

# *Omnino*

Undergraduate Research Journal

**VOLUME 13**

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY



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Undergraduate Research Journal

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# *Omnino*

*Omnino* is a peer-reviewed, scholarly research journal for the undergraduate students and academic community of Valdosta State University. *Omnino* publishes original research from VSU students in all disciplines, bringing student scholarship to a wider academic audience. Undergraduates from every discipline are encouraged to submit their work; papers from upper level courses are suggested.

The word “*Omnino*” is Latin for “altogether.” *Omnino* stands for the journal’s main mission to bring together all disciplines of academia to form a well-rounded and comprehensive research journal.

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Co-Authored By Carter Gilbert, Valdosta State University  
and Anna Landsem, University of Saint Thomas

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## **Assessment of the Development of Geotourism and Ecotourism in the Pokhara Valley, Nepal**

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Tribhuvan Univeraity**

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### ***Article Abstract:***

*This project was conducted in Pokhara, Nepal, to find the potential of geoh heritage sites and to supply avenues for sustainable development and education. We assessed five tourist locations on their potential for geotourism and seven sites for their ecotourism practices. The geotourism quantitative assessment and degradational risk assessment used a survey developed by Brilha (2016). A modified version of the questionnaire created by Baral, et al. (2012) was used to evaluate locations for their ecotourism ability in combination with the 5 general Principles of Ecotourism. The study appraised Pokhara for its geodiversity, geological heritage, and ecological conservation in line with UNESCO's list of attributes for aspiring Geoparks (aUGGp). These areas had high scores in geological diversity and geosite potential that may benefit from increased resources to support overall geological education and conservation as an aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark. This study aims to provide resources for tourists at these tourist locations with information on relevant geologic morphology, lithology, eco-conscious procedures, and conservation mitigations, as well as geo- and cultural history.*

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## Introduction

Hazards of Nepal's geology are at the forefront of public knowledge, scientific research, and media outreach because of their relevance as a threat to human life. While the geohazards of Nepal threaten lives and infrastructure, other aspects of geology can be utilized by its people to promote sustainable economic growth. In addition to financial benefits, there is a need for geologic education for Nepal's public and tourists. In a country with such a diversity in altitude, earth processes are further relevant to everyday human life and culture. Scientists, students, and the general public can benefit from this wealth of knowledge because of the advantageous location of their home and its geologic exceptionality.

This study will focus on the Pokhara Valley area, the tourist capital of Nepal. This city shows huge geologic diversity, from far-off mountainous views to small-scale variations in strata. The science behind these sites, however, often falls to the tour guide to explain or to tourists to discover on their own. It would be beneficial to the tourist industry and citizens to have accurate, accessible information that paints a geologic picture understandable to all.

Ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas [that maintain] the welfare of the local community and [involve] interpretation and education...” and “[t]he development of ecotourism has to contribute minimal impact on ecosystems and to the local community's economy, as well as respect for the local culture” (Yuwono, E. et al., 2021). Conservation of the natural land is only part of ecotourism. Sustaining the local community, such as their cultural and religious sites, is another critical part. These ideals and the four pillars that are expected of an ecotourist location are used in the criteria for analyzing each tourist site. According to Saayman (2009) the four Pillars of Ecotourism are: “Conservation and promotion of the natural and cultural environment, Sustainable management of the environ-

ment, Participation by the local community, and Tourist satisfaction”. In addition to geotourism potential, this study hopes to evaluate the locations on their current conservatory, sustainable, and eco-friendly applications and mitigation methods and their effectiveness.

## **Main Research Questions**

What are the important geological attributes of each site for tourists’ and the public’s education? How is ecotourism being advertised and upheld on each site? What principles are being utilized and what mitigation methods are performed to ensure the area remains an ecotourist site? Do these locations offer a diversity of amenities to conservation range? What is the geotourism potential in this area and does this area as a whole fit into UNESCO’s geopark requirements?

## **Research Methods**

At each site, geological information such as mineralogy, morphology, and structures were gathered using standard field techniques. Fieldwork was aided by a literature review to create a concise story of the site’s natural history. Geological figures and graphics were created using Microsoft software.

Analytical data for geoheritage potential and risk were found for each site using the quantitative assessment of geosites rubric (Table A2), which was originally published in Geoheritage. This allows more objective research about these sites’ potential for educational and recreational uses. The researchers generally ranked each of these characteristics from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least optimal for education/tourism and 5 being the most optimal. As Nepal has a particularly strong potential for risks, a degradation Risk Assessment from the same source was included (Table A3).

The information obtained for the ecotourism assessment was how each site performs and adheres to the Principles of Ecotourism. This included evaluation through yes or no questions for amenities offered at the tourist sites (Table A4) and a ranking of 1 through 5 on the availability of certain eco-friendly, tourism-focused criteria (Table A5). Averages were calculated from a list of predetermined questions that encompass the principles of ecotourism and each site's conservation methods. The researchers used a modified rendition of the questionnaire created by Baral, et al., to determine amenities offered and ecotourism criteria met at each location. A modified version was used because there does not appear to be a universal and official scale to determine if an organization, company, or location qualifies as an ecotourist site. It is important to note that the scale and criteria used for all the amenities (Table A4) are weighed equally as either having an amenity (yes) or not having it (no) within the Amenities Rating Scale (ARS). If an area exhibits one method of Leave No Trace principles being used or one accessibility procedure, it is weighed equally to a location that may have two or more procedures implemented at the site.

The criteria within the Ecotourism Rating Scale (ERS) is based on a 1 to 5 scale with a rating of 1 meaning there are poor or no conservation/sustainability aspects, and 5 meaning there are great or near-perfect sustainability aspects. These location ratings were completed as accurately as possible by the researchers, though it is evident that interpretation and perceptual errors particularly of foreigners in an area can and do occur during analysis.

## **Results:**

The intramontane valley of Pokhara draws tourists from around the world with its cultural heritage sites, beautiful mountain views, and active lakeside neighborhood. It also houses a variety of locations that are prime areas for observing sedimen-

tary structures, massive debris deposits, large geomorphologic formations, karstification, and river processes. This variety of geologic features makes geotourism in Pokhara a massive prospect, with the entire region having the potential to be a UNESCO geopark in the future.



Figure 1: Map of the Site Locations (Google Earth image, 2022).

<i>Site Name</i>	<b>Geotourism Assessment Score (100 is the most potential, 0 being the least)</b>	<b>Risk Assessment Score (100 as least risk, 0 as most risk)</b>	<b>Amenities Rating Scale (ARS; 0 as least offered, 100 as most)</b>	<b>Ecotourism Rating Scale (ERS; 0 as least eco, 100 as most)</b>
<i>World Peace Pagoda</i>	88%	70%	67%	86%
<i>Phewa Lake/ Tal Barhi</i>	79%	40%	53%	69%
<i>Seti River Gorge</i>	78%	66%	33%	43%
<i>Devi's Falls</i>	81%	61%	33%	54%
<i>Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave</i>	82%	51%	40%	51%
<i>Annapurna Museum</i>	N/A	N/A	53%	83%
<i>International Mountain Museum</i>	N/A	N/A	67%	74%

Table 1: Final scores for each site (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

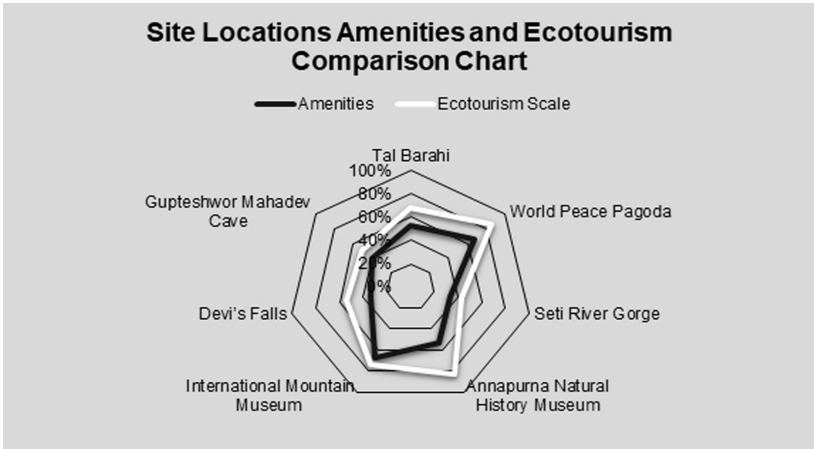


Figure 2: Site Locations Amenities and Ecotourism Comparison Chart (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

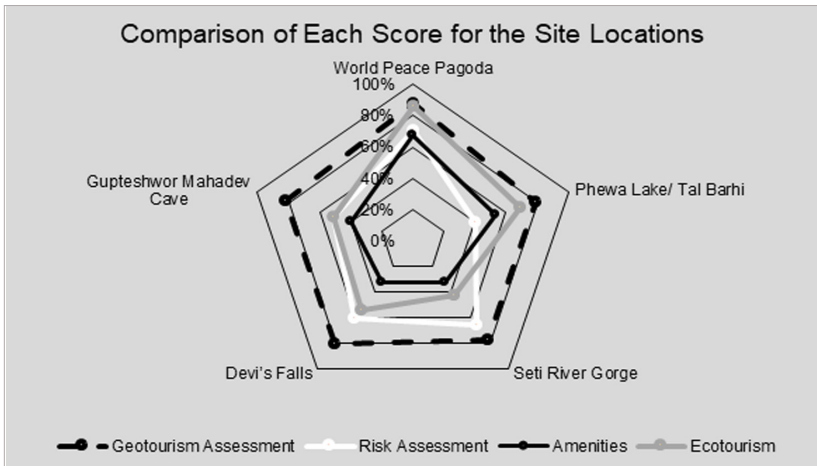


Figure 3: Comparison of Each Score for the Site Locations (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

## World Peace Pagoda



Figure 4: World Peace Pagoda view (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

The first observed site was the World Peace Pagoda, situated just under 1000 meters on the south side of Phewa Lake. Geologic features noticeable on the hike up to this site are phyllite outcrops and landslide scarps from residual soils. From the top, the glaciated Annapurna Range can be viewed, including the Harpan Khola Floodplains near Phewa Lake, terraces, as well as larger-scale landslide scarps. On the Geosite Assessment Scale, the area received 88% (Table 1). The most highly-ranked attribute of this site was the scenery, with a view of the Annapurna Range and many large-scale geomorphological features that surround the Pokhara Valley. In addition, the Pagoda is a well-established site for pilgrimages and tourism as it enshrines relics of Lord Shakyamuni Buddha. This association with cultural values allows for more outreach of tourists, whether they hike to this site for the beautiful pagoda or the overlook of Pokhara and its geology.

While the scenery adds geological heritage to this site, the accessibility of this uphill site will deter tourists, especially those who are elderly or disabled. There is also a risk for deterioration in each location—in this case, the Risk Assessment Scale was moderate to low at 70% (Table 1). The main risk is landslides in the weathered outcrops and water-logged soils surrounding the hike. The gabion levee mitigation of these slopes and the upkeep of the monument lessens the risk these slopes pose to those who visit this site. The majority of the hike up appears to be well preserved and sustained with minimal urban development, allowing the tourist to be almost fully enveloped by the forest. While this site is difficult to reach by walking, there were aspects of the hike up the mountain that were noted for their accessible attributes. These included some handrails (an ongoing installation) and resting locations. Along the path to the World Peace Pagoda, trashcans were frequently spaced along the durable-surfaced trail that minimized off-trail walking. These were provided and possibly maintained by a local boating company. Once at the top of the Pagoda, signs about the cultural significance and the history of the Lord Buddha were in both English and Nepali. There were also signs displaying Leave No Trace principles, such as enforced observed silence for consideration to pilgrims and signs saying to not pick flowers or otherwise disturb wildlife. The area was free to enter for tourists and locals, though donation boxes were available. Solar panels at the top of the mountain around the pagoda were also observed. These operations made this area a good choice for an ecotourist interested in the cultural tourism of Pokhara. For the Amenities Rating Scale (ARS) average, the World Peace Pagoda scored 67% (Table A4), and the Ecotourism Rating Scale (ERS) averaged 86% (Table A5).



## Phewa Lake



Figure 5: Phewa Lake (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

Other case studies of the Geosite Assessment Scale of Pokhara brought scores close to 80%. Phewa Lake is incredibly accessible, surrounded by a bustling tourist district on one side, with cultural and recreational areas perched on top of the hills that flank it. This proximity to other sites is a huge benefit to developing tourist areas. The measurement of this development potential is 79% (Table 1). However, the ability to access this site easily makes it more at risk of degradation and pollution from the dense population around it. Phewa Lake is a fragile ecosystem, with many other processes depending on its health, giving it the most amount of degradation and risk potential for the geosite case studies observed. It is important that, if further developed for geological tourism, this site promotes sustainable practices and educates readers on the fragility of the lake.

The island within Phewa Lake is home to a temple that is culturally important to many Hindus. Tal Barahi Temple, which was one of the first sites studied for its ecotourism ability, is only accessible by boat, and no motorized boats were observed at the time of the study. Some pre-planning procedures may be particularly necessary during peak tourist season to hire a boating company, which may impede locals' ability to participate and worship freely. Tal Barahi Temple had signs about the legend of Phewa Lake, some information regarding the lake, and donors in Nepali. While arrival to the island on a boat may prove difficult for accessibility, the island did attempt to make its location accessible with signs, ramp access, handrails, and benches to rest on. Aside from hiring local companies to boat one to the location, the entrance to the temple and island was free and open to tourists and the public. There was a donation box next to the temple for anyone to give freely, potentially used for the upkeep of the temple and island. The area had some natural elements on the island such as planted trees and shrubs, birds, and a fish-watching area; however, the area was highly developed. All of these elements would benefit cultural tourists and locals, though they do not benefit the ecotourism identity of the Tal Barahi Temple island. This leaves the average for the ARS of the island to be 53% (Table A4) by the researchers, and its ERS averaged to be 69% (Table A5).

## Seti River Gorge



Figure 6: Seti River Gorge overlook (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

There are at least two locations that will be labeled as the Seti River Gorge area. The first area is the physical gorge as it relates to geotourism, whereas the second location is where many tourists will first approach in their search for the Seti River Gorge. The Seti River Gorge itself is a unique area in Pokhara that shows karstification, river erosional processes, and confluence between the Seti River and the Khola River. This site scored a 78%, with high scores in scenery and geologic diversity in the Geological Assessment Score.

The main risks to tourists of this area concern observing it closely—it is both not very accessible and the sheer sides of the gorge could produce falling rocks and other unsafe conditions for tourists. In regards to the site itself's safety, the degradation risk score was a 66%. This area is classified as high risk of subsidence, low load-bearing capacity, and sinkhole hazards, and the development of it could strain these systems and cause infrastructure or human damage (Shrestha et al., 1999).

The location that the ecotourism and amenities scale covers is above the Seti River Gorge on Lamachaur Road at Tunnel 3. After paying a small entrance fee, this location was observed to have a small garden with two benches, one flight of stairs with handrails, and a short cement bridge with water running parallel and in the bridge to Tunnel 3. Looking over the side of the bridge, the Seti River is visible through the gorge. The area does not have many negative impacts on the local people. It provides some funds with fees for the community and the upkeep of the area, as well as donations at the shrine at the end of the short bridge being accepted. This area does not do much towards the conservation of the area; however, it does help the community to keep one of their cultural sites open with the fees paid by tourists. The area was not large, nor did it have a lot of amenities for tourists, giving it a lower scale of 33% for the ARS, and the lowest of the ERS at 43%.

## Devi's Falls and Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave



Figure 7: Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave staircase (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

These two geosites are in close proximity to each other and represent the plethora of formations from karstic sediments. Devi's Falls was well-accommodated with optimal viewpoints of the falls, where the Pardi River plunges through the consolidated sediments into a 200-meter-long underground gorge (Fort, 2010).

Beds of 10 to 20 cm thickness are visible in this cave system. Gupteshwor Cave shows a variety of sedimentary structures in the bedrock. There were laminations and wavy bedding observed in the lower part of the cave wall at a thickness of about 30 cm. The middlemost section showed hummocky cross-stratification, with pinching and swelling 5 cm thick beds. Above this were lag gravel deposits of angular to sub-rounded clasts of pebble size. There were instances of wedges and other forms of cross-bedding in this section.

At Devi's Falls, while the erosion of these formations by water creates the unique formations opportune for tourism, their weakness can be a risk as well. The consolidated sediments of the Pokhara and Ghackok formations can be prone to translational slides and rock falls, as well as sinkhole and subsidence hazards (Shrestha et. al, 1999).

Besides safety for tourists, degradation of the site must be considered in their geoheritage assessment, too. Gupteshwor Cave has low ceilings in some places with stalactites that tourists were observed touching. This can greatly damage the growth of stalactites and the overall health of the cave system. The risk of degradation of the Gupteshwor Cave site was found to be 51%, while Devi's Falls, much less accessible to vandalism, scored a 61%.

Upon paying a fee and entering the area, there were many statues and a large winding staircase that leads down to the cave where photography was strongly prohibited. An electric gate at this site showed both the importance of the area and the amount of revenue they generate to uphold this sacred area with visitors—significantly different from the other sites the researchers analyzed. The area above the cave had trash cans and some walking paths that were poorly adhered to, but durable areas both above and within the cave existed. The funds for the ticket and donations at the temple clearly funded sustaining this cave, as well as hiring caretakers and workers for the site. However, in ecological terms there appeared to be a lack of conservation for the cave as a natural site. There were no regulations against touching the walls and lights were put in place that promoted the growth of plants and moss, potentially disrupting the ecosystem within the cave. It is important to recall it is a religious site, and these aspects that may seem to conflict with eco-conscious conservation may be important to the conservation of their religion and culture. The scaling that the researchers used did not have a way to reflect on these ideas, which could potentially be important for every location visited.

Therein, the scaling for the ARS came to be 40% (Table A4) while the ERS averaged 51% (Table A5).



Figure 8: Devi's Fall  
(Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

Devi's Falls, often also referred to as Davis Falls, had a few different amenities and ecotourist aspects than Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave. There was a separate entrance fee, and upon walking in there was a small garden that led to a religious statue of the Lord Buddha, a photo zone, the summer house, and Devi's Fall. The path through the garden was durable and kept tourists on the trail with signs to leave the flowers and stay out of the garden. Once through the garden, the trail became poorly regulated, and large areas of the ground

had been cemented over to withstand large crowds of people. There were some benches throughout the park, handrails, and some signage in both Nepali and English. Some signs provided visitors with information about the area, its legends/history, and other local areas such as the Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave to go visit. While the area did have a shrine, it did not appear to be related to the waterfall and was thus suspected not to be a geo-specific cultural site. This area does not appear to be built or regulated as an ecotourism location, based more on its geotourism qualities. This location was averaged to have an ARS of 33% (Table A4) and an average of 54% (Table A5) toward the ERS.

## **Museum Ecotourism**

There were two museums that the researchers visited and evaluated. The first museum was the Annapurna Natural History Museum. This location was free to visitors with donations accepted and offered a great amount of education on plants, landscapes, and wildlife of the area. The museum had exhibits for ethnic groups with information about their cultures and religions, with some comparisons of other places primarily within the Annapurna and Nepal area. The majority of this information was in English. This potentially would impede locals from being able to visit and benefit from the information within the museum, though it is located on a college campus and benefits the students there. While no “Green Energy” was observed on site, there were exhibits that had information about different eco-friendly forms of energy and their importance. This location itself may not be considered a natural ecotourism location due to the lack of the literal natural world within the museum, yet the amount of information that is covered to educate locals, students, and tourists gives it an average on the ARS of approximately 53% (Table A4), but with an ERS of 83% (Table A5) due to its vast amount of education.

The International Mountain Museum required an entrance fee. Entering featured a short walk through a garden that led visitors to the main museum. The museum offered information about trekkers and mountaineers but did not offer those amenities themselves. There were trash bags throughout the museum and the garden, which was mostly restricted to the trail through the garden. While there was not a particular place for nature photography, there were exhibits with lots of nature and wildlife photography and opportunities to rent the garden to film videos. Exhibits within the museum often explained Leave No Trace principles and ideas, such as respecting wildlife, being considerate to others, leaving what you find, proper waste disposal and management, reducing firewood consumption, and



staying on the trail. The museum also talked about the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), climate change issues both at local and global levels, and Everest trash and Leave No Trace (LNT) issues that mountaineering poses. The ARS was at 67% (Table A4), and the ERS average was recorded by the researchers at 74% (Table A5).

## **Interpretations**

### **Geological Setting**

The Pokhara formation that creates these on-site tourist attractions has calcareous gravels with a matrix derived from limestone. The Ghackok formation shows more angular clasts with a higher degree of calcareousness. The clasts are mixed in origin, showing gneisses, quartzites, and sandstones/mudstones of varying degrees of metamorphosis. These outcrops depict rocks eroded from the Lesser Himalaya, Higher Himalaya, and Tethys sequences.

The formation of the Pokhara Valley is interpreted to be from several historical events of debris flows from the steep slopes of Annapurna II and IV (Fort, 2010). Sub-angular to sub-rounded sediments of the Pokhara formation imply debris and muddy flows alternated with river and alluvial fan deposits. The centimeter to decimeter scale of these sub-angular clasts suggests the debris flows could have been caused by an earthquake that would destabilize these slopes enough to dislodge and transport up to 3,000-ton boulders—for example, the famous Bhim Kali Boulder on the Pokhara University Campus. The lake is a drowned valley (Gurung, 1970), forming from the damming of the Seti River by these various catastrophes. This variety of geologic elements makes Pokhara an ideal hub for education in this field.

The 5 case studies of geotourism potential averaged to be 81.6%. Overall, these sites excelled in proximity to recreational areas, the density of the population, and the scenery. It seems that in addition to the geology present at each site, these sites benefit from each other and the interconnected tourist network of Pokhara (Figure 9). On the other hand, the weak points tended to be safety and vulnerability. The deterioration Risk Assessment Score (Figure 10) furthers this point, with lower scores that average 57.8% (Table 1). While the dense population aids geosites' interconnected development, it heightens the risk of deterioration by this population. In fact, the degradation or tourist safety risk of these sites had an inverse relationship to their uniqueness and aesthetic value. For example, Phewa Lake scored a 1 in vulnerability and a 5 in scenery (Table A6 and A7), and Seti River Gorge scored a 3 in safety yet a 5 in both observational conditions and uniqueness. Education is key to alleviating this difference; ideally, a campaign to teach tourists and locals about the geological factors of the sites around Pokhara. This would include how they can keep themselves and the sites safe with ecotourism principles while learning about the geologic features they are seeing and how they came to be.

In addition, the sites that were evaluated for their amenities to their ecotourism potential show that sites that appeared to offer more in the way of amenities correlated with the sites that had more ecotourism aspects and information (Figure 2). When used in conjunction with each other, there is potential for growth in helping create a sustainable area and a place for the education of the community and tourists, as well as for profiting and economically helping the local community.

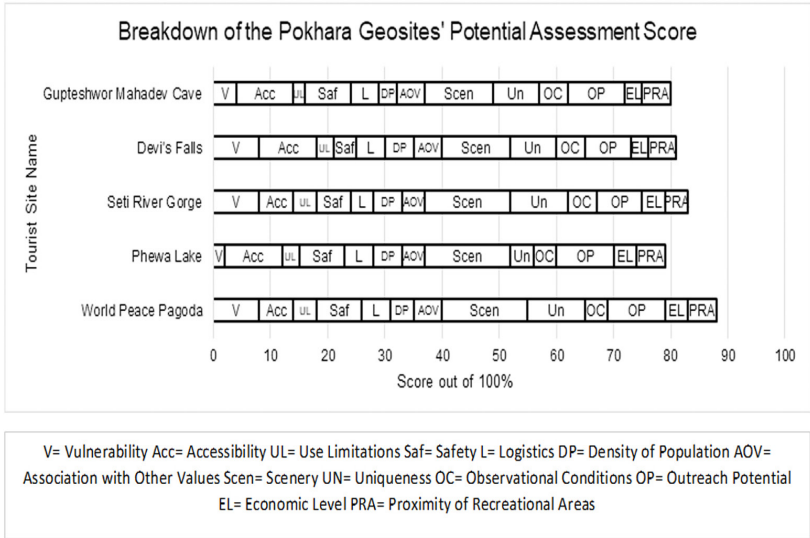


Figure 9: Comparison of Geosite Assessment Scores (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

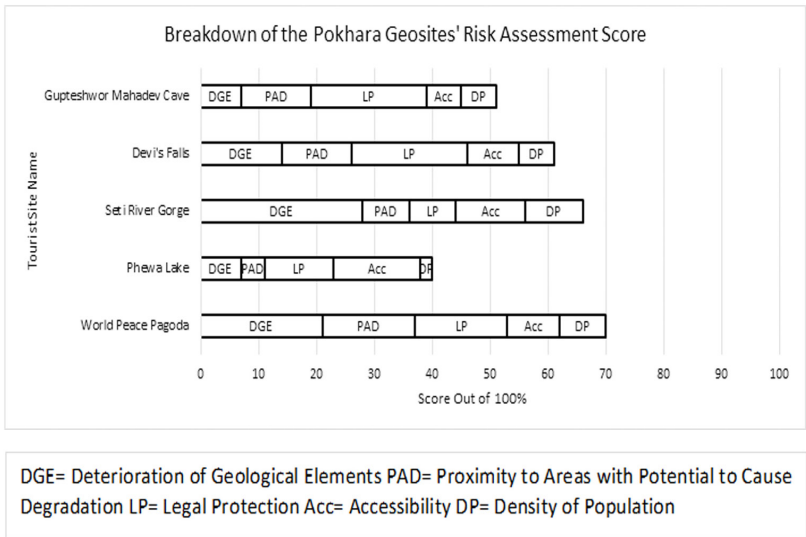


Figure 10: Comparison of Risk Assessment Scores (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

## Unesco Geopark Potential

A UNESCO Geopark offers residents and visitors unique and stimulating earth science processes for educational, recreational, and sustainable purposes. The researchers observed that Pokhara offers a plethora of sites to observe unique geological features, from small-scale up-close sedimentary structures in the Gupteshwor Cave to large-scale geomorphological features in the view from the World Peace Pagoda. Additionally, some areas offered more information about these areas off-site, such as the Annapurna Natural History Museum and the International Mountain Museum. Pokhara's geological heritage ties into cultural values as well as this community's economic welfare. Each of the geosites researched has processes representative and stemming from a variety of geologic areas of Nepal. There are sediments with clasts of varying degrees of metamorphism for observation, lacustral and fluvial geomorphology, and glaciated mountain views in just 5 of the many geological tourist spots of Pokhara. Each of these areas has value in the scientific community and cultural heritage with local stories and religious significance attached to each. This is valuable on an international level as well because of Nepal's diverse geology and culture attached to its steep elevation changes.

As much as geologic importance and heritage is fundamental to UNESCO Geoparks, their development requires a large capacity for educational, conservational, and economic infrastructure. This area lacks some educational tools that would be used by residents, tourists, and students in a Geopark. Very little about the geology of this area exists outside of technical papers or with easy access to tourists at each site. Promotional material and geotourism action plans, outlined by UNESCO in their requirements for a Geopark, are yet to be extensively developed.

In terms of conservation, many of these tourist locations provided some sort of regulation and upkeep. In areas such as the Tal Barahi, cleaning of the location was actively occurring during the field study, and the museums and Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave showed maintenance occurring. New infrastructure was also being built in locations such as the World Peace Pagoda. There were attempts to mitigate landslides and erosion of this site with the ongoing installation of gabion walls and structures. Some locations provided information about the geology of the area, though this was not common enough throughout our study to thoroughly educate a tourist or local. Many of the locations did not have their own websites and instead relied on other websites, while others did not even have that. Only 3 of 5 of the on-site locations had small map displays at the site. Still, many of the areas promoted some concept of sustainability either with signs or exhibits with in-depth information about conservation and sustainability. There appears to be potential for these sites, with modifications, to apply for a Geopark status, but further development of these sustainability practices and educational efforts is necessary.

