reason, but also with the expectation of some family members to apply for a job at the school itself. Indeed, all rural schools in these communities absorb a set of neighbours as non-teaching staff through precarious temporary contracts: including categories such as "caretaker", "doorman", "cook", "cleaning staff", "greenhouse manager", and so on. All these activities are poorly remunerated, but nevertheless provide some family members with a small monthly income that helps to reduce the extreme vulnerability of sustaining the reproduction of the DG exclusively through the agricultural activities. If parents don't get a school job, their only options are seasonal jobs in different agricultural poles of the country, especially Mendoza, Patagonia, and the tobacco harvest in tropical Jujuy. The possibility of having a monthly remuneration in the same locality of origin, as the school offers, is of value even when it means less income than that of seasonal migration, since there are no mobility or living expenses.

Indirectly, the school also generates other economic mobilizations of very small scale, but of significant impact in local terms. For example: the school buys several supplies locally, especially food for the student canteen: potatoes, maize, beans, vegetables, eggs, fruit, meat, poultry. This is highly valued by neighbors, who see local schools as a daily return opportunity for the sale of small quantities of agricultural products. Some State policies have been directly targeted at facilitating this supplying role, such as the so called "*Monotributo Social para la Agricultura Familiar*" (lit.: Social Monotax for Family Farming), which was in force between 2013 and 2018.[1]

In addition, rural schools mobilize another resource: teacher salaries, since teachers have to stay in the locality during the week and must consume food every day, wash clothes, and have a place to stay. These services are often provided by families in the surrounding areas, including in some cases hosting: a valuable, safe and profitable monthly income.

A third type of locally valued service offered by schools is vehicular transportation. Teachers must be transferred from the departmental capital city – Iruya or Humahuaca, in our case – every Monday at the beginning of classes, and back every Friday. This service, which is the responsibility of the provincial school board, provides a highly predictable option for the transfer of information, people and goods in emergency situations. It also incorporates an institutional actor into the demands of road maintenance, facilitating small private ventures to offer daily transport services much easier and faster than traditional transport by means of donkeys and mules.

The gravitational character of the school, not only as a conditioner but also as an economic alternative for local DGs, especially for those who are in the expansion stage, has been expressed in the preference to build houses closer to the school with the project funds, before any other investment. Not only to facilitate the access of children to school, but essentially to increase the family participation in the small markets for goods and services that are woven around and by the school. This participation entails a partial interruption of the wide-range territorial practices that used to be carried out in the past.

ON FENCE PROJECTS: OPEN FIELDS AND "MATURE" DOMESTIC GROUPS

Fences are chosen as the priority investment by DG without responsibility for school children, that is to say, who are going through the fission stage (Fortes 1969): either because their own children have grown up and have left the locality or formed their own DGs, or because they never lived in the locality, in the case of families that "returned" in their maturity to their homelands with a pension or a retirement that makes it easier for them to fully dedicate themselves to rural tasks (as has been identified in other Andean regions: Cortes 2004; Vassas-Toral 2016). What is certain is that families that intensify their agricultural productive activity coincide with those on which the current demographic reproduction of the communities does not depend.

Some DGs need wire fences to replace or complete sections of the traditional stone and mud *pircas*, since the traditional *pirca* techniques require a lot of work, and the installation of wire fences is much faster and requires less energy. In these cases, fences are used to close and separate already irrigated *rastrojos*. The most frequent argument for fence installation has to do with donkey damage. Donkeys are not strictly bred but handled almost like wild livestock, grazing freely on the mountain slopes for most of the year, until the annual *rodeo* during Lent. Consequently, when pastures become scarce on the mountain slopes at the end of winter, donkeys descend

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[1] See: https://www.agroindustria.gob.ar/sitio/areas/d_registros_y_monotributo_agropecuario/msa/.

attracted by corn, barley or wheat stubbles, alfalfa reserves and other available fodder. In this sense, wire fences reinforce traditional agricultural production in the irrigated areas.