Worldwide travel and tourism-related GDP trends flat-lined significantly with the recent COVID-19 pandemic, but travel to Nepal and therefore tourism economic benefits are predicted to increase in the coming years. With this increase in traffic and therefore revenue, it is important that Nepal invests in sustainable and long-lasting plans for the expanding tourist industry. The cost of this sustainable development will ward Pokhara away from potential degradations of geological and cultural sites, pollution to the environment, and the social impact on locals.

There are inevitable uncertainties in this research as Pokhara expands and the climate crisis worsens, including culture shifts, geohazard-related shifts to the sites such as earthquake damage, and land use shifts from urbanization. In addition, foreigners analyzing a location they are not fully accustomed to,

with minimal knowledge of all the nuances of the culture and human's relationship to the land has the potential to skew the results of the findings. This study would benefit from incorporating personal accounts from businesses and those living close to the tourist sites, as this was not possible in the research period. According to Bhandari (2013), a key factor for tourism management and development is community awareness in Pokhara. This would entail increasing the participation of residents and local businesses in tourism, creating awareness of the value of their sites to their heritage, and sharing those aspects with visitors. While this study benefits visitors who speak English by providing information in their language, a plan to incorporate the community to have more of a role in the geological education of these sites would add more authenticity to their value as geological heritage.

## **Conclusion**

During the field study, the researchers were able to analyze and evaluate several different tourist locations within the Pokhara Valley of Nepal and extract data about their geotourism and ecotourism capabilities. This information was collected for the Phewa Lake area and the two cultural sites studied there, for the two nearby sites along the Phewa Tal stream, the Seti River Gorge, as well as two different museums. While geotourism, risk, amenities, and ecotourism may not immediately appear to be interrelated, there do appear to be overarching trends when doing comparisons for the data. As found in the results and the interpretations, geotourism in Pokhara remains a massive prospect, with the region having the potential to be a UNESCO Geopark. This information can help tourists make more informed decisions on locations they wish to visit while traveling to the Pokhara area, and how those locations align with cultural tourism, geotourism, and ecotourism. This study also should prove beneficial to the sites visited and future sites for

expanding their information on their location and what features can progress their tourism and local communities. Through this study it is hoped that the people of the Pokhara Valley in Nepal, as well as any future tourists, are better informed about the geo- and ecotourism of the area and how it intermingles with all the factors concluded in this study.

### **Acknowledgments**

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## Appendix

### Figures and Tables

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>
<b>Vulnerability</b> – existence of geological elements that can be destroyed by students or visitors	10%
<b>Accessibility</b> – the easier and shorter the walk between the means of transportation and the site is, the higher the site’s potential use	10%
<b>Use limitations</b> – existence of obstacles that may be problematic for the development of educative or touristic activities	5%
<b>Safety</b> – when the field activity can be carried out under low-risk conditions for students and visitors, the site’s potential use increases	10%
<b>Logistics</b> – existence of facilities to receive students and visitors, such as accommodation, food, and toilets	5%
<b>Density of population</b> – existence of a population near the site potentially provides students and visitors who will use the site	5%
<b>Association with other values</b> – the existence of other natural or cultural elements associated with the site may justify interdisciplinary fieldtrips and attract visitors	5%
<b>Scenery</b> – represents the beauty of the geological elements that could stimulate students’ and visitors’ interest for the site and attract visitors	15%
<b>Uniqueness</b> – concerns the distinctiveness and the rarity of the geodiversity element that could promote students’ interest for the site and attract visitors	10%
<b>Observation conditions</b> – the better the conditions for observation of all the geodiversity elements on the site, the higher its potential use	5%
<b>Outreach potential</b> – related to the capacity of a geodiversity feature to be easily understood by people with no geological background	10%

Criteria	Weight
<b>Economic level</b> – the high level of income of people living near the site suggests a higher probability of it being visited	5%
<b>Proximity of recreational areas</b> – a touristic visit to a site may benefit from the existence of well-known tourist attractions in the surrounding area	5%
<b>Deterioration of geological elements</b> – reflects the possibility of loss of geological elements in the site as a consequence of: (1) its fragility, namely its intrinsic characteristics (size of geological element, ease of obtaining samples, resistance of the rock, etc.) and natural actions (sensitivity to erosion, intensity of erosional agents, etc.) and (2) its vulnerability to anthropic actions (tourism, agriculture, urban development, vandalism, etc.)	35%
<b>Proximity to areas/ activities with potential to cause degradation</b> – mining, industrial facilities, recreational areas, roads, urban area, etc.	20%
<b>Legal protection</b> – related to the location of the site in an area with any type of legal protection (direct or indirect). Access control refers to the existence of obstacles, such as: restrictions by the owner, fences, need to pay entrance fees, mining activities	20%
<b>Accessibility</b> – reflects the conditions of access to the site for the general public (not considering disabled people). A site with easy access is more likely to be damaged by visitors' misuse than one with difficult access	15%
<b>Density of population</b> – reveals the number of persons that live near the site and that can cause potential deterioration due to inappropriate use (vandalism, theft, etc.)	10%

Table A2 Quantitative Assessment of Geosites' use for tourist and recreational use, adapted from Brilha, 2016.

<b>Amenities Rating Scale Criteria (Yes or No)</b>	<b>Tal Bar-ahi</b>	<b>World Peace Pagoda</b>	<b>Seti River Gorge</b>	<b>Anna-purna Natural History</b>	<b>Inter-national Mountain Museum</b>	<b>Devi's Falls</b>	<b>Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave</b>
<b>Trekking/Hiking</b>	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Wildlife viewing or bird watching</b>	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Mountain-eering</b>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Cultural site</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Ethnic museums</b>	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Research/ Study</b>	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Nature photography</b>	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Trash/Recycling Cans</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Accessibility (ramps, benches, signage, etc.)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>“Green” energy (solar panels, etc.)</b>	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Minimization of off-trail walking, maximization of natural spaces</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Designated/ No smoking areas</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Leave No Trace principles</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Assessment of the Development of Geotourism

<b>Amenities Rating Scale Criteria (Yes or No)</b>	<b>Tal Bar-ahi</b>	<b>World Peace Pagoda</b>	<b>Seti River Gorge</b>	<b>Anna-purna Natural History Museum</b>	<b>Inter-national Mountain Museum</b>	<b>Devi's Falls</b>	<b>Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave</b>
<b>Fees and donations for conservation or local benefits</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Natural elements (trees, bushes, water area, animals, etc.)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Average (100% being the most fulfilling, 0% being the least)</b>	53%	67%	33%	53%	67%	33%	40%

Table A4 List of Amenities for Site Locations Amenities Rating Scale score (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

<b>Ecotourism Rating Scale Criteria (1 to 5)</b>	<b>Tal Bar-ahi</b>	<b>World Peace Pagoda</b>	<b>Seti River Gorge</b>	<b>Anna-purna Natural History Museum</b>	<b>Inter-national Mountain Museum</b>	<b>Devi's Falls</b>	<b>Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave</b>
<b>Minimizes negative impacts on the environment and local people.</b>	4	5	3	5	3	3	3
<b>Contributes to the conservation and management of the legally protected area.</b>	3	4	2	4	3	3	2
<b>Promotes participation and empowerment of local people.</b>	4	5	3	4	3	2	4
<b>Satisfies visitors' expectations towards successful ecotourism projects.</b>	2	4	1	4	4	2	2
<b>Increases the awareness of the area's natural and cultural systems.</b>	4	4	2	5	5	3	2
<b>Directs economic and other benefits to local people.</b>	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
<b>Provides adequate information to visitors before and during visits.</b>	4	5	1	5	5	3	2
<b>Average (100% being the most fulfilling, 0% being the least)</b>	69%	86%	43%	83%	74%	54%	51%

Table A5 Ecotourism Rating Scale score for Site Locations (Gilbert and Landsem, 2022).

Assessment of the Development of Geotourism

Criteria	Weight	World Peace Pagoda	Phewa Lake	Seti River Gorge	Devi's Falls	Gupteshwor Cave
Vulnerability	10%	4	1	4	4	2
Accessibility	10%	3	5	3	5	5
Use Limitations	5%	4	3	4	3	4
Safety	10%	4	4	3	2	4
Logistics	5%	5	5	4	5	5
Density of Population	5%	4	5	5	5	3
Association with other Values	5%	5	4	4	5	5
Scenery	15%	5	5	5	4	4
Uniqueness	10%	5	2	5	4	4
Observational Conditions	5%	4	4	5	5	5
Didactic Potential	0%	4	5	4	5	
Variety of Geological Elements	0%	5	3	5	3	5
Outreach Potential	10%	5	5	4	4	5
Economic Level	5%	4	4	4	3	3
Proximity of Recreational Areas	5%	5	5	4	5	5

Table A6 Quantitative Assessment of 5 Pokhara Geosites' Capacity to Support Geotourism.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>World Peace Pagoda</b>	<b>Phewa Lake</b>	<b>Seti River Gorge</b>	<b>Devi's Falls</b>	<b>Gupteshwor Mahadev Cave</b>
Deterioration of Geological Elements	35%	3	1	4	2	1
Proximity to Areas with Potential to Cause Degradation	20%	4	1	2	3	3
Legal Protection	20%	4	3	4	5	5
Accessibility	15%	3	5	4	3	2
Density of Population	10%	4	1	5	3	3

Table A7 Quantitative Assessment of 5 Pokhara Sites' Degradation Risk.



## El problema de "supremacía blanca" visto en los libros de texto, el cine y la televisión desde Latinoamérica

By Sean Martin

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### *Article Abstract:*

*The history of Latin America is rich and diverse, beginning with the pre-Colombian native peoples and continuing until the present day. However, there has always been a stain on this history, one that is evident from the very beginning and still seen today. That stain is the idea of White Supremacy, or at least, a preference of whiteness, in the peoples of the continents. This paper argues that through an examination of the history and culture of Latin America we can see that this problem is evident at every stage of historical development. Through a survey of textbooks, biographies, documentaries, and works of popular media that examine the roles of indigenous people in modern day Latin American states, albeit in fiction, we can see that there has always been a socio-cultural preference for “whiteness” among Latinos to the detriment of Black and Indigenous Latinos. This paper argues that even the way that we write our history and the way that we use film to represent modern people reflects the pervasive problem of White supremacy in Latin America.*

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Un tema que se ha hecho evidente a lo largo de la historia de América Latina es que la negritud y las identidades indígenas siempre han sido una parte importante de la cultura latinoamericana. Sin embargo, un tema que ha quedado muy claro es que, en la historia de las Américas, desde la colonización hasta hoy, el liderazgo de estos continentes ha estado influenciado, si no controlado directamente, por los supremacistas blancos. Aquí tomaré prestada la definición de “supremacía blanca” que dio la profesora de derecho Francés Lee Ansley. En el trabajo titulado *Estudios blancos críticos* por Richard Delgado y Jean Stefancic, Ansley declaró:

Por "supremacía blanca" no quiero referirme solo al racismo autoconsciente de los grupos de odio de la supremacía blanca. Me refiero, en cambio, a un sistema político, económico y cultural en el que los blancos controlan de manera abrumadora el poder y los recursos materiales, las ideas conscientes e inconscientes de la superioridad y el derecho de los blancos están generalizadas, y las relaciones de dominación de los blancos y la subordinación no blanca se representan diariamente en una amplia gama de instituciones y entornos sociales. (ctd. en Delgado y Stefancic 592).

Aunque esta etiqueta de “supremacía blanca” es más común en América del Norte de habla inglesa, la premisa subyacente es la misma: la idea de que la influencia de los europeos blancos es superior a la de los pueblos indígenas o afrolatinos. De todos los países y durante cada etapa de desarrollo desde la colonización, ha habido negros e indígenas que sentaron las bases de una identidad cultural latinoamericana. La inclusión de la negritud y la identidad indígena persiste hasta el día de hoy, aunque ha habido intentos de destruirlos a lo largo de la historia. A los efectos de esta investigación, el intento de socavar las narrativas indígenas y afrolatinas en lugar de las de los colonizadores, los europeos blancos y los criollos españoles se denominará "supremacía

blanca". Una encuesta de los medios modernos - como libros de texto, series de televisión, y el cine - muestra las luchas y la opresión de los pueblos negros e indígenas en los continentes por parte de los supremacistas blancos. Este trabajo de investigación analiza y descubre varios casos en los que, a pesar de esta rica historia, ha existido y existe la supremacía blanca, sustentada a nivel cultural, intentando hacer inferiores las identidades indígenas y afrolatinas a la del europeo blanco.

Desde el punto de la conquista cuando sólo había indígenas en las Américas, hasta la liberación, comenzó la mezcla de estas culturas africanas e indígenas. En la serie web *Mexico and Peru: The Black Grandma In the Closet* (Gates & Trachtman) descubrimos que Veracruz, el gran puerto de México, era un mercado de esclavos, trayendo personas africanas para ser vendido como propiedad - en lugar de seres humanos - desde los primeros días del colonialismo (Mexico and Peru 5:00-8:20). El profesor Gates va a México a entrevistar a autoridades sobre la historia de la cultura afromexicana y descubre que incluso antes de que existiera los Estados Unidos había colonias de esclavos libres en el continente, que antes de que llegaran los colonizadores británicos a Norteamérica había habido mezcla afroindia en los continentes (Mexico and Peru 11:40-13:05). Esto muestra que una identidad verdaderamente "americana" - más antigua, mejor establecida y con un legado continuo - es una identidad afroindígena. El profesor Gates también descubre que aún queda mucho trabajo por hacer para ayudar a las comunidades afromexicanas a prosperar en el México moderno. Viaja a Perú y tiene algunos descubrimientos similares en esta cultura: los peruanos negros han existido desde los primeros días de la colonización, y jugaron una parte integral de la composición cultural del Perú. Una vez más, sin embargo, el profesor Gates descubre que se ha trabajado mucho para encubrir y ofuscar la historia de la negritud en Perú, al igual que en México, en un intento de hacer que la identidad peruana sea más blanca.

Hemos visto que las identidades afro e indígena en las Américas siempre han existido e influenciado la historia de los continentes. Desde la época precolombina hasta la colonización y la liberación, los negros e indígenas estuvieron presentes y activos en la cultura que se estaba convirtiendo en “latinoamericana”. Ahora veamos cómo la identidad es y siempre ha sido suprimida por las identidades europeas blancas. En las primeras escenas de la serie *Bolívar* (Uribe) se muestra al famoso Libertador alentando a sus hombres a continuar con su poderoso viaje para sorprender y expulsar a las fuerzas españolas de la Nueva Granada en 1819, durante la guerra por la independencia. Uno de los aspectos llamativos de esta escena es la mezcla de rostros presentes en el ejército de Bolívar: rostros europeos blancos, rostros indígenas morenos y rostros africanos negros. A diferencia de la Guerra revolucionaria contra Inglaterra en los Estados Unidos unos 45 años antes, esta liberación del control europeo fue apoyada por criollos, mestizos, indios y negros. Desafortunadamente, una vez que terminó la colonización europea y las colonias fueron libres, no se dio la igualdad ante la ley, ni los derechos humanos y civiles a todas las personas. Después, hay una escena que representa la vida del joven Bolívar donde está jugando con su esclavo “amigo”. Se retrata que el joven Bolívar no es consciente de las cosas que están sucediendo al pueblo aunque el amigo esclavo sabe mucho de lo que ocurre en la ciudad (Bolívar ep. 2, 13:30-15:15). Aquí se debe preguntar dos cosas. Primero, ¿cómo un hombre que posee a otro hombre como propiedad puede hablar de ese hombre como amigo? Y segundo, ¿Por qué el rico joven no tiene que estar al tanto de los acontecimientos del lugar donde vive? Esta interacción muestra la dinámica de poder entre un criollo blanco y un afrolatino en el período colonial de la Nueva Granada: el criollo se refiere al esclavo como “amigo” aunque la “amistad” que existe se base en el acto de la esclavitud. Además, este es un buen ejemplo de la realidad de ser negro en las Américas: conocer las cosas que suceden en la vida pública y mantenerse en comunicación

dentro de la comunidad es un método de supervivencia. Para los europeos blancos ricos, esto no era tan importante.

No es sólo en una ficción histórica sobre la vida de Bolívar donde se ve el tema supremacista blanco. Además de que la representación moderna de Bolívar incluye la supremacía blanca, el registro histórico de hechos dice lo mismo. Aline Helg examina los miedos y la intolerancia que el propio Bolívar expresó cuando trató de continuar una estructura de clase y raza en las nuevas repúblicas que castigaban a los negros e indígenas por no ser blanco y europeo. Incluso el gran "Libertador" temía "una toma de poder de los mulatos" y no otorgaría los mismos derechos a negros e indígenas en sus nuevas repúblicas (Helg 447). Encontramos en sus escritos que aunque él quería estados libres del dominio europeo, una vez liberado de lo mismo, él quería continuar con la supremacía blanca a nivel cultural y social.

A medida que avanzamos hacia la actualidad y las representaciones de la realidad actual, encontramos que la supremacía blanca todavía está muy presente en las Américas. En su libro *Latinoamérica: Presente y Pasado* Arturo A. Fox continúa con este tema de sutil supremacía blanca y revisionismo histórico. Aunque nunca afirma que los europeos fueran superiores a las poblaciones indígenas o negras de las Américas, continúa por un camino que lleva, siempre, al racismo. Uno de los muchos ejemplos de este tipo de lenguaje sutil en su autoría se encuentra al comienzo del libro de texto, en la página 44, cuando habla de las cartas de Colón que describen a las poblaciones indígenas. Fox habla de los elogios que Colón le dio a la gente del lugar, pero omite la parte donde Colón dijo que estas gentes serían buenos esclavos y trabajadores (Fox 44). Fox también omite información que retrata los conquistadores y al Almirante de manera negativa. Esta información estaba fácilmente disponible en las mismas fuentes primarias que Fox habría estudiado en la época: los escritos del propio Colón, así como las fuentes primarias de los conquistadores y los sacerdotes de la iglesia. Afortunadamente, lo que Fox omite se puede encontrar fácilmente en las obras de

autores como Howard Zinn en su *Historia popular de los Estados Unidos* (1980). Zinn brinda la información que Fox ignora: cita a Bartolomé de las Casas y describe lo que el cura dice que hizo el Almirante y lo que permitió que hicieran sus hombres. Las historias son claras: las violaciones, los apuñalamientos, los asesinatos, las torturas, los desmembramientos y la esclavitud eran comunes entre los españoles de los primeros viajes y la colonización posterior (Zinn 5-8). Además, Zinn escribió su obra décadas antes de que Fox escribiera la suya. Esta información había estado ampliamente disponible durante unos 30 años. ¿Por qué fue excluido? Hablar sólo de la forma en que Colón elogió a los nativos ignorando las atrocidades que él y sus hombres permitieron es un claro ejemplo de reescribir la historia para hacer que los conquistadores europeos blancos parezcan benévolos y amables. Este es solo el primero de muchos casos en los que Fox, un historiador que publicó un libro de texto utilizado en muchos cursos, distorsiona la realidad y hace que los colonizadores europeos se vean menos belicistas de lo que en realidad eran.

En la película *Ixcanul* (Bustamante) sobre el pueblo maya moderno de Guatemala, hay muchas escenas de la vida cotidiana de estos pueblos indígenas. La película muestra la dureza de la vida de una mujer maya pobre, embarazada y obligada a convertirse en madre. Muestra las dificultades de la vida indígena y de ser una trabajadora para terratenientes ricos. Muestra las costumbres indígenas y las religiones y creencias del pueblo maya, que continúan hasta el día de hoy. Al final de la película, sin embargo, se retrata hispanohablantes blancos que están tratando a la población indígena como gente pobre sin educación, que existe solo para el beneficio de la población hispana - o las que parecen europeas - del país. Una pareja norteamericana quería un hijo, y lo pagó con dinero, y la venta fue llevada a cabo por un médico blanco, educado, de habla hispana, sin el consentimiento de la madre, como si la madre fuera una esclava en la Nueva Granada colonial. El hecho de que un médico piense que puede

robarle un hijo a una madre sin consecuencias, y que todo el acto sea perpetrado en secreto y obligue a la joven a sentirse loca, sin ningún control sobre su vida, es un acto de barbarie que recuerda la esclavitud nobiliaria.

En la película *También La Lluvia* (Lavery) fijamos en los hechos muy reales de las guerras del agua de Cochabamba y los acontecimientos que se desarrollan a su alrededor. En realidad, las empresas extranjeras querían quitarles los derechos de tierra y agua a los pueblos indígenas, como si estas empresas fueran los nuevos colonizadores. En la película, se retrata representaciones de la figura histórica del Padre de las Casas, y su famoso discurso denunciando la supremacía blanca de su tiempo. Los personajes mexicanos o españoles de la película también se enfrentan a estos problemas que afectan a sus colegas peruanos nativos. El problema, sin embargo, es que como los actores principales y el personal de producción (ya sean ricos, blancos, hispanos europeos de México o de España) no simpatizan con sus colegas nativos. Esta película es un examen del privilegio blanco o europeo en las Américas en tres partes: primero la perspectiva histórica con de las Casas, segundo con los eventos de la vida real de Cochabamba, y tercero con el privilegio de un elenco europeo que no tiene empatía ante los problemas de sus compañeros porque el elenco europeo no sufre los mismos problemas.

Finalmente llegamos a la película *Bantú Mama* (Herre-ra). Esta película no muestra la supremacía blanca latinoamericana de la misma manera que, por ejemplo, *Bolívar* la muestra. En Bolívar se ve al Libertador – rico, blanco, criollo - como una figura paterna para los negros – pobres, esclavos, sin derechos - aunque fue él que los tuvo como propiedad durante parte de su vida. *Bantú Mama* en realidad muestra que en el Caribe actual la supremacía blanca es evidente en la cultura *al mostrar que no es solo una identidad europea la que se considera suprema*. La protagonista es una mujer negra de Francia en el mundo actual. Aunque ella es europea una vez que está en problemas

en la República Dominicana, y sin papeles, no la ayuda ni la salva. Todo lo que importa es que ella es una mujer negra. La historia del racismo contra la nación negra de Haití es muy real, especialmente en el país vecino de la República Dominicana. Todo el elenco que se muestra en la película, posiblemente con la excepción del abogado, parece africano o descendiente de africanos. De hecho, el abogado también puede ser negro en parte. Sin embargo, nada de esto importa, porque en la población haitiana en la República Dominicana, hay "otros" que son fácilmente identificables como "más negros" tanto en el color de la piel como en la identidad. Para la policía de inmigración no es importante lo que haga la protagonista (solo caminar), lo único que les importaba es que ella era una mujer negra de piel más oscura sin papeles, y eso les bastó para suponer que era diferente y necesitaba ser arrestada. Esto muestra que incluso el ser europea no obtiene la supremacía, a menos, por supuesto, que la europea sea blanca.

Estas últimas películas son obras de ficción, obviamente. Sin embargo, se debe reconocer que las culturas que los producen lo hacen porque estos problemas existen y resonarán en los espectadores. No quiero decir que toda la cultura latinoamericana sea mala o perversa o incluso racista. Cada película y cada serie que se examinó para esta investigación incluía escenas brillantes de la mezcla de culturas y las celebraciones de las herencias de diferentes pueblos. Sin embargo, no se puede olvidar que hay un elemento obvio de racismo, ya sea manifiesto e intolerante como lo muestra en *También la lluvia* cuando de las Casas amonesta a los demás españoles, o sutil y matizado como se retrata en *Bantú Mama* cuando una europea es acusada de ser una inmigrante ilegal basándose únicamente en el color de su piel. Si alguna vez vamos a dar pleno reconocimiento a las herencias africanas como una parte real de una identidad estadounidense, debemos admitir que primero las discriminamos, y como lo pasa en nivel cultural. En el libro *The Afro-Latin@ Reader* Jiménez y Flores recopilan historias y entrevistas con varios afrolatinos



de los Estados Unidos. Esto incluye una famosa entrevista con Pablo Yoruba, un puertorriqueño negro que vivía en Nueva York en la década de 1970. Yoruba afirmó definitivamente que en la comunidad latina de Nueva York existe un claro elemento de supremacía blanca:

...encontramos que a nivel de base existía un alto grado de racismo entre puertorriqueños y negros, y entre puertorriqueños de piel clara y de piel oscura. Tuvimos que lidiar con este racismo porque bloqueó cualquier tipo de crecimiento para nuestra gente, cualquier tipo de comprensión de lo que habían pasado los negros... esto fue especialmente cierto para los puertorriqueños de piel clara (236).

Este, según Yoruba, es uno de los mayores problemas que la comunidad debe superar para elevarse. Este problema existía durante la colonización, y todavía existe en el mundo actual.

Si alguna vez vamos a empoderar a las comunidades indígenas para que ocupen el lugar que les corresponde como verdaderos estadounidenses, peruanos, puertorriqueños, dominicanos, etc., debemos dejar de fingir que sus colonizadores y opresores fueron exploradores valientes en lugar de tiranos sedientos de sangre. Arturo Fox, a su crédito, describe muy bien el "mapa humano" y la diversidad racial del continente. Él empieza a explicar lo difícil que es caracterizar una demografía tan diversa. También explica los grupos raciales y los prejuicios que existen (Fox 111). Sin embargo, un enfoque proactivo para cambiar esta narrativa incluiría la enseñanza de textos escritos por autores indígenas y afrolatinos sobre sus experiencias en la historia de las Américas, algo que Fox excluye. Así concluyo que lo primero que debemos hacer es reconocer que hay un aura de supremacía blanca sobre todo, para que podamos eliminarla, antes de que podamos continuar elevando estas culturas. Debemos quitar el pie del cuello, antes de que el cuello pueda sanar por completo.

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## **Biden Wins the Peach State: An Analysis of the 2020 Biden Vote Across the Counties of Georgia**

**By Caleb Register**

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### ***Article Abstract:***

*The purpose of this quantitative study is to evaluate if COVID-19 related variables are key predictors that led to President Biden's surprise victory in Georgia in the 2020 presidential election compared to traditional variables. Data from all 159 counties of Georgia are investigated to predict the dependent variable, the Biden vote in Georgia. The two key variables are per capita COVID-19 infections cumulative to November 3, 2020, and per capita COVID-19 deaths cumulative to November 3, 2020. Traditional variables are used to compare. The influence of each independent variable, traditional and key, on the Biden vote is explored through correlation analysis, a collection of scatterplots, and a multiple regression analysis. These key variables do not show a correlation in this study with how Georgia voted. However, variables affected by the key variables such as the mail-in vote does show a correlation. The future effects of this election are undefined. Therefore, Georgia now has a choice in voting: red, blue, or purple?*

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Politics is a complicated process. Facts, opinions, emotions, and wild twists await every turn. American political culture stands as an idol to some and is hated by others. However, the political effects and processes affect everyone's lives. Throughout Amer-

ican history, presidential elections have proven to be notable and carry much weight. A few examples include, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's historic fourth term highlighted in the 1944 election and the 2008 election that elevated the first African American President, Barack Obama, to office. The election of 2020 was no exception. Historic global and national events such as the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic occurred during election season. Former Vice President Joe Biden, a Democrat, defeated incumbent President Donald Trump, a Republican, to secure the presidency. Many states featured close elections. Some results were not unanimously certified. Conspiracies, recounts, and an insurrection on the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C followed. Biden victoriously carried Georgia's sixteen electoral votes after an exceptionally narrow vote. Recently, Georgia was considered a "red" state, meaning it was a concrete Republican stronghold. However, the state flipped "blue" to elect a Democrat. Few saw this coming years ago. Therefore, this study's goal is to define, evaluate, and explain the following question: Are COVID-19-related variables key predictors in the Biden vote across the counties of Georgia in the 2020 presidential election compared to traditional predictors?

This study's purpose is to quantitatively describe individual factors leading to the Biden vote across the counties of Georgia compared to the novel variables of COVID-19. It is composed of four major sections: a detailed literature review, a description of the data and methods, an evaluation of the findings, and a conclusion of the study. First, the comprehensive literature review presented will provide information about historic and recent politics in Georgia. The events leading to, the results, and the aftermath of the 2020 election will be evaluated. Also, during this section, the independent variables of this study will gain their merit as creditable opportunities for research. Next, the data and methods section will present data collected across the 159 counties of Georgia. In addition, the methods of how the data were found, collected, and evaluated will be discussed

and explained. Thirdly, the study's findings will be investigated and presented concerning their hypotheses. Finally, the study will conclude with a discussion of viable hypotheses. Additional beneficial variables to be studied in the future will be named.

## Literature Review

In each presidential election, some states are considered battleground states. A battleground state is the same as a swing state. A swing state can be defined as a state that the two major political parties, Republican and Democratic, have a similar opportunity to receive the majority vote in the state (Dictionary.com, 2021). Other states are historically a stronghold of one party. Therefore, most elections are decided by battleground states. The list normally includes the states of Florida, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Pennsylvania (Ellis, 2019). Georgia was not widely a part of this battleground state list at the beginning of the election cycle as it voted overwhelmingly for Trump in the 2016 election. However, the political landscape of the state altered between elections.

Georgia last elected a Democratic presidential candidate in 1992 (Bill Clinton) by .6 of a percentage point (Schaul, Stevens, and Keating, 2020). Dating back to 1952, Georgia voted Democratic six out of the last seventeen tries with Democratic wins clustered near the 1950s and the Carter Presidency. Georgians, along with other Southern states, voted for an independent candidate once during this period in 1968, George Wallace.

Trump was elected in 2016 with a victory over Democrat former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. According to *Business Insider*, Clinton won the popular vote with almost 66 million votes and 48% of the vote compared to Trump's almost 63 million votes and 46% of the vote. However, Trump won the all-important Electoral College 304-227 by carrying 30 states and one district in Maine (*Business Insider*). According to the *New York Times*, Trump received slightly over 2 million Georgian votes

and 50.4% of the vote while Clinton received almost 1.9 million votes and 45.3% of the vote. Although Trump won Georgia, he did so by less than the Republican from the 2012 election, Mitt Romney. Romney won the state by 7.8 percentage points (*New York Times*, 2017).

Democrats have steadily gained ground in the state to make Georgia a battleground state. First, Jimmy Carter's grandson, Jason Carter ran for governor of Georgia in 2014. He recalls a time that Democrats in the state were in rough shape and could not provide a list of county chairs in the 2000s (Bluestein and Murphy, 2020). From there, Jason Carter believed Democrats had a chance to take the governorship in 2014. He is quoted in *Politico* as saying, "Georgia is ready, right now, for a new direction," in a final campaign TV pitch. However, the vote stated otherwise as he lost the gubernatorial race with only about 45% of the vote (Wheaton, 2014). Jon Ossoff ran as a Democrat in Georgia's sixth congressional district's 2017 special election. According to *New York Magazine's Intelligencer*, the northern Atlanta suburban district is historically a Republican stronghold. He narrowly lost to Republican Karen Handel. Kilgore with *Intelligencer* describes Ossoff as "a symbol of the Democratic tide that has made Atlanta's increasingly diverse suburbs the fulcrum of Georgia politics" (Kilgore, 2020). The next year, Handel lost to Lucy McBath, a Democrat, by about 3,200 votes. Democrats gained votes for the Democratic Party in 2018 in this district as in 2014, U.S. Representative Tom Price, a Republican, won the district by 210,500 votes (Ellis, 2019). Third, Republican Brian Kemp won the gubernatorial race over Democrat Stacey Abrams by a slim 55,000 votes, a 1.4 percentage point victory, in the 2018 midterm elections (Niese, Peebles, 2020). As for the state legislature, Democrats flipped two seats in the state Senate and 14 in the state House in the Atlanta area; however, Democrats lost three state House seats elsewhere in the state for a net gain of 11 seats overall (Ellis, 2019).

*Ballotpedia*, a nonpartisan and nonprofit election information provider, explains the 2020 election and its results. Trump ran uncontested for the Republican party nomination and secured 76 delegates on June 9, 2020, in the Georgia Republican Primary with 947,352 votes. Biden won the Georgia Democratic primary securing all 105 delegates in a crowded field of Democratic candidates on June 9, 2020. Trump retained former Vice President Mike Pence, and Biden selected Senator Kamala Harris to be his running mate. Harris was the first African American woman to run on a major party's ticket. After a lengthy and heated race, Biden was elected president. In Georgia, Biden received 2,473,633 votes and 49.5% of the vote. Trump received 2,461,854 votes and 49.3% of the vote. The Libertarian Party received 62,229 votes and 1.2% of the vote (*Ballotpedia*, 2021). Across the nation, *Business Insider* reports that Biden won the popular vote by almost six million votes (79,271,864 to 73,464,544). Biden received 51% of the vote compared to Trump's 47% (*Business Insider*, 2021).

*Ballotpedia* describes two recounts that occurred. A recount in the state of Georgia can be requested by a candidate if the vote margin is less than 0.5% according to state law (Schaul, Stevens, and Keating, 2020). Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a Republican, informed the public this was likely on November 6, 2020 through the following statement, "This process is and will remain open and transparent to monitors" (*Ballotpedia*, 2021). A recount by hand was announced by Raffensperger on November 11, 2020. It was completed and confirmed Biden's victory on November 19, 2020, one day before the November 20, 2020 state certification deadline. The audit stated that the initial machine count was almost 100% accurate. It had a 0.1053% discrepancy in the statewide vote total. Due to that discrepancy, there was a variation in the margin of victory of 0.0099%. The final key finding of the recount was approximately 5,000 ballots (1,272 net gain for Trump) were not counted or included during the first count by the machines.



Election officials accredited this mistake to human error. A second recount was requested by Trump's campaign on November 21, 2020. Unlike the first recount, this one was not completed by hand. Instead, ballots were rescanned through machines. The recount concluded on December 4, 2020, with an unchanged outcome. Therefore, the election and Biden's win were recertified on December 7, 2020 by Raffensperger (*Ballotpedia*).

In addition to the recounts, there were many conspiracies. CBS News details six conspiracies that circulated the nation. First, some believed that Dominion, a voting machine manufacturer, had some of their machines programmed to increase votes for Biden by either flipping Trump votes to Biden votes or deleting Trump votes. Next, one county in Arizona's tabulation machine preferred Sharpie/felt-tip markers as opposed to ink pens. There was a conspiracy that using these markers invalidated Trump's votes. Continuing to the next conspiracy, although people in America have voted by mail successfully for centuries, Trump insisted that voting by mail was plagued by fraud by tampering or multiple voting. Still more, there were accusations of ballots being found or being thrown away. Additionally, there were claims that poll watchers were not allowed to complete their duty. Finally, there was a conspiracy that deceased individuals voted, and that others voted multiple times. Each one of these conspiracies was proven to be false (Cohen, 2021).

There were legal challenges to the vote in Georgia. The first described by *Ballotpedia* was entitled "In re: enforcement of election laws and securing ballots cast or received after 7:00 P.M. on November 3, 2020." The issue at hand was whether absentee/mail-in ballots were received in Chatham County after the deadline and included with those received before the deadline, which would be illegal. The case was dismissed on November 5, 2020. Kemp and Raffensperger were not exempt from the lawsuits. *Trump v. Kemp* battled the issue of whether the state election officials conducted the election according to state law. If these officials were found to have failed, then the court would

decide whether the results should be decertified and order the Georgia General Assembly to appoint new presidential electors. This case was also dismissed on January 5, 2021.

A large voter mobilization in the state of Georgia directly addresses numerous independent variables in this study. The mobilization began in Georgia over the latter part of the 2010s after several barriers were faced by voters. One of the organizations that helped kickstart this voter mobilization movement was Fair Fight Action. Stacy Abrams founded the Fair Fight Action organization just days after her loss to Kemp in 2018. According to *The Lily*, a product of *The Washington Post*, this organization's goal is to fight voter suppression, so voter turnout can increase (Kitchener, 2020). The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC)* reported on statements made by Lauren Groh-Wargo, CEO of Fair Fight Action. She claimed that voters faced barriers such as over 500,000 voter registrations being canceled in July 2017, individuals with hyphenated or unusual names having their voter registrations delayed, registered voters being incorrectly labeled as noncitizens, and long lines plaguing voting precincts (Niese, 2019). Some of these lines lasted for hours as hundreds of voting machines were sitting unused in government warehouses (Niese, 2018). These barriers were blamed on Kemp as he was the Secretary of State when these events occurred. In Georgia, the Secretary of State's office oversees the running of elections.

Voter mobilization organizations were extremely successful. The *AJC* obtained voter registration rolls from the Georgia Secretary of State's office after the Oct. 5th registration deadline for the 2020 presidential election cycle. At that time, there were a record 7.6 million Georgians registered to vote, an addition of approximately 1 million voters from the previous presidential election in 2016 (Niese, Peebles, 2020). This is important as the number of registered voters directly affects the following variables: percentage of population African American, percentage of population aged 65 and older, and percentage of the vote that was mailed in 2020. All these variables were direct-

ly affected by the increase in registered voters because that increase affects the total number from where these variables gain their percentages. It cannot be rationalized whether the other variables would be affected by an increase in registered voters since the pool includes all people within the county and not just registered voters.

The percentage of the population African American variable is the first variable investigated in this research. There is reason to believe this variable is key to the Biden vote in Georgia due to history and recent polling. The United States House of Representatives History, Art, & Archives' Office of the Historian details the history of African American politics in the United States over the last century. Historically, most African Americans were denied the right to vote at different periods of American history. The majority of those that could vote were Republicans. However, there was a realignment among these African American voters that began in the late 1920s. African Americans felt isolated by the Republican Party for their denial of civil rights. Although this shift started in the late 1920s, it took until the middle of the 1930s for a shift of the majority. This is evident by former President Hoover receiving the majority of the African American vote in 1932. This number was between two-thirds and three-quarters of the population. However, the loyalty to the Republican Party of African Americans diminished because of the Hoover administration's lack of aid and relief to the struggling population during the Great Depression. African Americans were hit exceedingly hard compared to their white counterparts. Twenty percent of those on welfare were African American while they were only ten percent of the national population. 21% more African Americans were unemployed compared to whites. During the Roosevelt administration, many more African Americans switched to the Democratic Party. Although they were still assisted less than their white counterparts, African Americans received tangible assistance during the Great Depression, and there was an opinion that the Democratic Party

began to represent African Americans and their interests more. From 1932 to 1936, the percentage of African Americans who voted for the Republican candidate for president decreased by more than half (Party Realignment and the New Deal, US House of Representatives: History, Art. & Archives, 2019).

In recent history and polling, reported by the *AJC*, Charles Bullock, a political science professor at the University of Georgia, stated that “We’ve (Georgia) got an increasing minority population, and that population generally votes Democratic. Republicans continue to rely almost exclusively on white voters.” Of the new voters since the 2016 election, nearly two-thirds are people of color including African Americans (Niese, Peebles, 2020). A 2020 exit poll shows that 88% of African Americans surveyed voted for Biden (Washington Post, 2020). Another population that has a track record of voting for a particular party is the 65 and older population leaning toward the Republican Party. A 2020 exit poll shows that 56% of those surveyed 65 and older voted for Trump (*Washington Post*, 2020). When registering to vote by applying for a driver’s license in Georgia became the default selection, voter registration increased greatly. The largest expansion of any age range occurred in the under-35 categories with a 22% increase. This included almost half of all new voters (Niese, Peebles, 2020). With this, the 65 and older age group that generally votes for the Republican party has a smaller share of the overall vote from previous elections (Niese, 2020) to 18% (Niese, Peebles, 2020).

Along with these demographics, population density affects voting trends. Bloomberg CityLab details a study that analyzes every county in the United States in comparison to their population density and 2012 presidential voting record. It concludes that there is a significant discontinuity between party lines at the 800 persons per square mile mark. Two-thirds of the less-densely, and likewise with the most-densely, populated counties voted for opposite parties with the latter leaning Democrat (Gordon, 2013). The Stanford Graduate School of Busi-

ness also reports on this divide. Jonathan Rodden, a Stanford professor of political science, conducted research on the subject that suggests that there is a growing correlation between population density and how individuals vote as time progresses (Chipman, 2017). Georgia's population has also been on the rise. It increased from 7.9 million to 10.6 million from 2000 to 2019 (Fausset, 2020). This increases population density. A *Washington Post* analysis of Census data concludes that Atlanta and its Democratic-leaning suburbs have seen increases in their populations as other areas of the state did not have as large of an increase (Schaul, Stevens, and Keating, 2020).

Research also shows that the low-income socioeconomic groups lean Democratic. Poverty in America is defined in 2021 as living under \$33,125 per year for a family of four according to the Georgia Department of Community Health and the Federal Poverty Guidelines (2021). A 2020 exit poll shows that 56% of those surveyed with a family income of under \$50,000 (including those in poverty) voted for Biden (*Washington Post*, 2020). Dan Franklin, a political science professor at Georgia State University, states that many of the new voters will on average be of lower income (Niesse, 2019).

As for education, a 2020 exit poll shows that 57% of those surveyed holding a bachelor's degree or higher voted for Biden (*Washington Post*, 2020). In 2016 Trump found support among college-educated whites. However, according to the *New York Times* right before the election, Trump's lead against Biden among college-educated whites in Georgia decreased significantly from 20 percentage points in 2016 to 12 percentage points in 2020 (Fausset, 2020).

COVID-19 led to high unemployment which affected the 2020 presidential election. The *New York Times* details a study where Biden won counties that suffered worse in terms of job loss initially than counties won by Trump. The counties that Biden won had higher unemployment rates. However, the literature states that just because there is unemployment does not

mean that those who consider the economy their biggest issue voted for Biden. The report cites an Edison Research exit poll that Trump received 83% of the vote in this category of voters with the economy as their main issue.

Next, the method of mail-in voting has been in use for many decades. However, in this election, this method was extremely popular due to the pandemic and how close the battle for the state was. Georgia, one of 35 states, allows any registered voter to request an absentee ballot without reason or excuse per a 2005 state law (Niese, 2020). Historically, voters had to request an absentee ballot. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, *AJC* reports that Raffensperger encouraged absentee ballots to avoid crowds and exposure at in-person polling places, so the state mailed absentee ballot application forms to 6.9 million registered voters for the primary election. A record of 1.15 million absentee ballots were returned, equaling nearly half of all votes cast. Although this was highly successful, the action was not repeated for the general election. The cost was the cited reason. However, many planned to absentee vote again. As of mid-September 2020, over 1.1 million people have requested an absentee ballot (Niese, 2020). There is a general opinion that mail-in voters lean Democratic. However, the *New York Times* reports that many leading experts disagree with this and say these are false claims (Epstein, Saul, 2020). The election of 2020 could be different. This is because of partisanship. The American Association for the Advancement of Science reports that social scientists believe Democrats could benefit from mail-in voting due to Republicans making it a partisan issue (Cornwall, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented factor that affects the 2020 presidential election. The CDC provides a timeline of the novel, once in a hundred-year pandemic. According to the Center, COVID-19 showed its first signs of spreading in mid-December 2019, in China's Hubei Province. A group of patients showed "symptoms of an atypical pneumonia-like illness" (CDC, 2023). On December 31, 2019, the World Health

Organization (WHO) Country Office in China became aware of these patient cases occurring in Wuhan. Reports led the WHO to connect these to the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market. On January 10, 2020, COVID-19 was announced by the WHO as the cause of the outbreak in Wuhan. On January 13, 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was found outside of China in Thailand. Later, on January 20, 2020, the first COVID-19 case in the United States was confirmed. By February 10, 2020, there were 1,013 deaths from COVID-19. The first death from the illness in the United States was reported on February 29, 2020. Ultimately on March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic (CDC, 2023).

It cannot be told how COVID-19 affects the Biden vote definitively affected the election because it is a novel virus that has not affected other elections. However, of those who view the COVID-19 pandemic as the most important issue in the election (14% of those surveyed), 89% stated they voted for Biden in a 2020 exit poll (*Washington Post*, 2020). Partisanship could also help Biden as Trump and other high-ranking Republicans disagreed with leading scientists on issues regarding how to handle the virus as reported by almost every media outlet for months since the inception of the pandemic. Biden made COVID-19 one of his cornerstones for being elected as detailed on his website with a key point to listen to leading scientists (The Biden Plan to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Prepare for Future Global Health Threats n.d.). One could be led to assume that more infections and deaths would lead to a higher Biden vote. However, some literature such as NPR states that more deaths are in pro-Trump counties (Wood, Brumfiel, 2021).

## **Data and Methods**

The unit of analysis for this study is the 159 counties of Georgia. Only behind Texas's 254 counties, Georgia has the second most counties of any state in America. The dependent

variable is the 2020 Biden vote in Georgia - recount. This is measured by the percentage of the vote Biden received in each county in Georgia from the recount. Nine independent variables are as followed: percentage of population African American, percentage of population aged 65 and older, population density in 2010, percentage of population in poverty, percentage of population 25 and older with at least a bachelor’s degree, October 2020 unemployment rate, percentage of the vote mail in 2020, per capita COVID-19 infections cumulative to November 3, 2020, and per capita COVID-19 deaths cumulative to November 3, 2020.

**Table 1: Variables, Characteristics, & Sources**

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Source
Percentage Biden Vote 2020 - Recount	9.03%	84.99%	35.0514%	15.88037	Georgia Secretary of State
Percentage of Population African American	.9%	72.8%	28.808%	17.6055	Census Bureau
Percentage of Population Aged 65 and Older	4.9%	34.9%	17.916%	4.6543	Census Bureau
Population Density in 2010	8.5	2585.7	198.663	382.5331	Census Bureau
Percentage of Population in Poverty	4.5%	35.9%	18.304%	6.654	Census Bureau
Percentage of Population 25 and Older with at Least a Bachelor’s Degree	7.1%	53.1%	18.549%	9.2642	Census Bureau



October 2020 Unemployment Rate	2.6%	10.7%	4.972%	1.14119	FRED Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
Percentage of the Vote Mailed In 2020	13.33%	47.85%	27.6851%	6.78388	U.S. Elections Project
Per Capita COVID-19 Infections Cumulative to Nov. 3, 2020	.001702	.883504	.04210065	.069680246	Georgia Department of Public Health
Per Capita COVID-19 Deaths Cumulative to Nov. 3, 2020	.000000	.016167	.00120589	.001454046	Georgia Department of Public Health

The following hypotheses are tested in this study:

H1: As the percentage of African American population increases within a county, the Biden vote will increase.

H2: As the percentage of the population aged 65 and older increases within a county, the Biden vote will decrease.

H3: As the population density increases within a county, the Biden vote will increase.

H4: As the percentage of the population living in poverty within a county increases, the Biden vote will increase.

H5: As the percentage of the population 25 and older holding at least a bachelor's degree increases within a county, the Biden vote will increase.

H6: As the October unemployment rate increases within a county, the Biden vote will increase.

H7: As the percentage of the vote that is mailed-in increases, the Biden vote will increase.

H8: As the cumulative COVID-19 infection up to November 3, 2020, increases within a county, the Biden vote will increase.

H9: As the cumulative COVID-19 deaths up to November 3, 2020, increase within a county, the Biden vote will increase.

## Findings

After conducting a correlation analysis, most variables were highly significant at  $p < .01$ . The director of the relationship is as follows: percentage of population African American (positive), population density in 2010 (positive), percentage of the population in poverty (positive), percentage of population 25 and older with at least a bachelor’s degree (positive), October 2020 unemployment rate (positive), percentage of the vote mail in 2020 (positive). Each independent variable and its correlations are shown below in Table 2. The following variables were not significant: percentage of population aged 65 and older, per capita COVID-19 infections cumulative to November 3, 2020, and per capita COVID-19 deaths cumulative to November 3, 2020.

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis of the Biden Vote in Georgia**

Independent Variables	Percentage Biden Vote 2020 - Recount
Percentage of Population African American	.854**
Percentage of Population Aged 65 and Older	-.153
Population Density in 2010	.506**
Percentage of Population in Poverty	.265**
Percentage of Population 25 and Older with at Least a Bachelor’s Degree	.254**
October 2020 Unemployment Rate	.682**
Percentage of the Vote Mail In 2020	.703**
Per Capita COVID-19 Infections Cumulative to Nov. 3, 2020	.026
Per Capita COVID-19 Deaths Cumulative to Nov. 3, 2020	.117

N=159,  $p < .01$  \*\*,  $p < .05$  \*

Figure 1 is a bivariate scatterplot analysis of the percentage of population African American and the 2020 Biden vote in Georgia. It demonstrates a positively correlated relationship between the two variables. In a bivariate correlation analysis

between the two, this had the second highest relationship of any of the independent variables at .854 and is highly significant at  $p < .01$ . The equation of this scatterplot's line of best fit is  $y = 12.86 + .77(x)$ . This can be broken down into a Y-intercept and slope that help describe the line of best fit. The Y-intercept is 12.86 meaning that if the percentage of African Americans in a county was 0%, the Biden vote in 2020 would be 12.86%. The slope is .77 meaning that, as the percentage of the population African Americans increased by one percentage point, the Biden vote in 2020 will increase by .77%. This relationship has an R2 equal to .729. This means that the percentage of population African American describes 72.9% of the variance in the 2020 Biden vote in a bivariate correlation.

**Figure 1: Scatterplot Analysis of the Percentage of African Americans and the 2020 Biden Vote in Georgia**

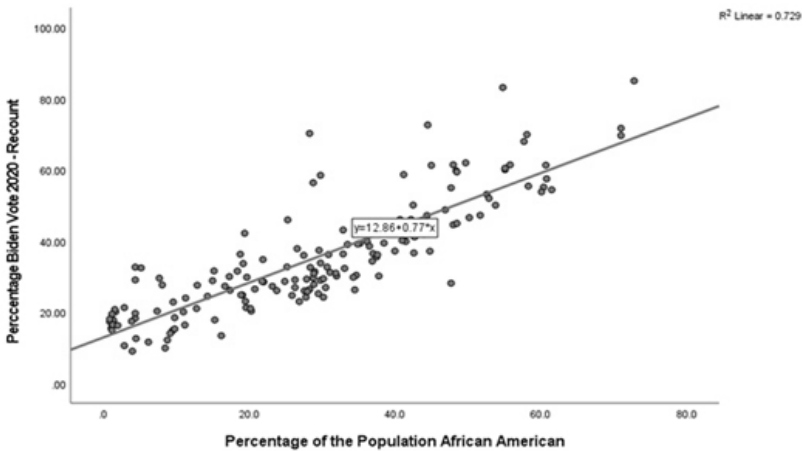


Figure 2 is a bivariate scatterplot analysis of the percentage of the vote mailed in per county and the 2020 Biden vote in Georgia. It demonstrates a positively correlated relationship between the two variables. In a bivariate correlation analysis be-

tween the two, this had the third highest relationship of any of the independent variables at .703 and is significant at  $p < .01$ . The equation for this scatterplot is  $y = -10.52 + 1.65(x)$ . The Y-intercept is -10.52 meaning that if the percentage of the vote mailed in per county was 0%, the Biden vote in 2020 would be -10.52%, which is impossible since a candidate cannot receive negative votes. The slope is 1.65 meaning that as the percentage of the mailed-in vote increases by one percent, the 2020 Biden vote will increase by 1.65%. This is over a one-to-one ratio which is astounding. This relationship has an  $R^2$  equal to .494. This means that the percentage of the vote mailed in describes 49.9% of the variance in the 2020 Biden vote in a bivariate correlation.

**Figure 2: Scatterplot Analysis of Mail-In Votes and the 2020 Biden Vote in Georgia**

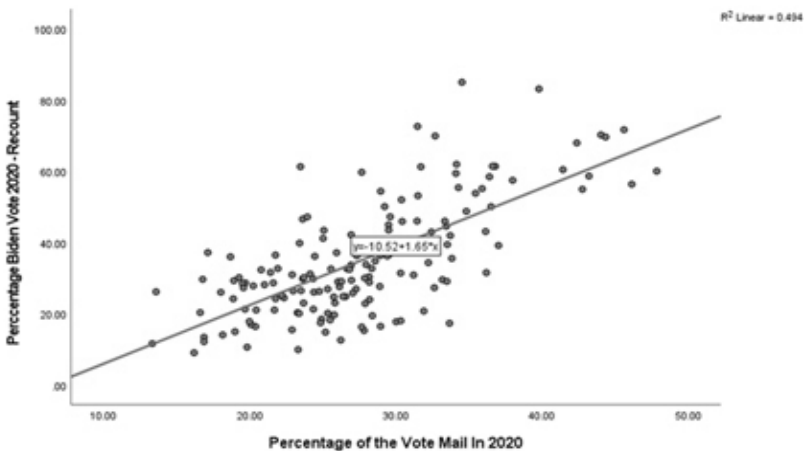


Table 3 describes a multivariate regression analysis of the independent variables. It denotes which variables are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , highly significant at  $p < .01$ , and which variables are not statistically significant at all when controlling for the other independent variables in describing the 2020 Biden

vote across the counties in Georgia.

**Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of the Biden Vote in Georgia**

Variables	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients	Standard Error	t-score	Significance
Percentage of Population African American	.704	.037	18.793**	<.001
Percentage of Population Aged 65 and Older	-.180	0.88	-2.049*	.042
Population Density in 2010	.005	.001	3.671**	<.001
Percentage of Population in Poverty	-.134	.085	-1.571	.118
Percentage of Population 25 and Older with at Least a Bachelor's Degree	.351	.061	5.752**	<.001
October 2020 Unemployment Rate	.265	.386	.686	.494
Percentage of the Vote Mail in 2020	.465	.073	6.386**	<.001
Per Capita COVID-19 Infections Cumulative to Nov 3, 2020	3.658	5.102	.717	.475

N=159,  $p < .05^*$ ,  $p < .01^{**}$   $r^2 = .929$

One variable is statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . With a t-score of -2.049, the percentage of the population aged 65 and older variable is significant at .042. It has an unstandardized regression coefficient of -.180 which means that for every percentage increase in the percent of the population aged 65 and older, the Biden vote will decrease by .180. There are four variables

that are highly significant at  $p < .01$ . Those are the following with their t-scores and significance in parentheses: percentage of population African American (18.793,  $< .001$ ), population density in 2010 (3.671,  $< .001$ ), percentage of population 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree (5.752,  $< .001$ ), and percentage of the vote mail in 2020 (6.386,  $< .001$ ). These four variables' unstandardized regression coefficients and, in parenthesis, the direction of the Biden vote are as follows when the independent variable increases by one degree of measurement: percentage of population African American at .704 (increase), population density in 2010 at .005 (increase), percentage of population 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree at .351 (increase), and percentage of the vote mail in 2020 at .465 (increase).

This multiple regression analysis only includes eight independent variables out of the original nine. This was because one variable had variance inflation factor (VIF) scores of 5 or higher. The variable, per capita COVID-19 deaths cumulative to November 3, 2020, was dropped because of concerns about multicollinearity. Therefore, the broader measure of infection rates was included with no concerns of multicollinearity in this presented model. The eight variables included in the multiple regression analysis all had VIF scores of less than four. The VIF scores ranged from 1.041 (percentage of the population aged 65 and older) and 3.634 (percentage of the population African American).