However, some other DGs utilize fences to create new enclosures. In the non-irrigated slopes, investing in wire fences has sometimes been made to increase the agricultural extension provided by the pens; and sometimes for pasture reserves that serve as a dietary complement for livestock towards the end of the rainy season. Although seasonal movements of livestock from one *estancia* to another cannot be replaced, the expectation of shepherds is that by adequately reducing the size of their flocks, the installation of perimeter fences around some *puestos* will at least save them the most distant and fatiguing livestock transfers.

So, while in the case of irrigated areas, fences help to reinforce traditional territorial practices, in the case of non-irrigated mountain slopes, fences are installed precisely to configure the relationship of people and places in a different way from the traditional one. The effort to establish large hillside surface enclosures tends to reduce the time and energy used in transhumance practices. In doing so, the spatial terms used for the designation of sites are also forced to vary. What had once been called a *puesto* with its surrounding *estancia*, becomes – from the moment of its enclosure and two-dimensional reconversion – a *potrero*.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: *CASAS* ARE BEING LEFT AS *PUESTOS* AND *ESTANCIAS* ARE BECOMING *POTREROS*

The intention of this article has been to analyze the territorial transformations that are occurring among the pastoral Andean communities as an active process in which these societies are readapting, through creative manipulations, both their own traditional ontologies, and the School as a modernization device promoted by the State. I have tried to highlight the ways in which pastoral domestic units promote transformations in their daily territorial dynamics, in order to achieve what they visualize as concrete improvements in their quality of life. These transformations do not necessarily face in an antagonistic way the modernization devices imposed by the State such as Elementary Schools, but on the contrary, they adopt these institutions, and in doing so, they endow them with innovative functions and purposes that were not the ones from their original and explicit program. In the case of schools, we have observed how the manifest pedagogical function of these institutions is complemented by another role: as drivers of local economic circuits. This social role becomes so important that DG facing an expansion stage (Fortes 1969) promote various strategies to adapt the other spheres of their daily economy to the possibilities offered by schools. Simultaneously, the families in a fission stage are fostering a productive intensification of their lands, in aim of profiting from the commercial circuits that, directly and indirectly, are woven around the schools.

Both dynamics promote opposite transformations in the daily territorialities, which are manifested in local terms. To express the territorial dynamics of younger DGs, I heard a local sentence: "*las casas van quedando de puestos*" ("*casas* are being left as *puestos*"). Indeed, ancient extended family *casas* sited in *rastrojos* devoid of schools, are today increasingly becoming sites for seasonal livestock grazing, that is, open field *puestos*. Meanwhile, new *casas* are being built around or near schools, in semi-urban hamlets where it is easier to manage collective resources, such as domestic water supplies, electrical lines or access roads, but above all, where it becomes easier to access economic activities linked to the services offered or demanded by the school for its operation.

On the other hand, elder DGs, under other economic conditions and family responsibilities, are more willing to intensify the traditional productive systems, by means of territorial modifications. Although in many cases the fences reinforce pre-existing enclosures, there are cases in which a transformation in the condition of territoriality is evident: the enclosure of *estancias*, which consequently cease to be so, to become *potreros*.

In both cases, modification of the terms used to designate the sites entails a parallel modification of the tenure demarcation criteria associated with them. What were once places of daily circulation in which a two-dimensional type of tenure was performed – *casas* located in *rastrojos* – are becoming sites of unrestricted circulation, demarcated zero-dimensionally – *puestos*. At the same time, what once were open circulation, zero-dimensionally conceived fields – *estancias* – are now being circumscribed to places of particular access removed from the commons – *potreros*.

These two opposing tenure dynamics nevertheless reveal an underlying territorial intentionality that is shared by both social categories: the intention to reduce the effort in time and energy demanded by the most exhausting forms of spatial displacement, in favor of more circumscribed livestock management dynamics, with a smaller participation of the most remote *puestos*. It is therefore undeniable that pastoral societies in the Andes are going through profound processes of territorial transformation, but to express these dynamics either in terms of social crisis or erosion, or of social prevalence, constitute analytical simplifications insufficient to explain a vital, complex and creative cultural reality.