Two variables were significant at the bivariate level but not in the multiple regression model. Those are the following: percentage of population in poverty, October 2020 unemployment rate. On the other end of the spectrum, one variable that was not significant at the bivariate level is significant at the multiple regression level. That is the percentage of population aged 65 and older variable. The  $R^2$  of the multiple regression analysis is .929. This means that these eight variables describe 92.9% of the variance in the 2020 Biden vote across the counties of Georgia. This is highly important as that describes almost 100%.

Based on Table 3 and the multiple regression analysis, this key hypothesis is supported and failed to be rejected:

H7: As the percentage of the vote that is mailed-in increases, the Biden vote will increase.

Based on Table 3 and the multiple regression analysis, these key hypotheses are not supported, and the null hypotheses are supported for the following:

H8: As the cumulative COVID-19 infections up to November 3, 2020, increase within a county, the Biden vote will increase.

H9: As the cumulative COVID-19 deaths up to November 3, 2020, increase within a county, the Biden vote will increase.

## **Conclusion**

The results of this study suggest that historically proven variables like percentage of population African American continued to be a factor for not only the Democratic vote but for Biden's victory in Georgia in 2020. The percentage of the population aged 65 and older continued to vie against the Democratic party and Biden. Counties with higher education levels were more likely to vote for Biden. Variables surrounding the economy such as the percentage of the population in poverty and the October 2020 unemployment rate surprisingly were not a significant factor in the Biden vote in Georgia. The Biden vote increased in more urban areas of the state while it was smaller in more rural areas. Variables concerning COVID-19 also received mixed results.

As this is the first election with the novel COVID-19, analyzing these results in comparison to established variables is worth considering by expanding the field of political science. If they are found to be key predictors of the Biden vote, following these variables must be considered in future elections. This research concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic, both per capita infections and deaths, were not a significant predictor of

the Biden vote though they were at the forefront of Americans' minds as they headed to the polls. This could be a result of the widespread impact across rural and urban areas alike. However, mail-in votes which surged due to COVID-19 had a major impact on the Biden vote. This suggests that COVID-19 had at least some significant impact on the election. Therefore, COVID-19 was not a key predictor of the Biden vote, but mail-in voting is. Although each of these variables should continue to be evaluated, special consideration should be given to mail-in voting in forecasting and researching future elections.

In conclusion, the causes, election, fallout, and aftermath are all still being studied and lived through. Much of the election's aftermath is still yet to be explored. Every second that passes is another second the history books are attempting to catch up. Research such as this will continue to evolve and learn with the people living during this period and after. Only time will tell whether this election is a paradigm shift in Georgia voting, or whether Georgia will return to its historical red state stronghold. Georgia is only left with one question: is Georgia now blue, red, or purple?



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## How Taylor Swift Uses the Creation of *Red (Taylor's Version)* to Reclaim Power in the Music Industry

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### *Article Abstract:*

*Taylor Swift had an early start in the music industry and has had a tremendous influence on an industry that is predominately run by men. Swift's masters from her earlier albums belong to Scooter Braun, a record executive who she sees as her enemy, so to take her power back, she has begun to re-record her first six albums. Her decision to re-record matters because this is a fight to regain her power over her own music while also advocating ownership rights for upcoming artists. Swift's decision to re-record her previous albums shows how an artist can truly own his/her own work. One of the albums that Swift has already re-recorded is Red (Taylor's Version). This article will use a semiotic analysis to examine how Swift uses the color red throughout her music and music videos to reclaim power over her own work.*

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Taylor Swift's influence on the music industry knows no bounds, and Swift has decided to shake things up by re-recording her previous albums, one of which is *Red (Taylor's Version)*. Swift's act of re-recording is important because it allows her to have ownership of her masters and will have an impact on the music industry for future artists. In order to explore this topic, this article will use semiotics to study how the color red is used by Swift in her re-recording of *Red (Taylor's Version)* to reclaim power over her own work.

To understand Swift's use of color, one must know that semiotics is the study of signs. The creation of media is intentional; every decision has a purpose behind it. This intentionality applies to Swift's work. Mary Kearney, who is a media studies author, wrote an article titled, "Introduction, or How to Cook an Artichoke" through which she tells a story about how the first people who decided to eat an artichoke had to figure out how to prepare it so that it could be cooked. According to Kearney (2018), finding signs in a piece of media is like cooking an artichoke since one must get to the middle, or the heart, to make a piece dissectible. Similarly to cooking an artichoke, Swift's *oeuvre* is difficult to fully understand on the first listen. To grasp the meaning behind her life's work, one must delve beyond the surface. This is important to recognize when considering Swift's re-recordings. Swift has evolved over time, and her music has evolved with her, meaning that her music carries a different connotation than it used to.

Ever since Swift began her career in the music industry in Nashville, Tennessee, critics have questioned her moves. One could say that Swift is hindered by her gender. According to Ott and Mack (2009), "Feminism, broadly, is a political project that explores the diverse ways men and women are socially empowered or disempowered." In Swift's song, "The Man," she explores the idea of how her actions would be received if she were a man instead of a woman with the lyrics, "I'm so sick of running as fast as I can / wondering if I'd get there quicker if I was a man" (Swift, 2019). Swift draws a connection between her gender and the critical tendency to devalue her abilities.

A recent example of people undermining Swift concerns English musician Damon Albarn. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Albarn and the interviewer discussed how many current artists rely on sound and attitude rather than creating music that will withstand the test of time. During the interview, the interviewer mentioned Swift's songwriting abilities. Albarn said, "[Swift] doesn't write her own songs... [co-writing]



doesn't count" (Wood, 2022). Many of Swift's fans came to her defense as Swift only has a couple of cowriters if she has any at all on her albums. Swift's third album, *Speak Now*, was written entirely by Swift when she was younger. Swift has admitted that songwriting is one of the parts of creating music that she is most proud of, which makes Albarn's comments damaging to her reputation. Albarn's claim forced Swift and others to make statements that contradicted Albarn's statement. In a tweet, Swift responded saying, "I write ALL of my own songs" (2022). False claims can be damaging, and as seen in Swift's case, certain men in the music industry have tried to undermine her when they can. Albarn's claim is one example of why Swift needs to take back her power by owning the rights to her music.

Another example of people devaluing Swift regards the ownership of her own masters, the original sound recordings of her songs. Swift does not own the masters of the first six albums that she recorded. When these masters went up for sale, she wanted to buy them; however, the record label chose to sell them to Scooter Braun, an infamous entertainment executive. In her song "The Man" from the album *Lover*, an album to which Swift does own the masters, one sees that Swift took the sale of the original masters as a personal blow. In another lyric from "The Man," Swift states, "They wouldn't shake their heads and question how much of this I deserve" (2019). These lyrics show how Swift has had to constantly prove herself. In response to the sale of her original masters, Swift has begun the work of re-recording all six of the albums that were originally recorded under her old record label, Big Machine Label Group.

To recognize the significance of Swift's decision to re-record her albums, one must understand how the music industry works. According to Davis and Meredith (2021), there are two types of copyrights: composition and sound recording. Composition refers to the "things you can write down about a song: notes, lyrics, chords, melodies, phrasing, key changes, tempo, and harmonies," but sound recording refers to the "part of the

song that you can hear” (Davis & Meredith, 2021). To put this in perspective, a song can have one composition copyright but two sound recording copyrights if two separate artists recorded separate versions of the song. Davis and Meredith (2021) also explain how there are six different rights that concern songs and how these rights determine how money can be made from a song. One of these rights concerns royalties. “When a song is licensed, it generates royalties, which songwriters and recording artists, plus the entities (record labels and/or music publishers) that represent their copyrights, are owed” (Davis & Meredith, 2021). In relation to Swift, this matters because re-recording previous albums would give her more control over her own content concerning royalties and the use of her music in other pieces of media such as movies or advertising.

In the article, “Look What You Made Her Do: How Swift, Streaming, and Social Media Can Increase Artist’s Bargaining Power,” Tribulski (2021) states, “Masters are the original sound recordings of songs; they embody a ‘recording artist’s life’s work and musical legacy’ and constitute an ‘irreplaceable primary source of recorded music.’” This matters because the ownership of a master recording determines how a song can be repurposed. Contracts between the artist and the record label vary, but there is a “common clause in contracts, which says songs can’t be re-recorded until the later of two years following the expiration of the agreement or five years after the commercial release” (CapitalFM, 2022). For example, Swift’s sixth album, *Reputation*, was released in 2017, so it would not be able to be re-recorded until 2022 at the earliest. According to Tribulski (2021), repurposing includes “releasing re-mixed and remastered versions of previously released material in new configurations; creating new releases from previously unreleased tracks, outtakes, and alternative versions from recording sessions; and generating new sources of revenue as technology evolves.” Ultimately, the ownership of an artist’s masters protects both the artist and their work. In this case, Swift is protecting her legacy

and showing other artists that they can take power over their work through their ownership of their masters.

Swift's original recordings were sold for around \$300 million according to Mayfield (2020). That multi-million-dollar deal might seem like a considerable sum of money; however, Swift has continued to stay amongst the "industry's top artists" according to Mayfield (2020). In the past, re-recordings have not always been as successful as the original recordings, but with Swift's large fan base, the re-recordings could potentially be as successful if not more so than the originals. Swift has re-recorded two albums so far. One of those albums is *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*, which according to Blake (2021), "hasn't been a total annihilation of Scooter et al., [but] it has certainly delivered a blow." *Red (Taylor's Version)* is the other re-recorded album that has been released. It has had even more success than *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* as "on Spotify, *Red (Taylor's Version)* surpassed the music streaming platform's biggest opening day of all-time for a female artist with over 90 million streams, surpassing a record that the singer [Swift] had previously held before" (Soria, 2021). *Red (Taylor's Version)* also broke other records for the biggest streaming week for a country album, and even more surprisingly, "All Too Well (10 Minute Version)" broke records of its own. It will take time to see long-lasting results, but from the records Swift's re-recordings have already broken, Swift has shown success with re-recordings is possible.

As Swift has grown up, her music has evolved. According to Fogarty and Arnold (2021), "Taylor may be a monument to an old, white America, but she's also an avatar of a future that is female." Swift began with country music, but she has moved into both pop and indie styles. Swift is also breaking the traditional roles of women in the industry. In the article, "Taylor Swift and the Work of Songwriting," Nate Sloan (2021) states, "Swift has positioned 'hard work' as a key feature in her persona since childhood." Swift's emphasis on hard work builds her image to the public. During her 2016 speech when she was award-

ed the Grammy Award for Album of the Year, Swift emphasized this idea of hard work to a young, female audience. According to Sloan (2021), Swift “views the work of an artist as more than self-branding. Work appears to hold a host of affective meanings for Swift: work as agency, work as a safe space, work as self-actualization, work as activism, work as labour, and work as liberation.” This narrative that Swift has built further proves how she “may be a monument to an old, white America” (Fogarty & Arnold, 2021) by emphasizing work, which is viewed as a traditional value, “but she’s also an avatar to a future that is female” (Fogarty & Arnold, 2021) because her Grammy Award Speech was directed toward young women. The narrative that Swift has built and continues to build by re-recording her first six albums is a way through which Swift is claiming power over her own work.

She is reclaiming her work, and her decision to re-record her previous albums could pave the way for future artists. Swift has also included bonus tracks on her re-recorded albums. This works as a marketing tactic to drive sales, but it also demonstrates how times have changed. Part of the reason that these songs were not released before is due to the restrictions around how many songs can be burned on a CD; however, society has shifted to a streaming-based system, meaning that those restrictions no longer exist. These bonus tracks are labeled as being “From The Vault” in the song titles. Swift’s reasons for not releasing her “From The Vault” songs during the original release vary, but now, these songs are allowing Swift to connect with her fans on a level she couldn’t before. For example, “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)” is an extended version of its shorter counterpart. The “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)” broke records of its own, and many fans preferred the extended version over the shorter version as evidenced by the number of streams it received. In the extended version, Swift can go into more detail about how she felt when these songs were originally written. Swift is also involved in the entire process of recording and

creating visuals since the “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)” short film was directed by Swift. Her involvement in creating her pieces of media shows her dedication to the industry and her determination to regain power over her own work.

This release of updated content has brought up the debate over whether artists will begin to show more “behind the scenes” content or songs that might not have made the original cut for an album. This allows artists to connect with their audiences. The release of new content also shows how artists and the meaning of their songs change. In a tweet on the night of the re-recording of *Red (Taylor's Version)* release, Swift stated, “Red is about to be mine again, but it has always been ours” (2021). This statement shows how Swift has always been a part of the production of her albums, but now she is also recognizing her fans by including them in her decision-making. According to Swift, she would not have re-recorded her albums if it had not been for her fanbase’s push for her to reclaim her rights over her music and their willingness to listen to the re-recordings instead of the originals.

Looking at the discography is another way to understand the meaning behind *Red (Taylor's Version)*. One of the first songs on the album is the song “Red (Taylor's Version).” This is the first introduction to the color red on the album. When one listens to the lyrics, one notices that each color mentioned in the song represents a different feeling or emotion. The lyric, “Losing him was blue like I’d never known,” shows how blue represents sadness (Swift, 2021c). The lyric, “Missing him was dark gray all alone,” shows the loneliness and emptiness that comes with losing someone (Swift, 2021c). Later, Swift says, “But, loving him was red,” which shows how red symbolizes the passion and power of their love in the relationship (2021c). At the time of the original album’s release, Swift was going through a breakup, and this album marked a turning point in her life. When *Red (Taylor's Version)* was released, Swift said, “It’s chill this time. It’s really nice to be able to put this album out and not be sad”

(Late Night with Seth Meyers, 2021, 0:05:48). This shows how artists can experience their work differently and how their work can have different meanings at various points in their life.

*Red (Taylor's Version)* also features some new songs, which are the bonus tracks known as being "From The Vault," and some of these bonus tracks got music videos. One of these songs is a 10-minute-long, extended version of a song, known as "All Too Well," which was already on the original album. Due to the length, the 10-minute version can do more storytelling than its shorter counterpart. Swift directed the short film, which featured Sadie Sink and Dylan O'Brien.

The music video for "All Too Well (10 minute version)" features many muted colors in its design. This use of muted colors allows brighter ones to stand out, and the brightest color that stands out is red, which can be seen on a variety of objects from a red scarf to red hair to red lips. One of the beginning lyrics, "And I, left my scarf there at your sister's house / And you've still got it in your drawer even now," paints the imagery of a scarf that happens to be red in the video (Swift, 2021a). The scarf holds significance as it is something the guy just cannot let go of, which parallels her relationship as the relationship was hard for Swift to let go of. Sink is the main character with red hair, which stands out against the dark background. As the music video begins to end, Swift appears with red hair, so the audience can conclude that Sink was playing Swift all along.

Aside from the use of the color red, there is another message in "All Too Well (10 minute version)." Some lyrics mention the message, "Fuck the patriarchy," which was written on a keychain (Swift, 2021a). This could be a double entendre. When the song was originally written, Swift could have been referring to her ex, but now, it could also be directed toward society which is still dominated by men. This line could also act as a symbol of the struggle Swift has gone through in trying to get her own masters back as well as trying to get them back from men in the industry. Since men run the music industry, Swift's fight for her

masters shows her power and makes her stand out as an artist.

Along with “All Too Well (10 minute version),” the song, “I Bet You Think About Me (*Taylor's Version*) [From The Vault],” also got a music video. This song starts out with a wedding reception. Swift, wearing a bright red jumpsuit, walks out on the lyric, “I didn’t fit into your upper-crust circles” (Swift, 2021b). This bright red jumpsuit is the first use of bright color in this music video as well. This represents rebellion in a sense. Just as the red jumpsuit sets her apart from everyone else, she as a person struggled to fit in and stuck out like a sore thumb.

In another clip of the music video, Swift teaches a group of kids how to flip someone off, which she directs to her past love. This is another example of rebellion and shows her influence on her viewers, especially those who are younger and more impressionable. Swift’s rebelliousness is seen particularly when Swift’s attire changes into a red wedding dress. Traditionally, wedding dresses are white, so when a wedding dress is any other color, it is seen as deviant. The red wedding dress is another instance where Swift stands out from the crowd, and it also distinguishes her from the bride. The last part of the music video shows Swift in her red wedding dress with a guitar, singing the chorus, which has an added lyric to it to end the song.

*I bet you think about me when you're out  
At your cool indie music concerts every week  
I bet you think about me in your house  
With your organic shoes and your million-dollar couch  
I bet you think about me when you say  
“Oh my god, she's insane, she wrote a song about me”  
I bet you think about me. (Swift, 2021b)*

That last lyric shows that Swift is comfortable with making moves that make others uncomfortable. In fact, Swift leans into some of the stereotypes that people give her, which is a smart move as it gives her ideas for her content and shows how com-

fortable Swift is with doing things that the patriarchy both in the music industry and in general society would disapprove of.

In the video, the viewers can see Swift use her bare hand to grab a handful of red cake, which she then shoves into her mouth. The red cake is another instance where red is used in the video, and Swift's action of grabbing the red cake with her bare hands and shoving it in her mouth shows her rebellion towards her previous lover. While her lover in the video keeps seeing Swift, almost as if Swift still haunts him because he just cannot let her go, Swift defiantly proves how she has moved on and will have ultimate revenge on those who have hurt her. Swift's decision to appear like a phantom to a past lover also parallels how Swift refuses to give up her power in the music industry. This video may reference those occurrences where Swift has avenged herself on competitors or those who have wronged her. This idea of revenge may be one of the biggest references to the color red. Red is often seen as invoking emotions, from fiery passion to fierce anger. From this, one can see that Swift is passionate about what and who she loves and will get revenge on those who have undermined her abilities as an established musician.

As depicted in *Red (Taylor's Version)*, red is not just a color. Through semiotics, one sees that red is both a symbol of power and passion. Swift's intentional use of language and color, specifically the color red, demonstrates her power as an artist who is willing to break societal limitations and stand against those with too much power in the music industry. *Fearless (Taylor's Version)* was the first re-recording, *Red (Taylor's Version)* was the second re-recording, and with four more albums to go, Swift is showing the music industry that she is not going anywhere anytime soon.



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## **Digital Attendance: The Design of an RFID-Based Attendance System**

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### ***Article Abstract:***

*Radio frequency identification (RFID) is a wireless technology that uses radio frequencies to scan and transmit data from a tag to a reader when the tagged object comes within the vicinity of the reader. This article explores the hardware and software implementation of RFID technology through a class attendance system to improve the efficiency and accuracy of traditional roll calls. The attendance system has three main functions: writing student names onto RFID tags, enrolling students into classes, and collecting attendance data. To implement these functions, we chose the following low-cost hardware available on the market. An Arduino UNO R3 microcontroller is used to control and process serial data communication between passive RFID tags and a high-frequency MFRC522 reader module; a DS321 real-time clock module keeps the time with crystal oscillator frequencies; and a MicroSD Card module logs the tag IDs and attendance information into text files. A C++ program is developed, and the compiled software is uploaded to the microcontroller using the Arduino IDE. A graphical user interface (GUI) is also developed to provide a user-friendly interface to control serial communication with RFIDs. Tests with various data inputs, communication speed, and storage verified that the attendance system is implemented successfully.*

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## 1. Introduction

Attendance logging is a common protocol for recording individuals present in group assemblies like university classrooms. The procedure allows for the attendance of people, whether present or absent, to be recorded and stored in a database. Traditional attendance recording practices commonly consist of roll calling, manual paper sign-ins, or a combination of the two. While these methods do accomplish attendance recording, they are typically time-consuming, less efficient, and less accurate. For example, roll calling a large environment could be tedious because of the number of attendees needing to be recorded within a reasonable time frame. The roll call process could inconveniently disrupt class proceedings. Manual attendance logging is also susceptible to errors and falsification because of a lack of awareness or the potential of tampering with data. To avoid these problems, other alternatives have been experimented with to find a more flexible yet systematic method of attendance recording.

To provide a more efficient alternative to traditional attendance recording, this article will incorporate an affordable electronics-based radio frequency identification (RFID) attendance system that captures real-time user information and records the time and status of attendance. This system will store data in the memory of RFID tags, scan the tags when they come within the reading range of an RFID reader, and store the attendance information of the corresponding users. To implement this system, we analyze electronic hardware to determine if it can store, modulate, and encode data and if the selected hardware is low-cost. The designated electronics are assembled and coded with an RFID-functional program. A graphical user interface (GUI) is developed to establish a user-friendly interface to input registration information and record the scanned attendance data. The prototype and implementation of this attendance system are satisfactory, and its design can be used for other applications in the future.

## 2. Background

### A. RFID Technology

RFID is a non-contact communication technology that utilizes radio wave frequencies to transmit data. An RFID system consists of an RFID tag that stores data under a unique identification number and an RFID reader that scans the information on the tag through radio signals and modulates encoded information. An RFID tag consists of two main components: an antenna that detects and sends radio signals and an integrated circuit that processes the information received. There are two types of tags: passive and active. Passive RFID tags only operate when they are within the range of the reader's field. Contrarily, active RFID tags are powered by a battery and can receive and transmit data within a given range. For an RFID system to operate, the tag must be detected by the electromagnetic field emitted by the reader. Once the tag is within the vicinity of the field, the tag transmits stored information to the reader. The reader encodes the data received and sends the data to an output device or database [1-2].

Determining the desired frequency allocation of RFID communication is imperative to ensure an adequate range of detection. There are four standard types of RFID frequency ranges: low frequency, high frequency, ultra-high frequency, and microwaves. Low-frequency readers range from 125 kHz to 134 kHz. With this frequency, the electromagnetic field would form a reading range of around 0.1m. High-frequency ranges typically have a frequency range of 13.56 MHz, resulting in a reading range of around 1m. Ultra-high frequency range regulations are different depending on the position on the globe, but their values tend to be around 900MHz, resulting in a reading range of around 20 meters. Lastly, microwave readers have a frequency range of 2.4 GHz and a read range of about 10m [2, 4]. Each frequency range allows for a variety of identification systems and

database designs. For example, low and high frequency readers would be suitable for systems that involve access control, while ultra-high frequency and microwave would benefit long-distance identification, such as asset tracking [2-4].

## B.Literature Review

The implementations of RFID technology have encouraged a variety of application hypotheses and experimentation. Attendance logging is no exception. The ability to wirelessly log information is a desirable technology that would result in orderly and efficient transmissions of attendance information. As a result, various attendance applications have been documented.

In 2009, Lim et al. [6] developed a circuit prototype that utilized an RFID reader powered by a Microchip PIC18F4550 microcontroller to identify a tag's unique identifier, or UID, and assign it to an individual for attendance. They prioritized cheap yet practical design. The hardware design relied on a serial peripheral interface, or SPI, to capture data sent and retrieved from tags within the reader's range. The circuit also implemented a real-time clock to accurately record the time of attendance. They concluded with a successful low-cost framework that was easily available for use. Their design pioneered numerous research and projects that presented their renditions of the attendance system.

Liu and Yao [7] designed a low-cost intelligent attendance system that recorded RFID tag attendance and displayed the output on a liquid crystal display (LCD) module. The architectural design included an STC89C52 microcontroller, an MFRC-522 module, a voltage conversion module, a buzzer, and an LCD module. They were successfully able to detect a tag's ID and record it on their system. However, their process of data recording was not well addressed, and it was unclear as to where or if the data was stored.

Ukioma et al. [8] developed an RFID attendance system that implemented a short message service (SMS) backup system.

They designed a circuit with an ATMEGA 328P microcontroller for data communication, an LCD to display the attendance log, and a Sim900 GMS module to send and back up attendance information to student devices. When RFID tags were read by an RFID reader and the unique identifier was a valid ID in the database, a GMS module sent a notification to the student's phone, indicating that they had successfully logged into the system. They argued that previous RFID research failed to include an SMS system to back up data if the system were to malfunction, resulting in data loss. The team successfully implemented a system that utilized SMS functions and suggested that they develop a biometric security feature and time-logging interface to improve their design.

Pireva et al. [9] implemented a UHF-powered RFID attendance system using a ThingMagic Astra UHF RFID reader and passive RFID tags. They divided their development into four layers: a presentation layer for the front-end presentation and user interaction, a business logical layer for organizing the processing of information received, an interface layer that controlled the database and hardware systems, and a data layer that held all the data. They developed a web application using HTML, JavaScript, and CSS that would interact with databases developed in MYSQL and PHP 5.1x scripting languages. Once development was complete, they tested the design in a simulated environment to identify potential errors or design flaws. While some issues arose such as failure to read the information to the network database, they eventually resolved and completed the design. Future plans for the project included implementing an SMS system.

Aritonang et al. [10] developed a biometric fingerprint attendance system with RFID backup controls using convolutional neural networks and authentication protocols. The CNN algorithm distinguished fingerprint patterns and prevented counterfeit fingerprint scans from being detected, while the RFID modules authenticated the user by enabling the RC4 encryption algorithm to ensure UID security. Their results displayed an ac-



curacy rate of 95.64% identified students with only 0.001% of lost information.

While some designed and implemented their own systems, others analyzed the effectiveness of RFID attendance systems. Qureshi [11] analyzed current attendance issues at King Abdul-Aziz University and proposed a solution using radio frequency technology. He stated that the manual format of attendance-taking was problematic due to factors such as time consumption and probability of error. Qureshi then compared alternative technological methods of attendance taking, such as barcodes, QR codes, and biometrics. After explaining why the limitations of the previously experimented attendance designs could not satisfy necessary demands due to time expense or cost, he reasoned that RFID technology would be a secure and robust attendance system implementation for future development. He followed an Agile methodology to design and implement an RFID attendance system. Specific hardware for the system was not discussed in the project.

Tucker et al. [12], similarly to Qureshi above, conducted a study comparing the effectiveness of traditional, barcode, and RFID attendance systems. Previous studies had shown that RFID was better designed for identification recordings but potentially was too strenuous to implement. Their reasoning for experimentation was to determine an optimal attendance logging method that efficiently logged data while staying within a reasonable budget. Tucker et al. were allowed an environment with barcode scanners and RFID scanners and tags to test and observe the efficiency of data logging 60 students. Their results showed that roll calls took a significant amount of time, rounding out above 11:00 minutes. On the contrary, RFID attendance took the shortest amount of time with the experiment completed in slightly over two minutes. When students were surveyed, RFID attendance had the highest approval rate, with barcoding in second, and traditional roll call in last. However, the RFID system was more expensive to implement due to existing bar-

code technology being readily available in the school system.

### 3. Methodology

To begin the development of an RFID attendance system, it must first be determined how an attendance system functions. An attendance system consists of the data logging of an individual's initial login and time of attendance. In a digital format with RFID, the system should be able to scan an RFID tag, encode data into the tag's memory, and decode and display the logging information once the tag is within the RFID reader's range. An approach to implement such a system would be to divide development into two separate phases: hardware analysis and software design. To implement this system, an analysis of separate hardware is conducted to determine if they are within an inexpensive budget range and have the specifications to either store data, read data, transmit data, or record time using their protocols and design. With the conceptual design and usage of each component determined, a circuit is diagrammed and assembled to connect each component based on their protocol. Once the circuit is developed, code must be uploaded to the circuit to configure each of the modules based on their design. The code should consist of functions that manipulate the data transmission of each module and record the attendance information determined by reading and writing to tags and external files. The modules are tested to see whether the circuit design can translate the data transmissions into a logged system. The project concludes with either a satisfactory attendance design or a prototype that could be expounded upon in other applications in the future.

### 4. Hardware Analysis

#### *A. MIFARE Classic 1kB Card*

The RFID tags used to store data values are the MIFARE Classic 1kB Card (e.g., Fig. 1). The card contains an integrated

circuit that operates around a frequency of 13.56MHz. The integrated circuit consists of EEPROM storage that holds 16 sectors of blocks. Each sector contains four blocks with each block holding 16 bytes of data. Block 0 of the memory holds the manufacturer information with the card's unique identifier, or UID, in the first seven bytes and the remaining manufacturer data in the following bytes. The last block of every sector is identified as the sector trailer. The sector trailer holds two keys, Key A in bytes 0–5 and Key B in bytes 10–15, which protect the information in its sector. It also contains a byte of code known as access bits that grants access to sector blocks. The read and write operations programmed into the card must be authenticated through the given sector block [13].



Fig. 1. Layout of MIFARE Classic 1kB cards.



Fig. 2. Depiction of MFRC522 Module.

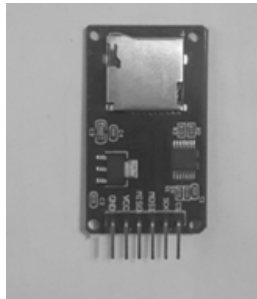


Fig. 3. Depiction of microSD Card Adapter Module.

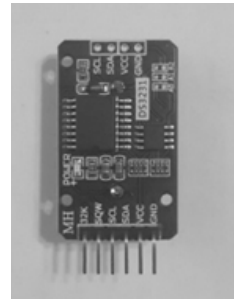


Fig. 4. Depiction of DS3231 Real-Time Clock module.

### *B.MFRC522 Module*

The reader used to read and write to the RFID tags is the MFRC522 module (e.g., Fig. 2), which is a high-frequency RFID transceiver that operates at 13.56 MHz and reads up to 50mm. The module can be powered by 2.3 to 3.5 volts of electric current. It primarily communicates through a serial peripheral interface (SPI). This interface allows for the following microprocessor and the module to synchronously transmit serial data at a fast rate, roughly 10Mbits/s. Three of the eight pins on the module function as SPI pins: the Master-In-Slave-Out (MISO) pin returns signal input to a microcontroller, the Master-Out-Slave-In (MOSI) pin receives serial input from a microcontroller, and the Serial Clock (SCK) synchronizes transmission pulses. The data line (SDA) also transmits data between the module and the microcontroller; however, it follows I2C protocols for serial inputs [14].

### *C.MicroSD Card Module*

The microSD card adapter (e.g., Fig. 3) is a reader module that reads and writes to an inserted microSD or microSDHC card with a 4.5–5.5 voltage power supply. The microSD must be formatted by a supported FAT16 or 32 file system to enable file creation and traversal on the microSD card. It initializes an SPI interface with a similar pinout to the MFRC522. However, this module requires a chip select pin to transmit data between I/O devices [15].

### *D.DS3231 Module*

The DS3231 module (e.g., Fig. 4) is a real-time clock module that calculates the current date and time. The module consists of a crystal oscillator which, by using a quartz crystal, applies the piezoelectric effect to transmit sequential electric fre-

quencies used to keep time. The temperature-compensated crystal oscillator, with a frequency of 32kHz, calculates the frequency of clock pulses and transmits the data to the integrated circuit located on the module. The module's accuracy depends on its surrounding temperature as fluctuations in the environment can slightly alter the output. Data from the module is transmitted using the I2C interface with an estimated frequency of 400kHz. The module requires only two additional pinpoints: the serial data pin for analog output and the SCL pin for clock frequency transmissions. It is also powered by a lithium CR2032 battery to ensure that the module proceeds to run when not receiving direct power [16].



Fig. 5. Depiction of Arduino Uno R3 board

### *E. Arduino Uno R3*

The Arduino Uno R3 (e.g., Fig. 5) is a microcontroller board derived from a prototype of the ATMEGA 328P integrated chip. The module can hold 32kB of flash memory and perform at a voltage of 2.7 to 5.5 volts. The module is mapped with 14 digital output/input pins and 6 analog output/input pins. The analog pins transmit the frequency of electrical pulses as data; contrary, digital pins send a signal of binary byte values. The two pinout layouts permit SPI, I2C, and UART interfaces to communicate

to cojoined modules under the same circuit. A USB port is also embedded in the Arduino circuit to connect the Arduino board to a computer. This connection allows the computer to upload code to the microcontroller as well as power the device [17].

### *F. Pricing*

As stated previously, one of the primary objectives of the RFID attendance system is to implement a cheap yet functional circuit design. To satisfy this condition, the project budget is restricted to \$100. The given budget is determined primarily from the funds available at the time. However, acquiring resources within this budget also displays the practicality of configuring an attendance system within a cheaper range.

The main hardware of the circuit, as well as additional components for circuit building, are priced and listed as follows. The Arduino Uno R3 can be found on the official Arduino website priced at \$27.60. While there are multiple bundles of five MFRC522 RFID readers typically ranging around \$9–\$20, individual MFRC522 RFID readers can be found ranging from \$1–\$10. The fluctuation in price suggests quality differences in the readers; however, speculation on the modules and brands led to no distinct differences. The MFRC522 module tested in this instance is the HiLetgo MFRC522 brand priced at \$5.69 on Amazon. DS3231 clock modules can be found priced at about \$1–\$10. Bundles of five modules can also be purchased for \$8–\$18. Like the MFRC522 modules, no brand distinction could be found for the quality of the DS3231 modules. This project incorporates the 2pc DORHEADS3231 modules priced at \$9.99 on Amazon. The microSD card module is priced ranging from \$5 to \$8. Module bundles are also priced ranging from \$7 to \$16. The 5pc HiLetgo microSD card bundle, priced at \$6.99, is purchased for the microSD card functions. MIFARE 1K cards can also be found on Amazon with prices dependent on the number of cards. Twenty MIFARE cards, priced at \$12.99, were

purchased for attendance testing. A breadboard priced at \$5.99 and three Dupont wire packets priced at \$6.98 were purchased on Amazon for circuit configuration. The total net price for the preceding equipment was \$76.23. Tax rates were not included in the calculation due to state tax. Soldering equipment is also not included in the total price because of existing access to the equipment. The final calculation stays under budget by \$23.77, satisfying the objective of producing an attendance system at a reasonably cheap price. Potential price changes from purchasing other brands were not included.

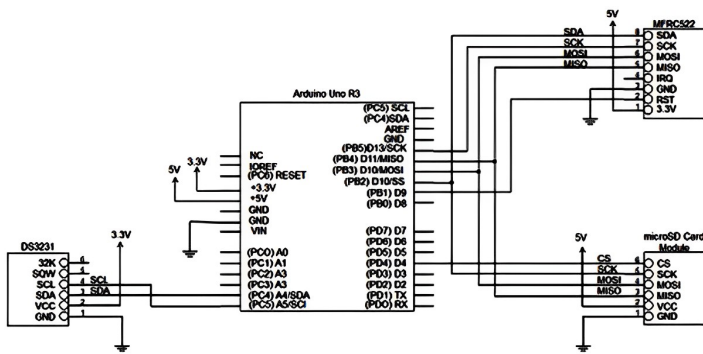


Fig. 6. Circuit schematic of attendance system designed using the EDraw-Max diagram design application.

## 5. Implementation

### A. Circuit Design

For the circuit design, all the pins have been attached to their corresponding pin layout (see Appendix I) on the Arduino Uno as shown in Fig. 6. All the ground pins are interconnected through the Arduino and a breadboard. The 3.3v pin is connected to the MFRC522 directly while the 5v is split between the microSD module and the DS3231 due to the voltage input of each module. Similar wiring can be seen for the SPI pins for

the MFRC522 and the microSD module. Both modules utilize MOSI and MISO pins to communicate between the Arduino Uno and SCK pins to control the signaling of data pulses. To ensure each module is wired correctly, Pin 11, Pin 12, and Pin 13 on the Arduino are wired to the front of the appropriate pin for the SD Card Module on column A of the breadboard. Another wire of the same output connected to the MFRC522 is wired in column B, a position in front of the previously connected wire. This guarantees that the two modules receive the proper voltage for each pin. The MFRC522 module also has an SDA pin wired to Pin 10 and an RST pin wired to Pin 9 that do not conflict with the other modules. The DS3231 connects pins to Analog 4 and Analog 5 for analog clocks.

### *B. Arduino Code*

1) *Backgrounds*: The code uploaded to the Arduino circuit is written in C++ using the Arduino IDE. The libraries used to initialize each of the modules' capabilities are the SPI and SD libraries embedded in the Arduino IDE and the MFRC522 and RTCLib libraries provided on GitHub [18]. The SPI library controls the data transmission for SPI inputs and outputs. The SD library integrates file creation and storage of information encoded from serial output. The MFRC522 library by miguelbalboa [19] initializes the authorization, read, and write functions needed to transfer information to and from the Arduino and the MFRC522. Real-time clock configurations were completed using the RTCLib library from Adafruit.



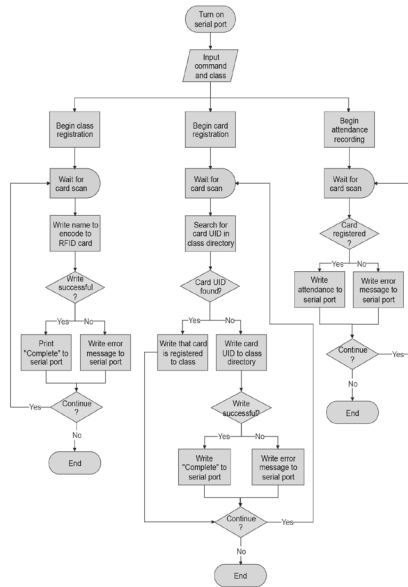


Fig. 7. A flowchart of the Arduino code protocols.

2) *Initialization*: The attendance system begins when the RFID circuit is connected to the USB port of a computer. Communication can begin once the Arduino receives power from the serial port. As seen in Fig. 7, once the serial port is opened, each of the modules begins to initialize if the circuit is properly wired and no connection errors are found. Once initialized, the DS3231 adjusts its clock to correspond to the current time and day. If the modules are initialized with no conflicts, the circuit waits for a command to set up the mode and functions the module is being requested to complete. There are three modes: card registration, class registration, and attendance logging. Each of these commands runs if a designated character byte command is received. After determining the command, the circuit waits for a class name to be sent through the serial port. Due to the SD card library only allowing and reading file names that follow an 8.3 file name format, class names can only have eight or fewer characters. If the class name does not already have an existing

directory on the SD card, a new directory is created and adds a text file that stores the data encoded to the RFID tag. Once this is established, the setup is complete. The loop function begins by preparing for the card's encryption key by resetting a key variable to the default key when manufactured, FFFFFFFFFFFFFF. After the key variable resets, the program halts until a card is within the reader's range.

3) *registerCardInfo()*: The following method runs only if the registration byte "W," representing write, is given through the serial port (see Fig. 7). The serial monitor prompts the user to input their first and last name, separating the two with a comma. The comma is used to alert the serial port to split the incoming bytes and process them separately when placing the data into blocks. The input is then added to a buffer and cast as character pointers. This points to the ASCII values represented by the byte numbers read by the serial port. If the buffer is not full, all the remaining indexes are assigned an empty space. Once the buffer is assigned, the write function passes the pointer to the buffer and the number of the desired block to write information on as parameters. The first name is written in block 1. In the write function, the card is authenticated by Key A using the block number, address of the key variable, and address of the card's UID. If the authentication is successful, the pointer of the buffer will fill the block. The name is stored as hexadecimal values of the character pointers. If the buffer is written to the block, the write function ends and returns to the registration function. The serial port then repeats the writing process for the received last name. However, the last name is written to block 2. Once the last name is written, the method returns true if the process is successfully completed and false otherwise. An error message occurs if any part of the process fails. The UID variable is emptied, the card halts its communication with the reader, and the loop reiterates for more cards to register until the serial port is closed.

4) *registerToClass()*: Similarly to `registerCardInfo()`, the following method only runs if “R,” representing register, is inputted as the RFID function in the initial setup (see Fig. 7). Once the command is received from the serial port, the microSD card inserted into the SD card module is activated and opens the student text file listed inside the class’s directory. Each line of the text file is iterated through in search of a corresponding UID to the data encoded on the RFID card. If no match is found, the RFID tag writes the UID of the card onto the class’s student text file. However, the program prevents preregistered cards from registering multiple times. Error messages are also implemented when search malfunctions occur, such as when a file fails to open. Once the function is complete, the UID variable is erased, communication is halted, and the loop resets.

5) *recordAttendance()*: The following method only runs when the attendance command “A,” representing attendance, is transmitted through the serial port (see Fig. 7). If the name from the RFID card is found on the microSD in the class’s students text file, a record attendance function is called. When the function is opened, a read function is called to read the first name stored in block 1. The card is authenticated similarly to the write authentication process. The bytes in block 1 are read to a buffer variable and looped through as unsigned integers. Each index of the buffer is cast as its ASCII character and written to the serial port and to a string variable if the value at the index is not 32. This number is the ASCII value of space and will be excluded from the reading. Once the buffer is read, the string is returned to the attendance variable. The read function is called again to read the last name from block 2. After the name is read, the SD card module creates a new file named as the current day recorded from the DS3231 module, formatted as MMMDD\_YY. A function responsible for recording the current date and time is called and formats the frequency by the name of the month, day, year, and hours on a 24-hour scale. Once the name and date are dis-

played on the serial port, the data is written to the attendance file on the microSD. Once the data is logged, the card UID variable is erased, communication between the card and module is halted, and the loop resets.

### *C. Visual Studio Code*

It is possible to simulate an RFID attendance system utilizing the Arduino IDE alone. However, Arduino's serial monitor is designed for the observance of serial communication between user-provided input and the Arduino circuit. To provide users with a more interactive design that diverts from the technical details, a GUI is developed using Visual Studio's Windows Forms and C#. The GUI is divided into four controls: a main form, registration user controls, class registration user controls, and attendance user controls. The main form is the main display that exhibits the current controls activated once serial communication is initialized. The main form is divided into two main panels: the display panel and the system settings panel. The system settings panel initializes serial communication between the application and the Arduino circuit once all serial data details have been selected. Options for a serial port name and baud rate desired for communication are integrated to ensure that communication occurs within the correct serial port at a desired rate of transmission. Class name options for directory creation or manipulation as well as options for RFID commands are also grouped with these user controls. Once all available inputs are selected, serial communication can be switched on.

Once serial communication is activated and an RFID command is received and processed by the Arduino, user controls dependent on the given command appear on the display panel of the main form (see Fig. 8). The card registration user controls are responsible for inputting a name and transmitting the data to the Arduino circuit to encode it onto a scanned MIFARE card. The controls display a log of the records of tag encodings once

scanned. The class registration user controls record the status of class registration when a card is scanned while a class is selected. A log of registration attempts is reviewed through serial communication. Finally, the attendance user controls receive attendance data from the serial port and record the information on a local database table. An option for the class time can also be inputted to determine whether the card was scanned on schedule.

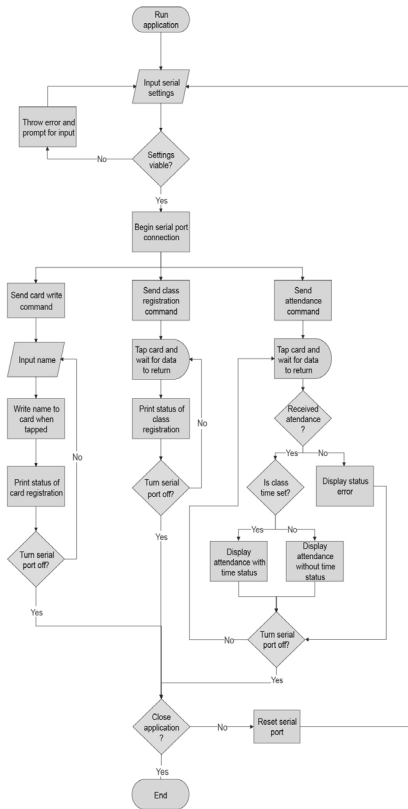


Fig. 8. A flowchart of the Visual Studio code protocols.

## 6. Evaluation

### *A. Testing*

1) *Circuit Communication Testing:* Tests began after configuring the Arduino circuit as indicated in the circuit design. Once configured, test code detecting the card's UID was uploaded to the Arduino to confirm whether communication between the MFRC522 reader and MIFARE 1K cards was occurring. Multiple cards were sequentially placed parallel onto and removed from the reader, each resulting with the UID's hexadecimal values appearing on the Arduino IDE's serial monitor. After verifying communication, the reader's 50mm range was tested to see if cards were actively detected. Unfortunately, no electromagnetic detection system or device was available to accurately map the radius of the range. To compensate, the length was measured with a standard ruler. The first test involved an individual card placed in parallel to and directly on top of the reader. After successfully receiving the UID, the card was progressively moved above the reader for each scan until approximately reaching the 50mm mark. The reader, as anticipated, failed to detect any cards after the 50mm mark. The tests succeeded within the 50mm range above, below, and to the sides of the reader. After confirming the range of the reader, the orientation of the cards was tested. Previous tests positioned the flat sides of the card to ensure that the reader and detected card were parallel. To test the orientation, the ends of the cards were placed perpendicular to the reader's surface. The longer and shorter edges were both compared respectively. Surprisingly, the MCRF522 only detected the cards on one lengthwise end and one widthwise end. After further observation, it was determined that the card's antenna was embedded closer to one of the corners. This resulted in a varied detection range when cards were placed perpendicular to the reader. To guarantee that the reader accurately detected cards within its range, it was decided that the best orientation for accu-

racy was flat-surfaced and parallel to the MFRC522 module.

2) *Arduino Code Testing*: The Arduino code was tested following the configuration of the circuit. To test the basic capabilities of the attendance system, five MIFARE Classic cards were selected to undergo a debugging process. Since the Arduino IDE does not have a debugging system, the test code was divided into three Arduino sketches responsible for testing the card registration, class registration, and attendance methods. Each of the sketches was coded to manually source results to a class named Test stored on a provided microSD card (see Appendix II – IV).

The card registration tests were developed to observe data encoding between MIFARE cards and the MRFC522 reader. The card registration algorithm demands that once the reader detects a card within its vicinity, the serial port displays a prompt that anticipates serial input from the user through the serial monitor. If the data is properly processed, it displays the MIFARE card's UID, the name encoded to the card's blocks, and the speed of transmission and processing in milliseconds onto the serial port window. A custom error message is displayed if any abnormal activities are detected. In order to test this feature, five cards were sequentially placed and held onto the MFRC522 reader and transmitted a name through the serial port. All five cards had information encoded without error (see Appendix II). Other tests included error cases, such as names larger than a MIFARE card's data block capacity and disturbance of communication between cards and the reader. The previous error cases successfully returned error messages.

For the class registration tests, UID recognition and data storage were prioritized to confirm that the microSD was holding the provided classes as well as a record of registered cards in the selected class. As explained previously, when a card is tapped onto the MFRC522 reader, the serial port displays whether the card is identified in the class and the search time. If a card is not found in the directory and the card UID is successfully stored in

the student directory, the name, UID, and speed of registration in milliseconds are displayed to the serial port. If the UID is found, a message stating the card has already been registered is written to the serial port. All five test cards were registered to the system when scanned. It was then tested to see if an error would occur if a card already registered for the class was scanned again. The hypothesized input was confirmed (see Appendix III). Any alternative results were handled with error throws. Fig. 9 shows the successful storage of the scanned cards' UIDs on the Test class's student text file.

The attendance tests determine whether attendance information was formatted correctly and transmitted to the serial port. According to the attendance algorithm, each of the scanned cards displays its stored name alongside the time of attendance and speed of communication in milliseconds if the card's UID is recorded in the class directory. If not, an error message would be displayed, indicating that the card was not registered to the class. Error messages are displayed if any other function, such as card detection or authentication, fails. All five cards successfully scanned and recorded attendance to the serial port. An additional card was also scanned to display an instance of an unregistered card (see Appendix IV). Fig. 10 also provides the creation of the current day's attendance log. To confirm that the data was being recorded, the microSD was ejected from the microSD card module and placed into a computer's USB port with an SD card adapter. Fig. 11 shows the text files for scanned student UIDs alongside the attendance logging.



STUDENTS -  
File Edit For

```
1d436a07
d071ee1b
ed0f6307
fd6b6b07
1d36c919
```

Fig. 9. Text file containing all the UIDs of registered students in the Test class.



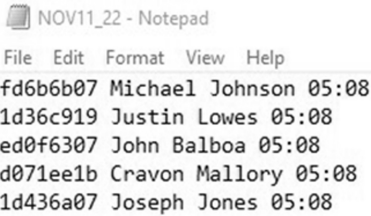


Fig. 10. A successful test of class registration commands and storage in the class directory

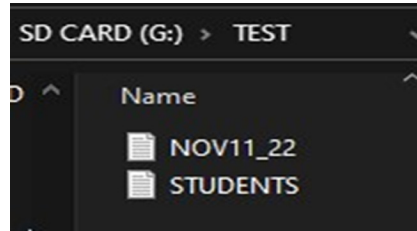


Fig. 11. Creation of the Test class directory stored on a microSD card. The directory contains a list of registered students and an attendance record for one day.

Once the three main components were tested, the components were combined into one Arduino sketch. The program was recompiled and uploaded to the Arduino Uno to observe the data transmission. The sketch currently uses 70% of program storage space and 57% of dynamic memory influenced by global variables.

3) *GUI Testing*: Once the Arduino code was tested, Visual Studio tests were conducted to determine if the GUI application was operational. The test methods involved numerous system tests that regulated each of the user controls and the triggering of serial data events. To begin the tests, the settings controls on the MainGUI form were experimented with to fire the right operations for certain input scenarios. These tests included a successful connection with appropriate inputs as well as scenarios where errors are thrown, such as a class name over the maximum allowed size, an unselected serial port, or the failure to input a function command. Tests were also conducted for serial port connection and disconnection. It was discovered that while the application successfully closed the serial port and displayed the controls of the selected command, the application did not reset the Arduino upon the serial port's closure as it would using other serial port monitors, such as the Arduino IDE or PuTTY. Only when the application was completely closed would the Arduino reset itself. The dilemma prevented the ability to switch

between commands or classes, a feature that was crucial for the development of the GUI. The current solution that has been implemented is the manual reset of the Arduino Uno using the reset button on its board for every instance the disconnect button is pressed. The error has been hypothesized to exist due to handshaking issues between the Arduino's pin configuration and the application's handshaking properties from Visual Studio's serial port package. Further testing and analysis will be conducted to find a working and permanent solution.

Once the system settings tests were completed, ten MIFARE cards were used to conduct tests for each of the three user controls. The test class named NewTest was input to store the information recorded from the GUI. Fig. 12 shows the display of ten successful writing tests, indicating that serial communication and card encoding through the application was operational and displaying on the form as intended. Scenarios for card disruption and authentication failures were also tested to ensure that the Arduino was transmitting correct error messages and that they were displayed on the application. Application failures, such as threading malfunctions and no-name inputs, were tested for error handling. Class registration tests utilizing the same ten cards followed the card registration tests. Like the tests conducted for the Arduino code, the status of registration was displayed on the application once the card was read by the MFRC522 reader. Fig. 13 presents successful iterations for all ten of the cards as well as three instances of card scans already registered to the class. Error throws were also tested for threading issues. Lastly, the cards were tested using the attendance user controls. The primary purpose of the tests was to ensure that the right information was being transmitted to the application and that each piece of data was accurately displayed on the data grid provided. Fig. 14 shows successful scans that utilized the class time feature to determine the punctuality of card scans. Tests were also conducted for card scans without a class time and for unregistered cards.

Each of the tests was disconnected and reconnected for further tests after manually resetting the Arduino board.

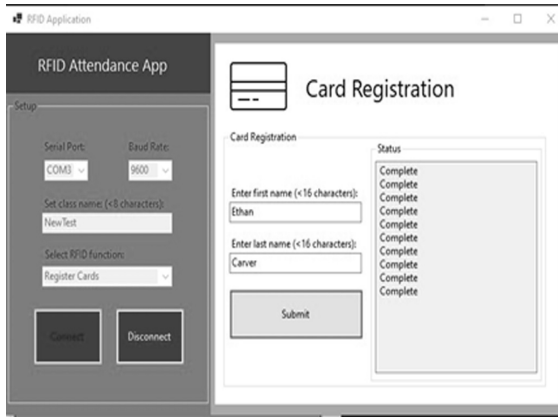


Fig. 12. A display of iterations of encoding names to ten test cards.

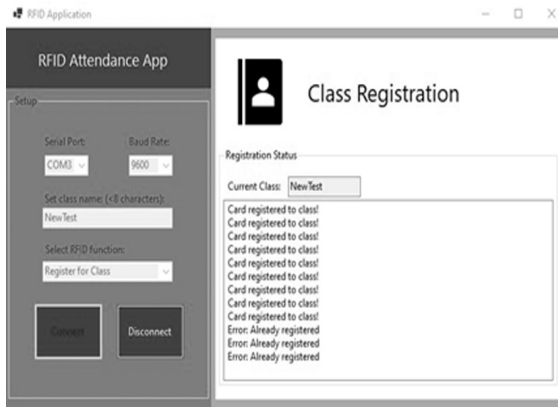


Fig. 13. A successful iteration of ten cards registered to the class NewTest, with three instances of preregistration errors for three rescanned cards.

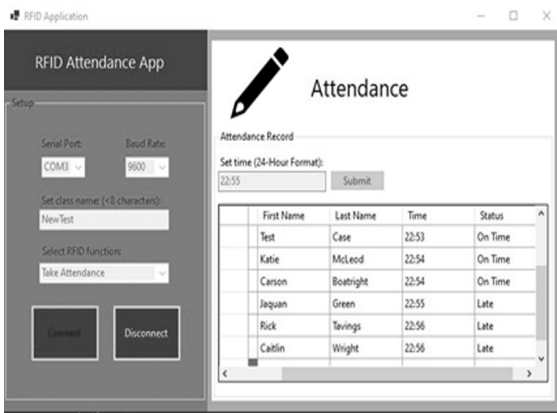


Fig. 14. A successful iteration of ten attendance scans for the class NewTest utilizing the class time feature. Three instances of punctual scans and three instances of tardy scans are present.

## B. Discussion

Currently, the majority of the projected RFID attendance system features have been successfully developed and can be implemented domestically. The design of the attendance system functions as expected, but a few changes would be needed for a better design. A minor concern with the system is the amount of storage the Arduino program needs to function properly. Determining a way to use different values and functions while optimizing the amount of stored information may improve performance, whether minor or not. Implementing appropriate C++ coding practices for memory allocation would lead to faster and safer data communication and optimization. Another issue could arise if an individual's name extends past the byte size of information a block can hold. Potential solutions for this dilemma could be to extend the name to another block if the serial input provided is larger than the initial block. Another solution would be to upgrade from MIFARE 1K classic cards to another RFID tag with larger data capacities. The only potential error in the system is the extended card readings to the MFRC522 if

PCD authentication or writing fails. These system failures tend to occur when communication between a MIFARE card and the RFID reader is interrupted by prematurely removing the card. A secure casing or container for the circuits may be considered to ensure that data transmission is not disturbed.

Hardware design changes may also be necessary to improve the system. For reference, a few of the hardware components are currently invalidated due to the attributes of Visual Studio's IDE. The attendance system was originally designed exclusively as a hardware interface; however, the incorporation of a GUI to control the circuit makes certain modules, while suitable for hardware designs exclusively, obsolete. For example, the DS3231 clock module is useful for circuit testing and standalone Arduino projects. However, the Visual Studio IDE includes a real-time clock library that contains simpler methods for accurately handling time and day recordings. The GUI potentially invalidates the microSD card module as well. Visual Studio allows the implementation of SQL databases that can be used to securely save and access data. The utilization of such databases would allow for smoother data logging, more secure authentication and identification, and easier accessibility to older records. Discarding the DS3231 and the microSD card module and only using the MFRC522 reader in the future would produce an efficient and cheaper design.