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The Rise of Consumer Capitalism in America, 1880–1930

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Cesare Silla, *The Rise of Consumer Capitalism in America, 1880–1930*, Abington and New York: Routledge, 2018, viii + 254 pages.

Over thirty years ago, Colin Campbell (1987) published his provocative book *The Romantic Ethnic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* – a landmark text in the emerging sociological study of consumption. In an imaginative rejoinder to Max Weber's thesis on the religious origins of capitalist accumulation, Campbell argued that the development of romanticism as a cultural and artistic movement, preoccupied by the cultivation of imaginative pleasure in a disenchanted world, gave rise to the unceasing quest for novelty which would later underpin the peculiar dynamism of modern consumption. In this smart and ambitious new volume, Cesare Silla also takes Max Weber as inspiration, but draws a rather different line of enquiry in his analysis of consumption. The starting point is his reading that Weber had already identified a new kind of subject taking shape within the milieu of the modern city – the subject as 'personality' – preoccupied with self-feeling, aesthetic pleasures and hedonistic pursuits. However, Weber also serves as the methodological inspiration for Silla. The author lays claim to his study of consumption as a Weberian genealogy, a historical sociology of how capitalist processes and productive innovation became interwoven with the emergence of new ideas of personhood rooted in continuous, self-defining consumption. To these ends, Silla sees the global consumer societies of the present as originating in the economic, social and cultural flux of a United States that underwent rapid modernization in the fifty years between 1880 and 1930. For the author, this historically-specific flux – captured in the concept of 'liminality' – was radically disorientating and served to unmoor people from an established order of community, work and religion that had provided meaning and purpose for generations. In its place, the fresh-faced acolytes of capitalist industry sought to inscribe a new order based on a more restless, more personal quest for meaning cultivated by the branding, advertising and marketing of mass-produced consumer commodities. Within this, a whole new connection was forged between intimate selves and capitalist accumulation.

In explaining how this occurred, the book is divided into four broad analytical themes: the economic and cultural context of a modernizing United States, the city and the experience of modernity, the production and elicitation of consumer subjects, and the emergence of consumer marketing as a broad, capitalist endeavour.

Chapters 1 and 2 examine innovations in capitalist production and organization underwriting enhanced possibilities for mass consumption and how these were coupled with new idealizations of personhood that tilted away from the older stoicism of 'character' to the anxious vivacity of 'personality'. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 assess the changing structure and meaning of the American city, tracking the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 as a bold, imaginative experiment in urban design and a model for the reinvention of city life. No longer a realm of labour or manufacturing, the city became an arena of spectacle and a crucible for a new kind of restless, self-fashioning consumer performance. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 address the broader 'invention' of the consumer whom capitalist

industry and retailing sought to cultivate, cajole and seduce. The emerging professional cadres of consumer capitalism accomplished this through breathing both reassurance and aspiration into brands, staking out sophisticated new modalities and aesthetics in advertising, and terraforming new retail environments that captivated consumers' imaginations as much as it captured their pocket books. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 take a more focussed look at marketing as the central strategy of the new consumer-oriented capitalism taking shape. Within the competitive world of business, it was no longer enough to know how to make goods efficiently – these businesses had to know how to sell them and it was marketing know-how and innovation which would determine competitive advantage. At its root, marketing required the ongoing accumulation of knowledge – extensively and intensively – of one's actual and potential customers which could, in turn, be used to attract and sustain their loyalty and commitment. Within this context, the very object of consumption was transformed. At one level, brands transcended the materiality of the goods they represented – the consumer industries were now entering into the business of selling status, joy and reassurance as much as they were Cadillacs, Camels and Coca-Cola. At the same time, the increasing segmentation and aestheticization of product lines and the deliberate engineering of planned obsolescence made goods vectors, rather than objects, of desire.