Another hardware change more significant than the previous assessments could be the addition of an Arduino Ethernet Shield. This module allows an Arduino circuit to connect to and communicate with the Internet through an ethernet connection to a local area network. Such connections would establish the Arduino as a server allowing instant data transmissions to Internet clients that could view and manipulate data in real time. The module also contains an SD card slot that logs files identically to the microSD card module. Such features would allow attendance to be recorded locally and virtually. If the module is to be added, the circuit would increase its total price by \$29.80

and make expenses with the current design close to or past the \$100 budget. However, the SD card module could be removed due to the SD card slot on the Ethernet Shield. Furthermore, expenses would decrease if the DS3231 clock module is removed as suggested previously. The price of an Arduino Uno R3 plus the Ethernet Shield module adds up to \$57.40; that would be \$18.83 less than the current hardware design. Depending on the pricing of MFRC522 modules, the new design expenses would range between \$62 and \$70. In conclusion, the addition of the Ethernet Shield module is a plausible solution for a cheaper and more flexible design for hardware and software alike.

As for the Windows Forms GUI, the application runs correctly outside of the disconnect feature that was intended to reset the Arduino code. As stated previously, testing the handshaking protocols of the Arduino must be prioritized for smoother versatility while using the application. Outside of this main issue, there are additional features for future updates that would allow for more flexibility with received data. For example, manual registration and attendance would be beneficial for backup strategies for faulty RFID circuit designs. Another addition includes a clocking system that registers scanned cards in and out and an absentee system that calculates whether a student is present or not. If the microSD card component is not removed from the design or if the Ethernet Shield is implemented instead, a feature allowing the access of class directories from the microSD card module instead of manually accessing the card through an adapter would ease user interaction.

## **7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, while there were flaws that require improvement, the attendance system was successful in recording the attendance of RFID tags. Each of the modules succeeded in transmitting data through the correct protocols and outputting information through radio wave technology. The project

not only utilizes the configuration and design of computer and electronic architecture, but it also establishes a potential tool that could ease the process of attendance taking. The attendance system could be used for any group or individual who needs a simplistic and affordable way to wirelessly log the attendance of a certain population. Further development incorporating less hardware and enhanced user-friendliness for the attendance GUI may be conducted to ensure the project is satisfactory.

## Appendix I: PINOUT OF RFID CIRCUIT

	<b>MFRC522</b>	<b>microSDCard Module</b>	<b>DS3231</b>
Pinout from Modules to Arduino	GND>GND	GND>GND	GND>GND
	3.3v>3.3v	VCC>5v	VCC>5v
	RST>9	CS>4	SDA>A4
	SDA>10	MOSI>11	SCL>A5
	MOSI>11	MISO>12	
	MISO>12	SCK>13	
	SCK>13		

Referenced From Miguel Balboa's Repository [19].

## Appendix II: RESULTS OF CARD REGISTRATION TESTS

```

COM3
[Send]

Initialization complete! Begin waiting

Enter first and last name, separating first and last with ',':
Cravon Mallory encoded to card d071e41b with speed of 1003ms

Enter first and last name, separating first and last with ',':
John Balboa encoded to card e6f6e307 with speed of 1003ms

Enter first and last name, separating first and last with ',':
Michael Johnson encoded to card f6d6e307 with speed of 1004ms

Enter first and last name, separating first and last with ',':
Joseph Jones encoded to card 1d43e4e7 with speed of 1004ms

Enter first and last name, separating first and last with ',':
Justin Lowes encoded to card 1d36e919 with speed of 1003ms

 Autocroll  Show timestamp
No line ending 9600 baud Clear output
    
```

# Digital Attendance

```
COM3
Initialization complete. Input class name:
Class directory created/opened
Tap card.
Current class: Test
Time: 2ms
1d436a07 not found! Adding to class..Time: 12ms
Joseph Jones with UID 1d436a07 added to class.

Current class: Test
Time: 3ms
1d436a07 found. Already registered.

Current class: Test
Time: 3ms
d071ee1b not found! Adding to class..Time: 10ms
Cravon Mallory with UID d071ee1b added to class.

Current class: Test
Time: 4ms
d071ee1b found. Already registered.
```

## Appendix IV: RESULTS OF ATTENDANCE TESTS

```
COM3
Initialization complete! Enter class:
Begin card scan
Current class: Test
Searching for UID fd6b6b07...
Time: 6ms
Attendance successful! Info: fd6b6b07 Michael Johnson 05:08

Current class: Test
Searching for UID 1d36c919...
Time: 6ms
Attendance successful! Info: 1d36c919 Justin Loves 05:08

Current class: Test
Searching for UID ed0f6307...
Time: 5ms
Attendance successful! Info: ed0f6307 John Balboa 05:08

Current class: Test
Searching for UID d071ee1b...
Time: 4ms
Attendance successful! Info: d071ee1b Cravon Mallory 05:08

Current class: Test
Searching for UID 1d436a07...
Time: 3ms
Attendance successful! Info: 1d436a07 Joseph Jones 05:08

Current class: Test
Searching for UID bd74c819...
Time: 4294927183ms
Failed, card not registered to class
```



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## **FBI's Counterterrorism Effort: A Year's Review**

**By Nathan Hughes**

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### ***Article Abstract:***

*This project is a content analysis of published press releases from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Section on Terrorism. The qualitative data contained within these press releases gives insight into the current terrorism concern. Specifically, this study focuses on the FBI's Counterterrorism effort within the past year as of August 10th, 2021. To assist in this analysis, groupings have been created based on individuals' affiliation or lack thereof. The main groupings in this study include the January 6th Capitol Breach, Islamic State of Iraq, and Syria (ISIS), smaller groupings such as Hamas and the "Boogaloo Bois," Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS), as well as twenty-seven counts of individuals acting without affiliation. Course concepts from CRJU 4670 Terrorism have been employed in the analysis of these findings, ensuring this review comes from an academic perspective. According to the results, the January 6th Capitol Breach was the most prevalent group, followed by ISIS, followed by smaller groups such as Hamas, HTS, Taliban, The Base, and finally the solo aggressors acting without affiliation.*

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## Introduction

Terrorism can be difficult to define as it is a complex issue, and one person's terrorist may be another's freedom fighter. However, the term generally entails the targeting of civilians with violence for the purpose of causing political change. The term "Domestic Terrorism," according to the FBI, is defined as "Violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature." In comparison, they define "International Terrorism" as "Violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups who are inspired by, or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored)" (Terrorism, 2016). While many people generally assume this is a phenomenon most often found in other parts of the world, according to the data held within this study, this could not be further from the truth.

This study will review the FBI's effort in combating this domestic and international threat. Furthermore, the study offers a foundation for further research on the topic. As time moves on, the counterterrorism team will continue to operate, and academics should continue to track this investigation. The purpose of this article is to discuss the nature and scope of this counterterrorism effort. In order to do so, qualitative data will be used to analyze and review the FBI's counterterrorism effort as of August 10th, 2021. This date was chosen as this was around the time the original assignment was assigned providing all students a uniform period to review. To assist in this analysis, groupings have been created based on affiliations or the lack thereof. These findings, course concepts from CRJU 4670 Terrorism, and prior research pertaining to associations, law, significant events, and more will be used in the discussion of these cases from an academic perspective.

## Discussion

### *Capitol Breach*

Of the 211 total cases reviewed in this study, 122 (58%) were specifically related to the January 6, 2021 event. This group was the most prolific and therefore the most notable terrorist event of the recent year. The biggest difference between these 122 separate cases are the actual charges that came as a result of the offender's actions. This study references only a sample of the many cases associated with the January 6th Capitol Breach. In the August 1st press release, it was revealed that Guy Wesley Reffitt was charged with entering and remaining in a restricted area with a firearm, obstruction of official proceeding, and obstruction of justice (News, 2016). On August 5th, Ricky Christopher Willden was charged with assaulting a peace officer. Then, in another August 5th press release, it was revealed that Troy Elbert Faulkner was charged with the destruction of government property due to him jumping on a windowsill, and subsequently kicking in the connected window.

In a June 30th press release, it was revealed that Mark Grods, a Mobile, Alabama resident and member of the Oath Keepers plead guilty to conspiracy charges centered around the Capitol Breach (News, 2016). The Oath Keepers are a far-right domestic terrorist organization akin to the Boogaloo Bois which will be discussed later. Specifically, his offense was that he joined an encrypted Signal chat called "DC OP: Jan 6 21" and attempted to recruit participants before traveling to DC, buying firearms, and distributing them for storage (News, 2016). The wide range of offenses hold wide ranges of sentencing as well. Some may be convicted of misdemeanor offenses, and some may be sentenced to up to twenty years in prison. It is also important to note that, in contrast to the ISIS cases, these count as domestic terrorism, as these attacks on the Capitol were committed by U.S. citizens (News, 2016).

## *ISIS*

Each of these cases are connected, as all have ties to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Of the 211 cases reviewed, only 15% were found to be connected to ISIS. To provide some context for ISIS, when the last U.S. forces left Iraq in 2011, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, the leader of the mainly Shiite government, continuously discriminated against the Sunni people in an over-corrective fear of the previous Baathist regime and Saddam Hussein's Al-Qaeda. Around this time, a number of Al-Qaeda members moved from Iraq to Syria where they joined forces with the Sunni people looking to rebel against the Shiite government and Prime Minister al-Maliki (Smith & Hirsch, 2022). Massive numbers of Sunni people gathered to protest their discrimination while the Shiite people began their own demonstrations. In Syria, Al-Qaeda began to gain ground as their numbers grew until they were ready to move back into Iraq in 2012. According to the documentary, they engaged in a campaign deemed "Breaking the Walls," in which Al-Qaeda attacked a number of Iraqi prisons, freeing and recruiting the inmates (Smith & Hirsch, 2022). Fast forward to March 2013, the first black flags of Al-Qaeda were spotted in Ramadan protests, which, around that time, they began to call themselves the Islamic State in Iraq and al Sham or Syria. At a Sunni protest in Hawija, in April of 2013, there is an altercation (the exact facts are unclear) but essentially, Prime Minister Maliki and his military responded with devastating force. The body count of that day is unknown but according to the documentary, hundreds of people were estimated to be killed that day (Smith & Hirsch, 2022). This heavy-handed response had an inverse effect on the group. They were not dismayed, but instead the bond between these ISIS jihadist grew stronger. Then ISIS would take Mosul, defeating the Iraqi Army before moving on to cities such as Qayyarah, al Shirqat, Hawijah, and Tikrit. All the while, they would round up Iraqi Army personal and record their mass ex-

ections (Smith & Hirsch, 2022). This is the same ISIS these offenders associate with. The offenders' actions differed greatly. For example, in an August 10th press release, it was revealed that Dilshod Khusanov was charged for providing "material support" for ISIS. He had financed transportation of a Brooklyn man who wanted to join ISIS and wage war in Syria (News, 2016). In an earlier press release, from July 19th, it was revealed that Muhammad Khalifa had also been sentenced for providing "material support" for ISIS. However, he had served as an English-speaking narrator in ISIS recruitment videos and, more notably, had actually executed two Syrian soldiers on behalf of ISIS (News, 2016). On July 7th, the FBI reported that Romeo Xavier Langhorne had also been found attempting to provide "material support" for ISIS. He pledged allegiance to ISIS knowing they were a terrorist organization before proceeding to make bomb-making guides in the name of ISIS (News, 2016). These three cases are just a quick snapshot of the total number of ISIS related cases, but they stand out because even though these people were all charged for providing "material support," what they actually did varied greatly. There is not much distinction between the "material support" cases and others. However, according to §2339A, the focus is placed on support in the form of financials, training, expert advice, or assistance, weapons, communication equipment and as long as it supports terrorist groups or activities (18 USC Ch. 113b: Terrorism). ISIS, like any other organization, requires members of a team to work. There will always be mujahedeen who finance, train, provide safe haven, and more for the terrorist organization.

### *Less Frequent Associations*

However, not all the cases could be lumped in with these two groups. Approximately 14% of the total number of cases were found to be tied to some other groups such as Hamas, the Taliban, and Al-Qaeda. For example, on June 1st, in a press re-



lease it was noted that Benjamin Ryan Teeter was charged for attempting to provide material support, in aid of Hamas. Benjamin Ryan Teeter and an affiliate were part of this “Boogaloo Bois” sub-group of Hamas (News, 2016). The word “Boogaloo” generally means “civil war” (Mohamed, 2020). These self-proclaimed “Boogaloo Bois” seek to spark armed conflict between citizens and authorities, particularly law enforcement, with hopes of overthrowing the government (Mohamed, 2020). Boogaloo Bois have also been known to strategically hijack protests and riots associated with Black Lives Matter, such as the event that occurred on June 2nd in Las Vegas, Nevada (2020, June 4) (Mohamed, 2020).

**Hamas.** Hamas is a Sunni Islam organization which sought, originally, to defend against the spread of Zionist/Jewish Extremism ideology. However, according to Sunni ideology, any doctrine that differs from their own warrants violent jihadist offense (Chenoweth et al., 2018). For example, in 2007, Hamas took control of Gaza, pushing out the previous Fatah authority (Guardian News and Media, 2077). Hamas resurfaced three times in this study. In the April 27th press release, it was revealed that Jason Fong was charged for providing material support for two terrorist organizations. These two organizations were Hamas and Hay’at Tahrir-Sham. It was discovered that Jason had attempted to train mujahedeen’s and instruct them on how to create not only chemical weapons but also IED’s (News, 2016). Next, let’s focus on the case of Benjamin Ryan Teeter from the aforementioned June 1st press release. In that case, Ben and co-defendant Michael Robert Solomon were found to not only be part of the Boogaloo Bois, but they also met with a known Hamas member for the purpose of supporting both groups in their respective missions (News, 2016).

**Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham.** HTS is a Sunni Muslim foreign terrorism organization affiliated with Al-Qaida. When the insurgents overthrew the Bashar al-Assad regime, they took control of what is now their primary base of operations, north Syria (Hell-

er, S., 2017). In the January 18th press release, Georgianna A.M. Gaimpietro, from Sparta, Tennessee, was arrested and charged for “concealing material support and resources” bound for the foreign terrorist organization HTS. Specifically, she met with someone she believed to be a potential mujahideen who wanted to join HTS. Little did she know that this individual was actually an undercover agent. In this meeting Gaimpietro advised the undercover agent on how they could secretly travel to Syria including things such as cutting ties with the people around them (*News*, 2016). She also offered to speak with her contacts on the other side to ensure safe travel to HTS. After inviting the undercover agent to instead go to Afghanistan, she gave them one of her contact’s information knowing full well HTS was a terrorist organization. In short, she attempted to recruit and provide passage for potential HTS members (*News*, 2016).

**Single Occurrences.** There were single occurrences of Al-Qaida, Hizballah, Auto Defenses Unidos le Colonia, al-Shabab, the Base, and the Taliban. According to a May 11th press release, Damian Williams was allegedly charged for receiving training from the terrorist organization Hizballah. This is particularly interesting as the press release actually goes into detail about the organization. According to the press release, Hizballah has social, political, and terrorist elements within, and is based out of, Lebanon. They have reportedly conducted numerous terrorist attacks. This organization has been regarded as a very capable and very threatening group particularly to the United States (*News*, 2016).

Then, there was an occurrence of Al-Qaeda in an April 27th press release. Alaa Mohd Abusaad pleaded guilty for the concealment of terrorist organization financing. Again, the suspect was caught speaking to an undercover agent but, in contrast, he was explaining how to fund mujahideen and was almost seeking donations for the group. According to the actual press release, Abusaad noted that financial support “...is always needed.” And you cannot wage war, “without weapons” (*News*, 2016).

Abusaad ended up getting the undercover agent in contact with a sort of “financial facilitator” and that the money would also help members of the well-known group Al-Qaeda (*News*, 2016). Next, in a November 2nd press release, it was revealed that Daniel Rendo Herrera had pled guilty to not only engaging in a criminal enterprise, but also attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. However, he also pled guilty to murder, kidnapping, and torturing rival drug runners and civilians. Daniel Rendo Herrera was a prominent drug kingpin and was a leader within Los Urbanos Drug Trafficking Org (*News*, 2016).

Next, consider al-Shabaab mentioned within an October 19th press release. In the press release, Farhia Hassan admitted to engaging with a global group of women who fund a known terrorist group called al-Shabaab. Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahdeen, also known as al-Shabab, is a Somalia-based Islamic terrorist organization (Agbibo, D. E., 2014). At its conception, al-Shabab was an extremist offshoot of the Islamic Courts Union and recruited heavily from Itihaad al Islamiya or AIAI. The younger members reportedly left AIAI and joined ICU, starting a sort of “radical youth militia” (Agbibo, D. E., 2014). In fact, the term “al-Shabab” means “the youth” (Agbibo, D. E., 2014). Around 2008, al-Shabab began incorporating leadership tactics and personnel from Al-Qaeda after their leader, Aden Hashi Ayro, died (Agbibo, D. E., 2014). Al-Shabab has been regarded as one of the most organized and deadly Al-Qaeda-linked Islamic groups (Agbibo, D. E., 2014). Notably, the organization carried out a grossly destructive terrorist attack at the Westgate mall in Kenya, in which “70 civilians, six security officers and five suspected terrorists were reported dead, and 175 others [were] injured...” (Agbibo, D. E., 2014). Farhia, the offender of the October 19th press release, was in charge of managing a number of donations and would lie to donors telling them their money was going to charity, but she would actually use it to fund the terrorist organization (*News*, 2016). Entailed

in a June 24th press release were the details of U.S. Army soldier PVT Ethan Phelan Melzer. According to the report, PVT Melzer was a member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team stationed in Italy when he “consumed propaganda from multiple extremist groups, including O9A...” and ISIS (*News*, 2016). Melzer attempted to provide material support including national defense information for this aforementioned white supremacist, neo-Nazi, group called the Order of the Nine Angels (O9A) and even planned a jihadist attack on his own Army unit (*News*, 2016). This organization, in which Melzer has been a member since 2017, has also proclaimed an admiration for people such as Adolf Hitler and Osama Bin Laden. This O9A group has also conducted a number of violent crimes in addition to plotting jihadist attacks (*News*, 2016). This case is significant as this individual was a United States serviceman sworn to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies and, notably, to obey the orders of the officers over him.

Next, a group called “The Base” was brought to the people’s attention in an October 28th press release. Brian Mark Lemley Jr., Patrik Jordan Mathews, and William Garfield Bilbrough IV each previously pled guilty to conspiring to transport, then actually transporting, aliens. Also, Lemley and Mathews pled guilty to a few additional alien-related charges and transporting firearms and ammo with the intent to commit a felony. According to U.S. Attorney David C., The Base’s philosophy focuses on violence fueled with racial hatred. Notably, the white supremacist group has a social media presence which apparently promotes terror, lone wolf attacks, and the “white ethno-state” (*News*, 2016).

### *Unaffiliated Individuals*

To meet the specific/individual criteria, these terrorists had to act primarily on their own, meaning they were not backed by, or in service of, some well-known group. Of the total 211 cas-

es reviewed, only about 13% were carried out in isolation from a bigger group. The first occurrence, going in reverse chronological order, appeared in the July 18th press release, in which John Douglas pled guilty to placing explosive packages outside of two different cell phone stores. He also admitted to leaving threatening notes demanding five million dollars (*News*, 2016). Next, according to the July 13th press release, Emily Claire Hari was sentenced for conspiring to interfere with commerce via violence and threats, the illegal possession of a weapon (a machine gun), and the unlawful possession of a firearm as a convicted felon. Essentially, Hari started a local militia group called the “Patriot Freedom Fighters,” which engaged in frequent criminal acts of violence (*News*, 2016). It is worth noting here that a number of their criminal activities include preparing to construct incendiary devices and distribute uniforms and weapons such as assault rifles and shotguns. On one occasion, the group went to a Women’s Health Practice office and planted a pipe bomb attempting to explode and burn down the building. However, a receptionist found the device and alerted the authorities (*News*, 2016). On a separate occasion, the group impersonated law enforcement for the purpose of gaining entrance to a residency where they zip tied the residents and searched for money and drugs. The group was also involved in fire bombings and arson (*News*, 2016). Detailed within a May 25th press release, Jonathan Joshua Manafo pled guilty to threatening to kill a 911 dispatcher. He reportedly called 911 and, instead of reporting an emergency, demanded to speak with the local sheriff. Of course, the dispatcher refused and told him to clear the line. Manafo responded by threatening not only the dispatcher but also their family. This was apparently while he was on his way to breach the Capitol on January 6th. The crimes he committed there are recorded in separate cases (*News*, 2016).

## *Course Concepts Connection*

When considering the application of CRJU 4670 course concepts, nearly every lesson has some application in this study. In section one we discussed the difference between a criminal organization and a terrorist organization as well as how this line can blur at times (2022b). Earlier we discussed ISIS and the Capitol Breach event. For ISIS, it is undeniable that there are political motives, as we have so much history recording the strong political charge behind this group. However, the event that the FBI focused on the most was the Capitol Breach. Following a speech made by Donald J. Trump, many supporters stormed the Capitol. This, incited by Trump or not, was in response to the loss of the electoral vote and therefore the election. Some believe that the population that stormed the Capitol included a lot of Antifa members. However, according to an NPR report, the FBI disproved this theory, as they found no evidence of the group's involvement. It was notable that many of the charged population were of the opinion that though some Antifa members may have been involved, their presence was insignificant (Anderson, 2021).

The question arises, "Do Capitol police officers count as civilians under our working definition of terrorism?" Technically no, because, unlike congresspersons, our service men and women take an oath to act as peace officers and protect citizens and installations such as the U.S. Capitol. However, violence carried out against them in support of a terrorist act falls under the definition. That context is vital and should not be overlooked. Also note §2331 (5) (B) (ii) saying "the term 'domestic terrorism' means any activities that—appear to be intended—to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or..." (18 USC Ch. 113b: Terrorism). Given this definition, the FBI does appear to have grounds to investigate this event from a domestic terrorism perspective.

A number of cases were reported in which people were providing financial support for the terrorist group. No matter what an organization seeks to accomplish, they will always need funding and, even here in America, there will always be sympathizers willing to donate and misappropriate funds to act on their extremist beliefs. One such example from the study was the case of Dilshod Khusanov in the August 10th press release. As we learned in CRJU 4670, historically, terrorist organizations desire media coverage as if it were oxygen (2022a). The more publicity they receive, the further their reach extends. This is important to consider when reading about “The Base” organization discussed in the aforementioned October 28th press release. They have their own social media, and it can be inferred they do not shy away from proclaiming their views because when it comes to media coverage, there is no such thing as bad publicity.

CRJU 4670 also emphasized the recruitment of American citizens into ISIS (2022a). Notably, we discussed how there may be some American residents who sympathize with ISIS, and looking at these recent cases, that point is heavily substantiated. Just within the past year we have seen multiple cases in which these sympathizers have engaged in funding, training, equipping, and attempting to mobilize people ready to engage in Jihad. A 2016 study showed that some 117 people in the United States had allegedly attempted to join ISIS or similar terrorist organizations (Bergen, P., 2016). According to the report, one reason people (usually young people) are drawn to Jihad is an attraction to this journey of “leaving our comfortable lives behind” and joining ISIS (Bergen, P., 2016). Organizations such as ISIS spread propaganda mostly through social media and this has proven one of the major recruitment outlets for younger would-be jihadists (Bergen, P., 2016). Going back to this financing discussion for a moment, in a document titled “FINANCING,” Prine notes that some may finance terrorism through “Fraudulent Charities” (2022c). This occurred of this within the past year. During the aforementioned October 19th press re-

lease, Farhia Hassan admitted to just this. Her donors thought their money was going towards charitable organizations, but she was misappropriating their money to fuel terror.

In the next module, the class discussed a few terrorist organizations including Hamas (2022d). This organization would arise again in our year review as there is without a doubt still a Hamas presence even here in the U.S. Hamas evolved in 1987, as a “militant and political” group for the Palestinian cause (2022d). Again, this terrorist organization has political purposes and uses violence as a means to an end. The greater “Jihad” refers to an internal struggle, in which we each have to do what is right. But this lesser “Jihad” refers to people actually defending Islam with military strategies (2022e). This idea fuels all foreign terrorist organization members, and one could say the concept, though under a different name, exists here under the domestic cases. Another relevant group are “mujahedeen,” who are individuals who engage in armed Jihad. Again, we see many people within the review who fit into this category. One such example of American sympathizers was the case of J.W. Lindh. He, as an American, joined the Taliban and Al-Qaeda engaging in armed Jihad which means he used a deadly firearm (2022e). Many of the people we have discussed within this review could have gone on to reach this level of infamy if it were not for the FBI’s effort in combating that usage of terror for political purposes or otherwise.

### ***Personal Revelations***

There will always be some people in the U.S. who sympathize with groups such as ISIS. However, it seemed almost unthinkable there were people here trying to train, equip, and mobilize terrorists. This is understandable, as there is a truly diverse group of ideals and worldviews here. In discussing the Capitol Breach with people outside of academia, it has been noted that many do not view this event as terrorism. Consider the



definition of terrorism from earlier in the study. Terrorism is violence, or the threat thereof, carried out against civilians for the purpose of causing political change. However, according to the legal text, the event can actually be deemed domestic terrorism if the offenders seek “to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion...” (18 USC Ch. 113b: Terrorism). Given this text, it would appear that the Capitol Breach technically falls within that terrorism definition. The FBI Counterterrorism team also supports this idea as evidence by this review.

However, under this definition there were a number of events not included in the year review that perhaps should have been. For example, there were a number of Black Lives Matter protests turned riots in which a number of small businesses were burned down in the name of political change focusing on the institutional level. While looking for information on other groups, a source discussing the government’s “power to investigate and prosecute domestic terrorism” was discovered, noting Representative Steve Scalise’s comment concerning the difference of perspective on these demonstrators (Hanna, R., & Halliday, E., 2022). His quote reads: “Many Democrats who were rightfully quick to join us in condemning last week’s events at the Capitol were noticeably silent over the summer. In those months, Americans watched looters ransack small businesses while cities went up in flames” (2022, September 1). He went on to point out the violence was not only allowed but praised by many in the media. It is undeniable that these are occurrences in which civilians were targeted with violence for the purpose of causing political change. So, by definition, these riots were acts of terrorism as well. However, they are not listed here, which is interesting and perhaps slightly concerning.

It is also worth noting that course concepts from CRJU 4670 have greatly increased the students’ abilities to understand what they may be reading, especially when it comes to groups such as ISIS. Without their studies, students would have no background for some of these groups, no knowledge of basic

terms such as Jihad, and no metaphorical context in which to work out these issues. In addition to these, many students may not have even thought to pull up the FBI terrorism News tab to investigate the past year, let alone the drive to engage and investigate for themselves. This study is significant as it is not about the mere memorization of terms and concepts but taking those ideas and using them to study the world and the current terrorism threat. This is important as, clearly, terrorism is not a distant issue. It is an ever-present threat to everyday life.