Silla's volume is engaging and well-written, combining primary archival research with a sure-footed engagement with the extensive secondary literature in the cultural history of consumption. It provides the reader with an excellent overview of how the world of goods characterizing consumer capitalism emerged as it did in the 19th and 20th centuries. The insights it offers are perhaps not revolutionary to our understanding of consumption, nevertheless, the breadth of scholarship casts important new light on the technical and organizational processes and innovations that made a new kind of consumer culture possible. In so doing, the book rightly skewers the pretentions of the postmodernists whose dearth of historical scholarship blinded them to the nascence of postmodern experience within modernity itself.

On a more critical note, however, there is a lack of theoretical and conceptual nuance in some of the treatment of the subject here. The proliferation of consumption, and the desire of consumers to find meaning in goods, are seen to hinge on processes of emulation and identity building. However, such seemingly important concepts are not discussed in any depth and the work of respective critics such as Colin Campbell (1995) or Alan Warde (1994) who have interrogated them (and found them wanting) is not engaged with. This book, in a sense, swerves more to the cultural history of consumption than it does its sociological theorization.

A further issue in that we hear very little from consumers themselves; to borrow EP Thompson's phrase, there is not much by way of 'history from below' here. The consumers who were being brought into being remain firmly off-stage, their parts spoken by exponents of the new retailing, advertising and marketing arts, or social scientists in thrall to new world of consumption, all of whom claimed to know what consumers wanted. A reading of literature, say, *The Great Gatsby* of 1925 would suggest a pronounced disquiet at the direction the new American Century was taking. Where is the story from below, antagonistic or otherwise? How did consumers actually think about the goods they were now desiring, buying, cherishing and throwing away? How did individuals feel about the new world that was taking shape around them?

Finally, perhaps a rather obtuse question, but one that bears asking: Do we actually live in 'consumer societies' as Silla so firmly believes (judging by his concluding remarks) and which he so assiduously excavates here? Sociologists love epochal, adjective shifts. If we do not live in consumer societies, then it is risk societies, or neoliberal societies, or societies governed through crime, or where systems now colonize lifeworlds, or where contemporary cultures come into being critically defined in some way by control, therapy or fear. The list is practically endless. We might accept that consumption is of supreme economic importance yet we should question Silla's assumption that individuals are primarily consumers, their social identities inextricably bound to the practice of consumption. Work, labour, and the business of production still seem pivotal in how most people express identity and relate to the social world around them, even if class has lost its salience. Certainly the contemporary politicization of gender and race, not to mention the rise of political populism, suggest a pronounced concern for identity and meaning beyond what the market can provide.

Nevertheless, despite these qualms, I would certainly recommend this book to any reader interested in how the conjoined twins of consumer capitalism and capitalist consumption came into being, and the role that a new vanguard of proselytizers, advertisers and marketers played in this process. Lively, informative and clearly argued, but with a historian's attention to the telling detail, it is a worthy addition to the literature in this area.

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Thinking Veganism in Literature and Culture: Towards a Vegan Theory

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Emelia Quinn and Benjamin Westwood (eds) (2018). *Thinking Veganism in Literature and Culture: Towards a Vegan Theory*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, Palgrave Studies in Animals and Literature, 286 pages.

At the time of writing, the five-month focus on the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted many to reflect on our relationship with the planet and the other animals we share it with. Many are of the opinion that we are in the midst of the Anthropocene, or Sixth, Mass Extinction. Jem Bendell (2020) highlights how the destruction of natural habitats and resultant loss of biodiversity, heightens our risk of catching diseases like Covid-19, with zoonotic pathogens and viruses increasingly crossing from a rapidly dwindling number of wild animal species to humans. We are also witnessing a global rise in violent far-right extremism, and pervasive underlying structural racism, prompting peaceful Black Lives Matter protests in response to the killing of George Floyd and, let us not forget, Breonna Tayler. Bazterrica's (2017) *Tender is the Flesh*, then, was remarkably prescient. It highlighted both our abject horror at the thought of cannibalism, and the need for intersectional thinking on issues of social stratification, animal rights and the environment. It also presented a striking metaphorical commentary on how neoliberal capitalism's powerful few exploit/consume the less powerful many.

Quinn and Westwood's collection builds on such connections made in fiction, by looking at these issues through a critical lens. Veganism, they posit, as both an object of analysis and a method of social critique, offers a way to think *through* a range of questions about, for instance, culture, sexuality and law. It begins with an introduction to three key concerns: the first two concern vegan identity, acknowledging the many tensions and inconsistencies within both defining it and practising it. They moot the notion of veganism as an orientation, rather than simply a goal-orientated activist practice. Drawing on Derrida's (1997) carnophallagocentrism, and Bentham's concern with the capacity to suffer as a fundamental criterion for ethical consideration, they note the centrality of the human/animal binary in Western philosophy and the role of animal bodies in constructions of gender and 'race'. The final aim or concern is to explore the impact of the current vegan 'moment' across a range of disciplines.

The collection then unfolds in ten further chapters, situated within four parts: 'Politics', 'Visual Culture', 'Literature' and 'Definitions'. The first chapter is by Laura Wright, author of another volume in this series, *The Vegan Studies Project*. Using the 2016 presidential campaigns, she argues that animal consumption is aligned with patriotism. Using Agamben and Coetzee, Sara Salih explores the experience of bearing witness to suffering – is this a form of complicity or an important moment of acknowledgment for the victim? A few chapters in the collection consider what it means to occupy the position of 'vegan viewer' when responding to cultural representations of animal suffering or regarding the more-than-human world more generally in fine art, video games and film. Subsequent chapters consider whether legal definitions of veganism to counter discrimination, aid outreach, or, using queer theory, reflect on the possibilities of veganism as a 'form of life'.

In addressing the three broad aims outlined in the introduction, the collection also reveals three further central issues. One is that veganism exposes individuals to disturbing, painful knowledge. The horror of the slaughterhouse or factory farm, for instance, is behind most of the chapters in the collection. Several chapters also point to the performative nature of a vegan identity. Finally, this text asks difficult questions about the nature of the relationship between vegan subjectivity and academic research, though not providing easy answers. Whilst commendable in its scope, given early discussions about the role of understandings of 'the animal' in constructions of 'race' and gender, it is a pity this text doesn't adopt a more sustained intersectional approach.

Nevertheless, *Thinking Veganism* is a timely and necessary text for scholars of critical animal studies, cultural studies, sociology and anyone concerned with environmental or animal welfare matters. In a moment where we must reflect on the post-pandemic opportunities for a more equal and just society, we have already seen how quickly behavioural change can be effected. It is clear that if the Climate Emergency is not addressed swiftly, we will be facing a global crisis far more serious than the current pandemic. Matthew Arnold rightly recognised the potential for literature to change us for the better; if not a call to arms, *Thinking Veganism* is a beacon of hope, hope which lies in the transformative power of reading such texts. Positioning veganism as an orientation, with the potential to both engage with and create culture, rather than viewing it as simply a restrictive diet or political doctrine, is enlightened. At a time when veganism is gradually becoming normalised, literature, culture and collections such as this, will play an important part in changing social attitudes to our long-term lifestyle choices. An early chapter referenced Gramsci's interregnum; the old may well be dying, hopefully the new can be born.

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Book Review

Review of Andrea Cossu and Matteo Bortolini's Italian Sociology, 1945 – 2010: An Intellectual and Institutional Profile

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Andrea Cossu and Matteo Bortolini, *Italian Sociology, 1945 – 2010: An Intellectual and Institutional Profile*, London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017, vii + 137 pages.