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## **Seduction's Influence on Fallen Women: Analyzing Victorian Literature's Perception of Patriarchal Theory**

**By Leigh Ann Overlaur**

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### ***Article Abstract:***

*The scandalous women portrayed in nineteenth-century literature are represented through stereotypical societal constructs, yet the author's approach to these concepts makes the stories controversial and irrational. They frame their stories with notions highlighting fallen women and their scandalous liaisons through characteristics such as vulnerability, naivety, love, and desire. The author's gender seems to play a role in presenting the female portrait and psyche because their personal views seem to translate on paper. The male gaze places the titular characters in compromising situations that lead them to be seduced; the female gaze recognizes society's excessive demands and grants the heroines more independence. As a result, the characters are not the villains of their stories, even though they are implied as such because of their improper lifestyles. The real culprit of all these travesties are the authors, shown in the negative motif in which they write their female characters. Literature proves that time alters the perspective of society and patriarchal theory. As time progresses, the philosophy of authors seems to shift because femininity is represented with a more progressive projection. Even so, however they are portrayed, women will always be too complex to translate on paper.*

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Literature of the long nineteenth century is riddled with improper and scandalous women who revolt against society's conventional standards of proper behavior. Literary criticism has adopted the term "fallen women" to signify a heroine's downfall in society and the impending consequences, but this undoing seems to be catalyzed by the influence of seduction. Victorian authors generally introduce women as the seductress, which makes them a common commodity because they represent the forbidden feelings of desire. However, these characters are both praised and ridiculed for their mischievous actions by those around them. Society is fascinated by their illustrious personas and illicit affairs but morally condemns them for being independent. They are viewed as too simple-minded to understand the consequences of their wrongdoings; they are too methodical in their affairs. They are the seducers that use their looks for sin; they are too innocent for their own good. Whichever way they are portrayed, the women of literature, especially of the fallen nature, were unjustly criticized during this time based on their lifestyles.

Fallen women were fundamentally denounced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for the same reasons that we celebrate them today: their uncensored look at misbehavior. Famous authors would broach the subject with laborious effort, but the true focal point shone through in their style of seduction and its corresponding elements. The presentation of misbehaving women holds many complexities, but only a few texts do it so compellingly: Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856); Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877); Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891); and Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920). These novels present the numerous components in accurately portraying corruption: vulnerability, the outcome's effects, love, and gender gaze. These essential elements add aspects of animation to an otherwise stereotypical topic that is severely misunderstood. Additionally, they expertly weave women-driven stories by presenting compelling yet realistic

characters: Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, Tess Durbeyfield, and Ellen Olenska. These revolutionary novels are interestingly ambiguous, as some authors censure the women while others commend them. However, each presents itself as a cautionary tale, not one of death but of the potencies of seduction. In these novels, seduction is demonstrated in a distinct motif that methodically conventionalizes women as society's villains, but the author's perspective of patriarchal theory is the only factor that predetermines their downfall.

### 1. Vandalistic Vulnerability

Vulnerability, which is often depicted as powerlessness, is unsurprisingly exploited by others—which is especially emphasized in literature. The vulnerability of women in novels correlates to many factors that stem from their problematic surroundings and lifestyles. Lisa Hoffman-Reyes recognizes this in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by describing, “In offering a portrait of Tess, Hardy's narrator describes her as being in possession of a sensational beauty that cannot be ‘overlooked’—a sentiment echoed through the speech and actions of the characters in the text. She is a maiden to whom ‘the eye returns involuntarily’” (Hoffman-Reyes 34). Hardy's description of Tess paints her as the ideal pastoral portrait because she is the epitome of purity and naturalness; her facial attributes are repeatedly equated to flowers and, as a result, are portrayed as too tempting. Nevertheless, his illustration of realism is catalyzed as he shatters that portrait of perfection and taints her beauty with debauchery. Hoffman-Reyes argues that Hardy expertly experiments with the philosophical notions between attractiveness and morality, which is crafted in the aspects behind Alec's reasoning for abusing her. The born-again Christian later recognized that what he did was immoral, but her beauty was too alluring to ignore. Tess's appearance is continuously taken advantage of because of the vulnerability it creates. However, Alec's ability to prey



upon her is not based upon her attractiveness but is instead due to another dangerous characteristic.

In the first chapter of the section entitled, "Maiden No More," Hardy recognizes Tess's true vulnerability: her naivety. This is evident as she reprimands her mother for not preparing her for the menacing men of the world. Hardy writes, "'How could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me!'" (97). As she returns home from her sabbatical of working for the d'Urbervilles, Tess is severely forlorn, as her innocence has recently been stripped from her. Before this occurrence, she was unaware of the dangers outside of her home and their calamitous effects. Alec's views of her attractiveness are prompted by her naivety, which assists him in his main objective. Tess never learns from her mother the cautionary tales against men and their deceptions; therefore, she has no reasonable cause to defend herself against Alec's immorality. Her inability to distinguish between good and evil is deprived of her as she finally experiences the epitome of evil. After this encounter, Tess's vulnerability shifts away from the naivety of her surroundings to a belief of unworthiness. She believes herself too impure based on her actions with Alec, so she punishes herself by denying her love for Angel. Her ignorance can be further recognized within her superficial and one-sided relationship with Angel. Tess's didactic nature represents the effects of vulnerability and how the world of men will constantly exploit it. However, unlike Hardy, other authors take a different approach toward vulnerability and represent it in ironic behavior.

The eponymous character of *Madame Bovary* has no qualms about being vulnerable, as she imagines that it makes her more desirable. In one precipitable instance, Flaubert describes, "So then her erotic desires, her craving for money, and

the depression born of her passion all merged into a single torment; and, rather than striving to turn her thoughts elsewhere, she focused on it more and more, fomenting her pain and seeking out all possible occasions to indulge it” (Flaubert 97). Unlike Tess, Emma uses her beauty for her own gain; she is aware of her attractiveness and is willing to be the seductress of the story. However, she believes she understands the components of love and the psyche of men, which she solely bases on her extensive reading of romance novels. This amalgamation of awareness alongside foolishness creates a detrimental scenario of severe vulnerability through misinterpretation. In this instance, she dramatically declares herself depressed based on her own restrictions against being with Léon in a romantic relationship. She views herself as the heroine of her individual story because she is restraining her feelings as she is a married woman. Nevertheless, as the two soon admit their affection for each other, Emma becomes more naïve about her surroundings. She gains a sweet taste of her deepest desire—passion. After Léon leaves, she experiences a state similar to her previous despondent disposition, and this is the moment that Rodolphe seduces her into a physical affair. Her flair for the dramatic and erroneous outlook on life places her in many vulnerable situations—some of which she does not realize until it’s too late for atonement.

As the novel progresses into a state of clever irony, Emma finally must accept her immorality and deception, which steers her to helplessness. J.P.M. Stern explains this as, “Such an unmotivated outburst occurs for instance when Emma, now at the end of her tether, goes to see her old lover Rodolphe, to borrow from him the money she owes L’Heureux” (369). After Emma has compiled massive amounts of debt through her frivolous spending on her lovers, she has finally grasped the detrimental circumstances surrounding her relationships. While explaining the fallen women archetype, Nina Auerbach writes, “No doubt the Victorian imagination isolated the fallen women so pitilessly from a social context, preferring to imagine her as a destitute and

drowned prostitute or errant wife cast beyond the human community” (33). Emma placed her family in an exposed economic situation that is seemingly impossible to revoke. As a result, she allows herself to be positioned in a vulnerable state by visiting Rodolphe and asking him for money. She was willing to prostitute herself to elicit a sexual response from her former lover and thereby gain the lost funds; thus she fully succumbs to the woman that gender theory classifies her as: a subordinate who is not equipped for desire and autonomy.

As she finally accepts her wrongdoings, Emma learns that Rodolphe cannot follow through on her request for money. This realization of her impending doom is thoughtfully conveyed in a short revelation; Flaubert writes, “‘You haven’t got them! . . . I should have spared myself this final humiliation. You’ve never loved me! You’re no better than the others!’” (277). While it leads to catastrophe, this occurrence allows Emma to understand the naivety she has ignored throughout the novel. Her vulnerability then changes into an identity crisis as she incessantly categorizes herself as having a perpetual understanding of love and its complexities in the past. However, her epiphany of completely misunderstanding her relationships leads her to another helpless situation: eating arsenic and dying a painful death. Flaubert and Hardy present the rudimentary ideals of vulnerability, yet their presentation styles significantly differ. It makes no difference if the story is highlighted as realism or satirical, as both authors unavoidably escort their women into tragedy.

## **2. Enticement's Effects**

The nature of humans is to elicit a response from devastation. However, calamity caused by stories of seduction evokes individualized responses that are unique to each narrative. Kaja Silverman provides a glimpse into Hardy's viewpoint by writing, “The abstraction functions as a kind of resistance or defense against the demands of representation, dissociating Tess from

her body as the discursive pressure on it intensifies” (21). Silverman notes that Tess is absent from her surroundings as the harmful components of her life position her in a trance. Even before her time with Alec, she seems detached from conventional emotions; she either feels too much or too little. Silverman observes that this disassociation provides her with a defensive stance against harm. Her naivety places her in a position of confusion, so she has no choice but to comply because she is unsure how to respond. However, after *The Chase*, the raw effects of seduction are disclosed; Tess feels disconnected from her peers and her old life. She sinks into a deep depressive state that seems unbearable, as she feels so despairingly alone. Hardy writes, “Her depression was then terrible, and she could have hidden herself in a tomb” (99). This notion is similar to Tolstoy’s interpretation of seduction’s consequences, as he illustrates Anna’s guilty conscience. Her iniquity, in turn, leads her to crippling self-loathing, which is eventually projected onto those around her. This negative quality—along with her desperation, shame, doubt, and jealousy—completely altered her disposition and characterization. Both novels accurately portray the fatalities of sexual misconduct, as both female protagonists not only horrifically die but also perish spiritually. By displaying their diverse understandings of seduction’s ramifications, Hardy and Tolstoy recognize that despair ferments and never entirely leaves one’s soul.

As a spiritual death begins to transpire, Anna’s notion of beauty seems to fade as her physical descriptions lose their vibrancy. At the beginning of the novel, those around her are particularly aware of her ethereal, harsh, and dark features. However, Tolstoy allows the reader to begin comprehending the extent of passion’s effects as Anna’s characteristics shift. Stern explains, “Anna’s very beauty—severe and passionate and grave from the very beginning, at the ball where she meets Vronsky for the second time—her very beauty becomes graver, distraught and more tragic as the story comes to its climax. It comes to

reflect her distraught mind—that is, it is determined by her own maturing awareness of her moral situation” (369). Stern notes that Anna’s predicament is neither psychological nor social but one of morality. She knows that her passionate relationship with Vronsky is against her beliefs. She seems immune to society’s ridicule, but Anna cares about her actions’ fatal consequences on her family. As her persona shifts toward an envious and resentful nature, she begins to push away those closest to her. As a result, these cracks in her identity begin to present themselves through her physical descriptions. Tolstoy gives the reader a chronicle of her dwindling looks with distinct sketches; he almost seems to mourn her fading beauty as he erratically illustrates it. Anna’s youthfulness and liveliness dramatically decline as her wrongdoings bear on her. Women’s physical beauty is almost always vividly described in novels. However, their physicality is used against the characters, and beauty becomes a weapon instead of a shield. The first indication of conflict appears in the representation of the women’s features; she is no longer the alluring seductress but instead the plain ingenue with a harsh attitude. Similarly, as her jealousy reaches a new height during her pregnancy, Anna begins to shift into an unrecognizable figure in Vronsky’s eyes.

At this point in the novel, Tolstoy conveys Anna’s beauty as no longer the spry, striking blossoms of youthfulness but rather a wilting flower losing its vibrance. This concept also directly correlates to her moral persona, as she continuously fights with Vronsky over erroneous preconceived notions. The reader is allowed a glimpse of Vronsky’s thoughts as he ponders, “Then he thought himself unhappy, but unhappiness was all in the future; now he felt that the best happiness was already in the past. She was not at all such as he had first seen her. Both morally and physically she had changed for the worse” (Tolstoy 353). This realization immediately follows an interaction between Anna and Vronsky that involves the former in a hysterical state of jealousy. After requesting his presence, she believes his tar-

diness equates to unfaithfulness on his part; however, Tolstoy seems to insinuate the hypocrisy of this haste declaration because their whole relationship is based on infidelity and secrets. This part of their romance—the one that was conceived on a bed of lies—begins to take a toll on both lovers. Vronsky does not believe himself to be unhappy, but he is not especially content with his current life because of the complications this affair has caused. Anna's unwarranted attitude and weight gain can be assumingly related to her pregnancy, which mirrors an instance at the novel's beginning. When Dolly discovers her husband's affair, she confesses to Anna that she is no longer beautiful because of her husband and children, to which Anna claims that she understands her predicament. Now that her situation constitutes the same dilemma, Anna almost believes she is immune from love and beauty's disassociation. Nevertheless, Vronsky observes that he never imagines that their bond, only the love, will fade. While this may be true, the relationship's "love" and jarring effects were conceptualized by one thing: seduction.

### 3. Ludicrous Love

A minuscule boundary separates love from mere passion. Passion is usually a component of love, but love is hard to identify within the heat of passion. Lloyd Daigrepoint describes this by writing, "In the protagonists' story of attraction and restraint—one marked by alternating states of tenderness and anger, of fascination and renunciation—*The Age of Innocence* depicts not only the tumult but also the insidious self-absorption of passion mistaken for love" (1). Daigrepoint explains that passion, while an otherwise prevalent emotion, has the possibility of being stronger than love. As commonly seen in literature, the magnifying passion shared between two people is usually forbidden, which adds to the excitement and enhances the misinterpreted feelings of love. Correspondingly, Newland and Ellen undoubtedly share an intense connection, but the amalgamation

of their surroundings and personalities cannot conjure more than those hollow feelings. Newland continuously proves that he is naïve regarding women and love; he expects May to mold to his expectations and Ellen to conform to his desires. On the other hand, Ellen cannot distinguish between truth and lies as she was sorely mistaken about her love for her first husband, which ultimately makes her vulnerable. They both seem surprised by their feelings but are unwilling to act upon them because they seem unsure if their future together would genuinely be happy. Until May's pregnancy announcement, Newland seems set on his intent to escape with Ellen to live out their time unashamed of their relationship.

Throughout the novel, it is evident that Newland only loves the template of his desires, not Ellen herself. His fraudulent persona is cleverly disguised as an amusing attempt at romanticism. Wharton encourages this notion as she depicts, "The longing was with him day and night, an incessant undefinable craving, like the sudden whim of a sick man for food or drink once tasted and long since forgotten. He could not see beyond the craving, or picture what it might lead to, for he was not conscious of any wish to speak to Madame Olenska or to hear her voice" (104). This contemplation arrives after the reader is provided with a glimpse into Newland's unsatisfactory and boring marital life. During this moment, he is left alone with his thoughts to soar, and they fly straight to images of Ellen. However, Newland is not craving to see Ellen; he is only curious about her current lifestyle and living quarters. He is not fascinated by the woman herself but by her scandalous and unique position in society, and he has been since the origin of their association. Newland's hypocrisy is evident throughout because he loves the concept of society but uses Ellen to seem like a non-conformist. He tries to appear a revolutionary liberal for women's rights but loses his stance once he's challenged against it. Additionally, he never truly loves Ellen because he does not understand love's basic algorithm. Newland views loving May as a chore and duty and

resultingly sees Ellen as his reward. However, Wharton seems to recognize that neither woman exists for the sole purpose of being Newland's puppet. Both women whom he claims to love are allowed a spiritual awakening; thus, Wharton depicts love as superficial and a pawn of passion. She identifies a more significant accomplishment than finding love in another, which is experiencing the love of oneself.

Both Wharton and Hardy seem to gradually approach the ideals of self-acceptance as their character's arcs slowly broach the subject of a free mind. Correspondingly, this can evidently be seen in Hardy's ending, but the reader must first endure Tess's hardships involved with Alec's seduction. Hardy writes, "No, you will not leave me to-morrow! Will you, I ask once more, show your belief in me by letting me clasp you with my arm? Come, between us two and nobody else, now. We know each other well; and you know that I love you, and think you the prettiest girl in the world, which you are. Mayn't I treat you as a lover?" (83). Preceding this proclamation, Tess explicitly identifies that she does not love Alec and is repulsed by his unwarranted kisses. However, Alec repeatedly uses his power as leverage over her reluctance, which makes her unwilling to deny him and defend her true feelings. Her naivety and vulnerability radiate within her dialogue, making Alec's yearning to conquer her even more significant. He manipulates her inexperience by continually declaring his limitless love and making her question her inability to reciprocate it. Nevertheless, Hardy seems to recognize that Tess's innocence was always unequivocally going to be stripped from her because her morals are never actually under speculation; this is apparent in the novel's true purpose: an examination of a man's morality.

#### **4. Glaring Gender Gaze**

Analyzing the aspects of gender gaze within literature can be a complex undertaking as only small details reveal the



actual lens of the author. Amy Mandelker describes this concept in *Anna Karenina* by writing, "Bending the novel of adultery to this purpose required a gender inversion which cast a woman in the (anti)-heroic role, rather than in her traditional part as the 'strong woman,' the superfluous man's foil" (49). Tolstoy arranges his writing style to mirror Flaubert's in *Madame Bovary* because of their similar stances on socio-economics and female freedom. Both Flaubert and Tolstoy create their male characters in an unrealistic and fictitious manner to shift the focus toward the women's perspective. However, as a result, Anna and Emma's faults seem to be highlighted instead of their modern takes on womanhood. In the novels, the husbands are described as unfortunate beings who do not deserve these situations. The lovers are depicted as valiant bachelors who have no qualms about seducing their female counterparts. Through these details, the women lose their voices and abilities to be relatable, becoming the villains of their own stories. For example, Tolstoy writes, "'Yes,' she continued. 'Become your mistress and ruin my... everything.' She was going to say 'son' but could not utter the word" (187). At first, Anna is reluctant to become Vronsky's mistress because she is aware of the catastrophic outcome and the dishonor it would bring. She is hesitant to acknowledge the effect this relationship would have on her son, making her appear like a selfish mother. Vronsky eventually manipulates Anna into agreeing to officialize their association, which is a pivotal moment in the novel as her downfall commences. In the beginning, Anna seems like a strong woman who dominates any room she's in, but at that moment, she attaches herself to Vronsky's persona and never again regains her freedom. Tolstoy, like Flaubert, seems to be overcompensating for their respective novel's femininity by illustrating complex women, but the character's individuality is ultimately lost. *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary* are beautiful compositions of literary realism and the epitome of art. Still, they are easily identified as being written by men because of the women's excessive flaws and suppressed voices.

On the contrary, Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* represents the ideals of feminism because of the specific details in her heroines. To highlight this concept, she pens Ellen as a strong and capable feminist; this is evident when she writes, "'Is it your idea, then, that I should live with you as your mistress—since I can't be your wife?' she asked. The crudeness of the question startled him: the word was one that women of his class fought shy of, even when their talk flitted closest about the topic" (Wharton 135). At this moment, Wharton completely contradicts Tolstoy's fashion of confrontation; Ellen, unlike Anna, can admit the truth of her present circumstances and challenge her partner. In Anna's situation, she seems submissive towards Vronsky and is aware of the risks but unwilling to deny his wishes. On the other hand, Ellen appears to be offended when Newland insinuates a similar proposition because she does not want to be personally degraded. She acknowledges that if she were to become his mistress, she would refute her own beliefs of freedom. Ellen understands that their relationship was never meant to flourish into anything more profound. In the novel's context, Newland represents traditionalism, and Ellen embodies modernism. Newland wishes to appear liberal but cannot accept society's unconventional changes, which is seen in how he reacts to Ellen's jarring statement. Newland is surprised by the unrefined nature of her honest response and immediately wishes for her to conform. Interestingly, while narrated by a man, the novel allows no room for the male gaze. Newland indeed voices his opinions, but Wharton's story ultimately portrays a practical exposition of women.

Wharton stands out against her predecessors due to her ability to express the rudimentary foundation of the female psyche while presenting these characters positively instead of negatively. Linette Davis argues, "At her most subtle and insightful in *The Age of Innocence*, Wharton lays bare the mechanisms of patriarchy hidden beneath the conventional romantic love story" (1). Wharton's story is unorthodox because it portrays a simple

affair yet complex beliefs on patriarchal theory. The main concept of the patriarchy in feminist criticism is gender inequality, yet Ellen never becomes dependent on her male counterpart, she never alters her personality to morph to his desires, and she never appears inferior to Newland. True seduction never appears within the novel's pages, even though the story is intertwined with an affair. Furthermore, Ellen and Newland's relationship is never physically consummated, so their connection is solely based on emotions. To criticize the patriarchy, Wharton provides her women with emotions and opinions that prove autonomy can be found within the grips of society. Ellen and May were created to symbolize the modern and true woman because of their realistic actions and thoughts, especially while interacting with Newland. Wharton expertly identifies societal issues and how easily women are excluded and overlooked while being treated as second-class citizens. While *The Age of Innocence* may not be classically categorized as Victorian literature, it has a timeless lens that pays homage to its predecessors while portraying women with realistic qualities. As a result, Wharton—unlike Tolstoy, Flaubert, and even Hardy—focuses less on female sexuality and more on female empowerment, which allows the women to manifest their individuality without a man's influence and to avoid victimhood.

## 5. Conclusion

Throughout literary history, women have been at the forefront of criticism because of the way that they are adversely presented. However, their innocence, reputation, and life fall victim to literature's prejudices. Fallen women are the main ingredient to represent modern realism but this is achieved by printing scandalous text. These stories' sex, drama, and death captivate audiences with their uncensored look at the magnetic force of females. Most authors establish an account involving seduction to make a defamatory yet desirable scenario. The paradox that

seduction creates is that it is neither righteous nor ruthless, but it is both a punishment and protection. While it is true that the act of temptation seems to catalyze these women into their predicaments, they are written as unable to escape their problems because of their gender. Seduction is neither morally right nor wrong, but it is vicious to the virtuous mind; all these women are vulnerable, easily affected, and ignorant of love. They are punished for the false protection their lovers provide, but in the end, they are only a causality of the author's decisions. Corruption is not the villain—neither is Anna's jealousy, Tess's naivety, Emma's foolishness, or Ellen's misinterpretation of love. The authors are the real culprits because they write the women with too many flaws, juxtaposing between being too realistic and too fictitious. Nevertheless, these novels, which were all written within seventy years of each other, prove that time alters the perspective of society and gender theory. As time progresses, the philosophy of authors seems to shift because their characters and plots are more inclusive, allowing for a more progressive representation of women.

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## **The Missionary vs. Her Movie: An Analysis of the Life of Gladys Aylward and her Portrayal in the Film *Inn of the Sixth Happiness***

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*Article Abstract:*

*Gladys Aylward was a British Missionary who traveled to the Republic of China. There she founded an inn, the basis of her ministry, called "The Inn of the Eighth Happiness." While in China, Aylward became a Chinese citizen. She then worked for the Republic of China as a foot-inspector, where she enforced new laws that made illegal the practice of foot binding. Aylward's impressive life was recorded by Alan Burgess in the book "The Small Woman." In 1958 this book was adapted into a film titled *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*. The purpose of this article is to examine the life and works of Gladys Aylward and compare them to her portrayal in the film *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*. Throughout the course of my research, I intend to demonstrate how the film is highly romanticized and historically inaccurate, thus, diminishing her extraordinary contributions as a missionary. It is important to recognize that although many films are based on true stories, there are still many inaccuracies within popular entertainment. Although the film industry favors exaggeration, the stories of famous individuals should be retold in a manner that is both entertaining and true to the nature of their lives.*

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Film has been a central fixture in recreational life since its creation in 1895. Depicting fictional and true stories alike, films capture an audience's attention with their ability to make stories come to life on the big screen. It is now exceedingly common for popular books to be turned into films. With the adaptation from book to movie, integral elements of a story are often lost or changed. While screenwriters are expected to take some creative licenses, viewers are often disappointed and even angered when a plot is changed too drastically. This irritation is especially apparent when fictional novels are adapted into film. However, plenty of movies based on true stories or nonfiction books are approached by filmmakers with the same amount of creative license. In an effort to make a true story more dramatic or appealing, key elements, such as historical accuracy, are often overlooked or replaced in a film adaptation. Even though the level of creative license in true stories appears to be the same as that applied to fictional works, there is often not an equal reaction on the audience's part to such misrepresentations and inaccuracies.

An excellent example of this issue can be found in the 1958 film *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*. Directed by Mark Robson, the film is based on Alan Burgess's novel, *The Small Woman*. Both the novel and the film center on the life of Gladys Aylward, a British missionary. In the film's introductory credits, the filmmakers display the line, "This story is based upon the life of Gladys Aylward, a woman of our time, who was, and is, dedicated to the simple, joyful, and rare belief that we are all responsible for each other."<sup>1</sup> Praised for its depiction of a strong female character, reviewers said that, "*The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* is a rarity among movies: Its central character is a strong, self-determined woman, yet she is neither bizarre nor criminal."<sup>2</sup>

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1 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson, featuring Ingrid Bergman, Curd Jürgens, and Robert Donat (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958), [https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B009EEM1YG/ref=atv\\_yv\\_hom\\_c\\_unke\\_1\\_1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B009EEM1YG/ref=atv_yv_hom_c_unke_1_1).

2 Calvin Demmon, "A Self-Determined Woman: Neither Bizarre nor Criminal." *Alberta Report / Newsmagazine* 21, no. 33 (August 1994): 36.

Ingrid Bergman, the actress who plays Aylward in the film, even received an Academy Award for her performance in the role.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the recognition she received for the film, “Ingrid Bergman, a strapping Swede of five feet nine inches in height, was totally miscast as the diminutive cockney sparrow Aylward (a bare five feet tall).”<sup>4</sup> While at first it may not seem problematic that Aylward’s appearance was inaccurate, her stature was a noteworthy feature of her story. “...the Hollywood version depicting Gladys as a fetching, youngish woman — [was] so unlike the [real] Gladys, a driven tiny woman of 37; worn and weary and dressed in whatever clothes were at hand, she was best described as shabby and drab... However, with her strong personality and extreme humanity and compassion, she would genuinely have made a great impression on Chinese of all classes. Gladys easily crossed the boundaries of status and nationality, and it is difficult to deny the strength of character of this 4’10” plebeian...”<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, according to *Reform Magazine*, “Aylward was appalled by the liberties Hollywood took with her story, her appearance, her accent, and her name. The film changed the name and race of important characters and invented a love affair for which she leaves her mission.”<sup>6</sup> According to Andrea Press, in the article “Gender and Family in Television’s Golden Age and Beyond,” it was common in the 1950s for media to highlight women’s romantic relationships. Press goes on to say that “...feminist themes about women’s professional status are systematically ignored and undercut in favor of a focus on the details of women’s romantic personal lives...”<sup>7</sup>

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3 “Ingrid Bergman—A Modern Magdalene: ‘Saint to Whore and Back Again’ in *Casablanca*, The Bells of St. Mary’s and The Inn of the Sixth Happiness.” *Theology and Sexuality* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 73. doi:10.1177/1355835806069785.

4 Jeffrey Richards, *China and the Chinese in Popular Film: From Fu Manchu to Charlie Chan* (I.B. Tauris, 2017), 163.

5 Keith Stevens, “Gladys Aylward (1902-1970) with the Muleteers of Shanxi and Spying for the Chinese,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 44 (January 1, 2004): 125.

6 “This Month in History.” *Reform Magazine*, November 2019, 6.

7 Andrea Press, “Gender and Family in Television’s Golden Age and Beyond,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 625, no. 1 (2009): 144.



Early in her life, Aylward felt that she had been called by God to serve as a missionary. Although she began her career as a housemaid, she was unsatisfied with her employment. Eventually, after overcoming several obstacles, Aylward was able to become a missionary. In the 1930s, as a single woman, she traveled to China alone. While living in China, she served in a small, mountain community in the Shansi province. During the 17 years Aylward lived in China, she helped run an inn for muleteers, served as a foot-inspector, became a Chinese citizen, performed humanitarian work during the second Sino-Japanese War, and spied for Chinese nationalists. She is most famous for marching nearly 100 orphans through the mountains to safety during the war.