'*Io fei gibetto a me de le mie case*' - I made my own home be my gallows. Thus wrote Dante Alighieri in *The Divine Comedy*. I am starting to know what he meant. Like so many others at the time of writing, I have been exiled from my office and condemned to work at home. There is nothing either comedic or divine about working from home. I can discern very little on the horizon of my short to medium-term future on which to fixate as way of an antidote to the acute anomie of the present. All the more surprising that on completing my close reading of Andrea Cossu and Matteo Bortolini's *Italian Sociology, 1945 - 2010: An Intellectual and Institutional Profile*, I found myself actively feeling grateful for my current predicament. Notwithstanding sustained assaults to disciplinary autonomy, the intensifying marketization of higher education, and the fug of Covid-19 induced uncertainty that lays thick in the air, relative to our Italian cousins the state of sociology in Britain could be a lot worse.

This book forms part of an edited series presided over by John Holmwood and Stephen Turner entitled *Sociology Transformed*. Commissioned in 2017 by Palgrave, the series maps changes to the field of sociology 'on a country by country basis', which it does with the aim of contributing 'to the discussion of the future of the subject' in its 'many variant forms across the globe' (ii). Set against the backdrop of this wider orientation, the book provides an historical 'sociological account of sociology as an academic profession in Italy between 1945 and the late twentieth century' (2). More specifically, the authors aim to demonstrate how 'the particular configuration of intellectual agencies, organizational constraints, and disciplinary structuration' have informed the evolution of the discipline in Italy to date (4).

Animated by the desire to go beyond the overly 'politicized and romanticized' myths embedded within the professional memory on the one hand, and poorly substantiated scholarly accounts on the other, the book depicts the fragmented, polycentric and piece-meal development of sociology in Italy in the post-war period (3).

Cossu and Bortolini's sociological reconstruction of the history of Italian sociology assumes a primarily two-part structure. Running to eight chapters in total, the first four chapters combine to tell the story of the intellectual and organizational development of the discipline in the period from the final third of the 19th century to the appointment of the first full chairs in sociology in 1961. Chapter one recounts the struggle to separate out the intellectual and disciplinary identity of sociology from the humanities on the one hand, and statistics, economics and political science, on the other. Chapters two and three address further issues of disciplinary differentiation, early attempts at empirical sociological research, and the marginalization of sociological practice to a range of 'extra-academic' research centres and institutes - most notably in Milan and Turin in the North, and the multi-

faceted entity that is *Il Mulino*, in Bologna. Chapter four delineates processes of continuity and change in the professional sociological habitus from the last 1960s onwards, as the intellectual dispositions of the then up-and-coming generation of institutionally trained scholars clashed with those inscribed in the old-guard.

The remaining four chapters are each devoted to mapping the direction and diversification of the discipline in the years following the establishment of the first fully accredited degree in sociology at the University of Trento – the subject of chapter five. Chapter six explores the influence of Marxist-inspired forms of critique of Italy's modernization both during and from the 1960s onwards, whereas chapter seven describes the steady fragmentation of Italian sociology from the 1970s into two main ideological camps – 'Catholic' and 'lay'. The final and eighth chapter provides a survey of the state of the field from the 1980s up until 2010. The take home point here is that growing numbers of Italian social scientists 'are abandoning Italian as their main language of communication and are distancing themselves from the ossified national academic conventions' (112). For now at least, it seems unlikely that the future of Italian sociology lies in Italy.

In summary, this is a well organized, well-researched, and clearly written book. Moreover, the light-touch approach to theory, the authors drawing loosely on Bourdieu's Field Theory and Abbott's 'ecological approach' to frame the data, ensures that the peculiarities of the Italian case are viewed through the prism of general-level processes and patterns. While the narrower aims of this book may well serve to limit its appeal to a wider sociological readership, in terms of its broader value Cossu and Bortolini's study provides a pertinent reminder that the rise and fall of academic disciplines is largely determined by forces and factors that lay well beyond the sphere of influence of their practitioners. There is much to learn from the way social scientists in Italy have sought to overcome the institutional structures and state-led policies constraining them. Let us hope that the future of sociology in Britain bears little resemblance to the history of the discipline in Italy to date.

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