Although the film based on Aylward's life was positively received by general audiences, it is historically inaccurate and misrepresents her missionary work. In a quote from the *New Yorker*, a critic said about the film, "It is a long, technically glossy picture that raises the always difficult question about whether a living character should be, or can be, presented on stage or screen without causing annoyance to many and almost certain offense to one."<sup>8</sup> The film, made during Aylward's lifetime, certainly offended her. According to an article by *Newsweek*, Aylward herself was unhappy with her exclusion from the screenwriting. During an interview with Aylward, *Newsweek* states that Aylward, "Now in her 60s and a resident of Formosa, has called Twentieth Century-Fox a 'bunch of liars: they haven't sent me a script!' and complained that the picture has probably done her wrong."<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, Aylward's original assumptions about the development of the film would come to fruition. For instance, rather than staying true to Aylward's life, the film instead chose to exaggerate a romantic relationship. A commercial success, making 4.4 million dollars in the box office, *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* was a missed opportunity to highlight Aylward's im-

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8 "Inn of the Sixth Happiness," *New Yorker*, December 13, 1958, 124–25.

9 "Inn of the Sixth Happiness," *Newsweek*, December 15, 1958, 114.

pressive humanitarian contributions. The following line, taken from an advertisement for the movie, gives one an idea of how Aylward was portrayed in the film. “Love had suddenly come to her under the China sky...love for this Eurasian soldier who now pressed his earthy, Oriental skin against her own...”<sup>10</sup> Obviously, this is not what one would expect to see advertised for a film about a Christian missionary. Although the film is certainly not as risqué as the advertisement suggests, it perfectly exemplifies how Aylward’s life was misrepresented in the film. Aylward’s romantic interest in the movie is very loosely based on a real man. However, despite the films attempt to invent a romance for her, Aylward remained unmarried her entire life.

Although general audiences were unaware of such inaccuracies, many movie reviewers criticized the film for the liberties it took. Critics felt that the religious purpose of Aylward’s life had been glossed over in favor of a highly romanticized version of events. In the words of one critic, the film was “very much a product of its era, this is both a romanticized version of a true story and a Western representation of Chinese Culture; as such, fans of classic movies will appreciate it more than history buffs.”<sup>11</sup>

Understandably, seventeen years of life experiences could not be comprehensively captured in a two-hour film. However, an abundance of creative liberties were taken and diminished the value of the real events as they occurred. When examining the life and works of Gladys Aylward and comparing them to her portrayal in this film, it becomes evident that many inaccuracies exist. This includes the exclusion of important details in the film.

As a young woman, feeling led by God, Aylward decided to study to become a missionary in China. After studying at the Chinese Inland Mission College for roughly 3 months, the school told her that she was not progressing in her studies, she was unqualified, and she did not have sufficient knowledge of

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10 “The Inn of the Sixth Happiness,” International Movie Database, accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0051776/taglines>.

11 S. Axmaker “The Inn of the Sixth Happiness,” *Video Librarian*, May 2014, 46.

theology to become a missionary.<sup>12</sup> Even though she was discouraged, she accepted the Chinese Inland Mission's offer to work as a housemaid for an elderly missionary couple.<sup>13</sup> Still determined to work in China, even without the support of the China Inland Mission, twenty-six-year-old Aylward worked until she could save enough money to purchase a train ticket to China.<sup>14</sup>

*The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* begins with Aylward traveling to a mission school in London. Contradictory to her real experience with the mission school, Aylward was not even allowed to enroll at the college. The organization's leader informed Aylward that she was unqualified, and they could not send her to China. He did, however, in an act of kindness, arrange for her to work as a housemaid. She then saved her money until she could pay for a ticket to China. In the film, her journey is portrayed as a relatively safe and unproblematic train ride.<sup>15</sup>

In reality, due to military conflict, Aylward had to travel by both train and boat. At the start of her trip, Aylward traveled by train through Germany, Poland, and Russia. Shocked by the signs of poverty she witnessed, Aylward traveled for 10 days before she encountered any major obstacles.<sup>16</sup> Slowly, the passengers aboard the train dwindled, and in their place, soldiers boarded. One evening, after the train had stopped for the night and all the soldiers had departed, Aylward heard gun shots. After speaking with the conductor, she was told that the train could go no further because of a nearby military conflict.<sup>17</sup> "This brief undeclared war between China and Russia over possession of the Chinese Eastern Railroad received little publicity in the western press."<sup>18</sup> Determined to continue her journey, Aylward traveled

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12 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1957), 16-17.

13 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 18.

14 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 20.

15 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

16 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 27.

17 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 28.

18 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 29.

backward along the rail line, through the snow, for hours until she reached another train station.<sup>19</sup>

At the train station, a Russian official approached Aylward and placed her under arrest. After two days of interrogation, Russian officials, having misread her passport, tried to convince Aylward to stay in Russia. Due to a language barrier, the officials had interpreted the word 'missionary' on Aylward's passport to read 'machinery.' Therefore, they assumed she was a skilled worker that would be a valuable asset to their forces. Eventually, after successfully convincing the officials that she was not a machinery worker, Aylward received new papers from the officials along with new tickets for the remainder of her journey.<sup>20</sup> Even though she appeared to be in the clear, Aylward was later detained by another Russian officer.

After several days of detainment, Aylward was visited by an unknown woman who warned her that she was in danger. The stranger informed Aylward that the Russian officer, who had been holding her passport, was going to alter Aylward's passport to force her to stay in the city and become a factory worker.<sup>21</sup> Sure enough, when Aylward received her passport back, the occupation had been changed from 'missionary' to 'machinist.' In a suspenseful chapter, the strange woman arranges for Aylward to flee the city in the middle of the night. As her only option of escape was with a Japanese ship, Aylward departed and sailed to Japan.<sup>22</sup> Once in Japan, Aylward was then able to take another boat to China.<sup>23</sup> It took another month of travel, by both train and bus for Aylward to arrive in the city of Tientsin. She then spent an additional two days traveling by mule, through the mountains to Yangcheng.<sup>24</sup>

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19 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 29-30.

20 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 31.

21 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 32-35.

22 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 38-40.

23 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 41.

24 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 44-47.

In her life, as well as in the film, when Aylward arrived at her destination in China, she met and began working with an older missionary named Jeannie Lawson. These first scenes are relatively accurate as they depict Aylward witnessing a public execution and later, Lawson and Aylward coming up with the idea to open an inn.<sup>25</sup> In the town of Yangcheng, tradesmen with donkey caravans, called muleteers, passed through frequently. Aylward and Lawson planned to open an inn where the muleteers could stay at night and the women would tell them Gospel stories. The missionaries hoped that their message would be spread with the muleteers as they traveled through the Shansi province.<sup>26</sup> One notable difference between real events and the film is the name of the inn. The title of the film, *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* is not the inn's real name. Rather, Aylward and Lawson "named their establishment the Inn of the Eight Happinesses—love, virtue, gentleness, tolerance, loyalty, truth, beauty and devotion."<sup>27</sup>

In the film, shortly after opening the inn, Lawson falls off a balcony and dies.<sup>28</sup> In the true story, Lawson in a bad temper had picked a fight with Aylward. Lawson was so angry that she kicked Aylward out of the inn.<sup>29</sup> During that time, Aylward went to stay at a nearby mission.<sup>30</sup> Several days later, when she had cooled off, Lawson left Yangcheng to find Aylward. While staying at a different inn on her way to find Aylward, Lawson fell off a balcony with no guard rail. Having injured her spine, she could not move. The townspeople did not help her, and Lawson was left lying on the ground for days. When Aylward heard about Lawson's fall, she traveled to her as fast as she could. Upon her arrival, Aylward found Lawson in a critical state. Even though Aylward cared for her for six

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25 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

26 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 55.

27 Tina White, "Small Woman with a Big Dream," *Manawatu Standard*, (April 6, 2019).

28 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

29 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 65.

30 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 66-67.

weeks, Lawson's injuries proved fatal. Lawson's death was a pivotal moment for Aylward as it pushed her to learn Chinese so she could continue telling stories at the inn.<sup>31</sup> Even though the mission school had told Aylward she was not intelligent enough to learn Chinese, she quickly picked up the language.<sup>32</sup>

After learning Chinese and establishing herself in the community, Aylward gave up her British citizenship to become a Chinese naturalized citizen. Around the same time, the Mandarin in Yangcheng had received a decree from the central government that the practice of foot-binding was to be outlawed. The Mandarin, unable to appoint a man to enforce this law, approached Aylward and asked her to find a woman who could work for him as a foot inspector.<sup>33</sup> Aylward spent several months corresponding with nearby missions and was unable to find a suitable person.<sup>34</sup> Only then did the Mandarin ask Aylward to take on the job.<sup>35</sup> In the film, Aylward does become a Chinese citizen and a foot-inspector, but the Mandarin only offers her the job as a way to try and convince her to leave the area.<sup>36</sup> Surprisingly, Aylward was met with great success working as a foot inspector. She would travel to surrounding villages and inspect young girls' feet to ensure they were no longer being bound, and she would unbind the feet of those who had.<sup>37</sup> Her reputation in the community grew and she was given a new name. The people called her Ai-weh-deh, which means the virtuous one.<sup>38</sup> In the film, this name was changed to Jen-Ai, one who loves the people.<sup>39</sup>

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31 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 69-73.

32 Kenneth A. Curtis and Daniel Graves eds, *Great Women in Christian History: 37 Women Who Changed Their World*, (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, Inc. 2004), 200.

33 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 78.

34 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 79.

35 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 80.

36 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

37 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 82-83.

38 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 94.

39 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

One scene in the film shows Aylward purchasing an infant for sixpence from a “child-seller,” one who made money by human trafficking.<sup>40</sup> Although shown as an infant named Sixpence in the film, the child, actually named Ninepence, was somewhere between four to six years old. In Burgess’s book, Aylward, after encountering the child-seller, did not have enough money to purchase the child. Outraged with the situation, Aylward met with the Mandarin to discuss the issue. The Mandarin explained to Aylward that, according to the law, there was nothing to be done. He instructed her to merely ignore the child-seller.<sup>41</sup>

In a moment worthy of the big-screen, Aylward turned around on her way out and said to the Mandarin, “I have to inform you, Mandarin, that I did not come to China only to observe your laws. I came for the love of Jesus Christ, and I shall act upon the principles of His teaching, no matter what you say.”<sup>42</sup> In an act of defiance, rooted in her faith, Aylward purchased the child from the seller and adopted her. Aylward would go on to adopt many more children during her lifetime. This scene of Aylward’s acting in faith and defying the Mandarin was not included in the film. However, the decision to modify this portion of the story takes away from Aylward’s real experience. If featured in the film, this incident would not only have conveyed Aylward’s stubborn and fierce character to the audience; it would have also demonstrated the strength of her faith and the motivation of her missionary work.

One of the film’s main characters, aside from Aylward, is a Captain named Lin Nan. Based off a real man with the similar name ‘Linnan,’ Captain Lin became Aylward’s love interest in the movie. Even though Lin’s parents were English and Chinese, he was not fond of foreigners and did not appreciate Aylward’s presence at first. In fact, he disliked all missionaries because he did not share their beliefs. Despite his harsh feel-

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40 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

41 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 98-100.

42 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 101.

ings, as he got to know Aylward throughout the film, he fell in love with her.<sup>43</sup> Lin's character is one of the biggest problems with Aylward's portrayal in the film. While Aylward did have a relationship with the real Linnan, it was not at all like the relationship shown in the film. Linnan was a Chinese man and it was much later in Aylward's life, after the Sino-Japanese war began, that the two even met. In addition to the exaggeration of Linnan and Aylward's relationship, the decision to change Linnan's racial identity is also a direct reflection of the period. A romantic relationship between Aylward and Linnan as a half European man was less controversial for a 1950s audience than a romance between Aylward and a fully Chinese man.

"The Japanese had been at war with China since 1937, and advanced south through the Shansi Province during the late spring of 1938".<sup>44</sup> During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sino-Japanese war, Aylward lived through many city bombings and Japanese occupations. Understandably, these could not all be recorded in the film adaptation. The film only highlights the first bombing in Yangcheng.<sup>45</sup> In actuality, there were many bombings in the entire region and Aylward spent a lot of time traveling from town to town to find safety and help those who were injured. In a letter to her mother about the military situation, Aylward wrote, "Do not wish me out of this or in any way seek to get me out, for I will not be got out while this trial is on, these are my people; God has given them to me; and I will live or die with them for Him and His Glory."<sup>46</sup> This quote was changed in the film. Instead, Aylward delivers this line to Captain Lin, who is trying to convince her to leave the city and find safety. The wording of the quote is changed to read, "Don't wish me out of this, or in any way seek to get me out, for I will not be got out. These are my people and

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43 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

44 Keith Stevens, "Gladys Aylward (1902-1970) with the Muleteers of Shanxi and Spying for the Chinese," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, 120.

45 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

46 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 149.



I will live and die with them.”<sup>47</sup> It is clear here that the movie intentionally removed the religious motivation for Aylward’s actions and replaced it with a romantic interaction.

The real Linnan met Aylward when he, as an intelligence officer for the Chinese forces, was sent to ask her for her assistance in obtaining information on the war.<sup>48</sup> After a period of friendship, the two decided to get married, but agreed they would wait until after the war had ended.<sup>49</sup> Although a marriage was planned, Aylward ultimately decided not to marry Linnan. In fact, it was only after her incredible march through the mountains that she changed her mind. Burgess recorded Aylward feeling that, “Now, instead of that inner exultation, the rounded delight of knowing that she loved and was loved in return, there was this nagging anxiety to do the right thing by her God, her children, and the man she loved.”<sup>50</sup>

Left out of the film entirely was the fact that during her relationship with Linnan, Aylward served as a spy for the Chinese nationalists. As a missionary, she was able to travel through areas that were under Japanese occupation. She took advantage of this and took detailed records of their numbers and passed them on to Linnan.<sup>51</sup> Aylward’s most famous act was traveling with 100 children through the mountains for several weeks to get them out of a warzone and into safety. This march is depicted in the film, and her band of children does have a close encounter with Japanese troops; however, it fails to fully demonstrate the difficulties they faced on their journey. In the film, Aylward’s story ends after she safely delivers the orphans to Sian after their march through the mountains. When offered a position at the Chinese Inland Mission that had, in the movie, refused to take her on as a student, she decided to decline the

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47 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

48 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 162.

49 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 189.

50 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 251.

51 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 165.

offer. Aylward then left the children in the care of the Chinese Inland Mission and set out to find and supposedly marry Lin.<sup>52</sup>

By the time Aylward arrived with the children to Sian, she was extremely ill and malnourished.<sup>53</sup> Occurring after the end of the film, Aylward remained very ill for many months. She slowly healed but never fully recovered. Despite her chronic health issues, Aylward continued to work in China for many years. Eventually, she was offered the option to return to England, and she decided to go so she could have a needed operation.<sup>54</sup> When she returned to England in 1949, her appearance was so altered that her parents did not recognize her.<sup>55</sup> Aylward spent the remainder of her life working and preaching, and “In April 1957 she sailed back to the Far East, not to communist China, but to Hong Kong where she spent her energies and her money helping destitute families from the mainland.”<sup>56</sup> Additionally, Aylward “ran an orphanage in Taiwan until her death in 1970.”<sup>57</sup>

The ending of the *Inn of the Sixth Happiness* is incredibly problematic. As was previously stated, Aylward chose not to marry Linnan only after completing her journey with the children. Her experiences while traveling shaped this decision. Aylward’s strong resolve to commit the rest of her life to God alone was excluded from the film. Even though she loved Linnan, she loved God and serving her community more. This was the driving force for all Aylward’s missionary work, and the film diminished her strong religious motivation by exaggerating a romance rather than accurately telling her story.

Although the film industry favors exaggerations, the stories of famous individuals like Aylward should be retold in a manner that is both entertaining and true to the nature of their

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52 *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, directed by Mark Robson.

53 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 249-250.

54 Alan Burgess, *The Small Woman*, 252-254.

55 Phyllis Thompson, *A London Sparrow*, (London: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd, 1971), 128.

56 Antonia Fraser, “Gladys Aylward.” In *Heroes & Heroines*, ed by Antonia Fraser, (New York: A & W Publishers, 1980), 236.

57 Kenneth A. Curtis and Daniel Graces eds, *Great Women in Christian History*, 202.

lives. In a *Time* article, it was said that “something of the woman’s flame-single, stone-actual spirit is unquestionably preserved in the film, but all too often the religious force of her example prettily dissipated in the delusive grandeurs of the wide screen, and safely explained away in the entertainingly heroic tropes and grossly commercial moments of the heart.”<sup>58</sup> An incredible woman with a fierce spirit, Aylward led an adventurous life. *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* was a lost opportunity that failed to capture the real life of such a remarkable woman.

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<sup>58</sup> “Inn of the Sixth Happiness,” *Time* December 22, 1958, 72.

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## **Analysis of the Origins of Perfectionism and Approaches to Managing Maladaptive Perfectionism**

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*Article Abstract:*

*Perfectionism is a trait that is often sought after and is attributed to individuals who are successful and ambitious; this is an idea that is observed in the educational setting, with perfectionism being perceived as socially acceptable amongst students. While perfectionism may be associated with an individual's success, it may also impede one's success and produce negative outcomes. Researchers, such as Gnilka, Ashby, and Noble, indicate there are two distinct dimensions of perfectionism: maladaptive and adaptive (Gnilka et al., 2012). University students are regularly associated with maladaptive perfectionism which is shown to negatively affect their academic success and increase their level of psychological distress (stress, depression, and anxiety) (Shepard and Hicks, 2017). The research reviewed here will summarize and analyze the origins of perfection and coping strategies used by perfectionists implementing previous research on perfectionism, achieving a greater understanding of how maladaptive perfectionism affects university students and providing further information on effective methods to mitigate and treat maladaptive perfectionism.*

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## **Multidimensionality of Perfectionism**

“Perfectionism is a personality disposition characterized by striving for flawlessness and setting exceedingly high standards for performance accompanied by tendencies for overly critical evaluations of one’s behavior” (Stoeber and Hotham, 2013). Traditionally viewed as being unidimensional in nature, current research and the development of quantitative measurements suggests that perfection is a multidimensional personality construct (Rice and Lapsley, 2001; Stoeber and Hotham, 2013). The traditional perspective of perfectionism in culture can be observed from the general/customary definition as “a disposition to regard anything short of perfection as unacceptable” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022), which is often analogous to a person who is successful, and ambitious—or it is required as a characteristic of the “ideal student” in the educational setting. On the contrary, a facet of the multidimensionality of perfectionism may produce the opposite outcomes, impeding success and increasing amotivation. The accepted perspective of perfectionism currently is that it is separated into maladaptive perfectionism (MP) and adaptive perfectionism (AP). Adaptive perfectionism is the healthy form of perfectionism while maladaptive perfectionism is the neurotic or unhealthy form of perfectionism. This article is a review and analysis of previous research in the domain of perfectionism, with the main concentration on maladaptive perfectionism. Using this research, the origins of perfectionism and coping strategies will be reviewed to discuss effective methods used to mitigate and treat maladaptive perfectionism.

Two of the major scales used to indicate one’s level of perfectionism are the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (F-MPS) and the Almost Perfect Scale (APS). The F-MPS consists of six subscales: Doubts About Actions, Concerns Over Mistakes, Personal Standards, Parental Expectations, Parental Criticism and Organization. Combined, that score reveals a per-

son's amount of perfectionism, and a high score on the F-MPS scale indicates higher levels of perfection. Higher scores from Concerns Over Mistakes and Doubts About Actions are indicators of maladaptive perfectionism. The Almost Perfect Scale (APS) consists of four subscales used to specifically measure the adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism: a Standards and Order scale, an interpersonal and counseling Relationship Scale, an Anxiety Scale, and a Procrastination Scale (Periasamy and Ashby, 2002). Combined, the APS and F-MPS aid to characterize and identify the two dimensions of perfectionism. In addition to the APS and F-MPS, the Hewitt and Flett Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale further dissects maladaptive perfectionism and adaptive perfectionism into three subcategories: self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism; showing socially prescribed perfectionism forms maladaptive perfectionism, while self-orientated and other-orientated perfectionism forms adaptive perfectionism. Interestingly, socially prescribed perfectionism comprises the beliefs that high standards are expected by others and acceptance by others is conditional on fulfilling these standards (Stoeber and Hotham, 2013), which seems to be reflected in the overall high scores in the Concern Over Mistakes and Doubts About Actions for maladaptive perfectionists since it is believed that acceptance and approval hinge on fulfilling goals and standards. This implication is supported by Halgin and Leahy (1989), as they state that the development of maladaptive perfectionism may be caused by an environment of conditional positive approval (233)—this insists that a factor of perfectionism entails locus of control.

Locus of control is one's perceived ability to exercise control over the outcome of their behavior (Periasamy and Ashby, 2002). Locus of control consists of two classes: internal and external locus of control; internal locus of control refers to perceiving the outcome of events to be contingent on [one's] own actions, whereas with an external locus of control, one perceives their outcome as dependent on external factors (Periasamy and



Ashby, 2002). Though both forms of perfectionists have been shown to have a higher internal locus of control, maladaptive perfectionists tend to have a higher external locus of control than adaptive perfectionists; this disparity may be attributed to the perspective that maladaptive perfectionists believe that their level of achievement of goals/outcomes is contingent on the approval/acceptance of others (Stoeber and Hotham, 2013). On the other hand, adaptive perfectionists may pursue those same goals and standards, but those with a high internal locus of control are able to be satisfied with differing outcomes. With the foundation of how to measure one's perfectionism and insight on locus of control as they relate to maladaptive perfectionism and adaptive perfectionism, we can accurately define what adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism is.

Adaptive perfectionism is the positive/healthy form of perfectionism, where adaptive perfectionists are able to gain a sense of satisfaction in their arduous pursuit of reasonable and flexible high standards, concentrating on what is accomplished, even if they fail (Gnilka et al., 2012; Rice and Lapsley, 2001). An example of an adaptive perfectionist can be observed through the scope of a musician. When learning repertoire, taking lessons, or even during a performance the musician sets high standards and goals for aptness and distinction, however amid their performance they may make mistakes in a section or area of the music leading them to fall short of their expectations. The response of an adaptive perfectionist would be to figure out what they did wrong and what they should improve on to accomplish their standards/goals rather than dwelling on their mistakes. In performance playing, since time is always moving forward, there is no point in dwelling on the mistakes made previously as if you can go back in time, stop, and fix those mistakes. Due to their frame of mind, adaptive perfectionists can maintain a positive psychological well-being when faced with failure; amongst the dimensions of perfectionism, adaptive perfectionism is associated with higher levels of hope, lower levels of depression, lower

levels of stress and anxiety, and higher levels of psychological well-being (Gnilka et al., 2012; Aldea and Rice, 2006).

Maladaptive perfectionism, described as an antithesis of adaptive perfectionism, “is the relentless striving for extremely high standards and critical self-evaluation of performance” (Sheppard and Hicks, 2017). Where adaptive perfectionists hold flexible standards and are able to gain a sense of satisfaction in the pursuit of their standards/goals, maladaptive perfectionists may endure intrapersonal turmoil and distress from pursuing their rigid, inflexible, and sometimes unattainable standards/goals. Ongoing studies indicate that maladaptive perfectionism corresponds with low levels of self-esteem, low levels of self-confidence, lower sense of satisfaction, higher levels of stress, and higher levels of depression (Aldea and Rice, 2006; Gnilka et al., 2012). Sheppard and Hicks further support the correlation between maladaptive perfectionism and psychological distress (stress, anxiety, depression, etc.) when studying university students, finding that there is a statistically significant relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and psychological distress.<sup>59</sup> To continue with the example of the musician, when learning repertoire, taking lessons, or even during a performance, the musician sets high standards and goals for aptness and distinction, however, amid their performance they may make mistakes in a section or area of the music leading them to fall short of their expectations. The maladaptive perfectionist musician in this situation may only focus on the mistakes made during the performance, regardless of if it was noticeable or if the overall performance was a success. Since the musician’s mindset is pinpointed on the imperfections of the past, it may negatively affect their psychological well-being so that when approaching

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<sup>59</sup> See *From Maladaptive Perfectionism and Psychological Distress: The Mediating Role of Resilience and Trait Emotional Intelligence* (p. 71), by L. Sheppard, R. Hicks, 2017, *International Journal of Psychological Studies*. Maladaptive perfectionism is shown to have a statistically significant relationship with psychological distress. When resilience is added to the median analysis, it is identified as a partial mediator of psychological distress since it leads to a dramatic decrease in the regression of maladaptive perfectionism and psychological distress when implemented.

a similar situation in the future the musician will have developed a fear of mistakes when performing.

The divergence of adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism can be seen through their common trends and characteristics, their origins, and indicated deeper related psychological issues/stressors.

## **Origins of Perfectionism**

Understanding how perfectionism is developed, as early as in the adolescent age, sets a foundation for understanding why and how maladaptive perfectionism is expressed at later ages, specifically in the university student demographic. It will also aid the reader in better recognizing why maladaptive perfectionists tend to exhibit certain cognitive characteristics and frames of mind.

### ***Theory of self-psychology***

A perspective of conceptualizing the origins of perfectionism is through the use of the theory of self-psychology theorized by psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut. In this theory, Kohut defines the self as “the core of [one’s] personality and motivation” (Arble and Barnett, 2017). Our self is built up of self-objects or experiences that are essential to the course of development and the regulating of an individual’s sense of self. These self-objects experienced from childhood development are then expressed in adulthood. Now, these self-objects are not tangible objects or persons, such as a child disliking a certain food, which in turn is the impetus for the development of a “picky” personality as an adult, but self-objects are focused on the function of said object and person and how it plays into one’s sense of self. An example of a functioning self-object, in context, would be a child’s need for their parents to replicate/react to their sense of pride if they achieve something, such as how a baby looks at their parent’s emotional responses and cues to understand the world around

them. In Arble and Barnett's study of Kohut's psychology of self, three categories of self-objects are explained: mirroring, idealization, and twinship.

1. Mirroring is a child's desire to share their accomplishments and satisfaction with their parents, in an effort to experience adoration for their success and perfection (Rice and Dellwo, 2002; Arble and Barnett, 2017). A simple example of this form of self-object interaction can be seen when a child shows artwork from school, in an effort for the parents to corroborate with their sense of pride from their "great" artwork. Positive acceptance and recognition allow for the realization of worth, self-esteem, and validity (Arble and Barnett, 2017).
2. Idealization is the concept that children need to idealize their parent(s); in other words, they try to identify with parents who are more capable and powerful than them. Kohut describes this plainly as "a need for merger with a source of 'idealized' strength and calmness" (Kohut and Wolf, 1978).
3. Twinship is the need to have a sense of belonging and participating with others who are around us. This interaction can be experienced when a child goes to their parent to receive comfort and care when they get injured or are sad. When the need for twinship is met, it encourages the development of a sense of self-worth and identity.

These needs (twinship, mirroring, and idealization) are what contribute to the self-objects an individual may experience as a child, which directly impacts their self-development. These core self-object interactions can affect the cohesiveness of one's self-development because they are crucial to a child's perfectionistic and narcissistic needs (Rice and Dellwo, 2002). According to Arble and Barnett (2017), "Kohut articulated a view of narcissism as existing on a continuum ranging from healthy to pathological" (609); this accepted view of narcissism im-

plies that children all innately have narcissistic attributes and needs. However, the resultant form of narcissism is dependent on how it is nurtured. The pathological form of narcissism, the one we associate with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), is indicated by the use of an inflated sense of self-importance, lack of empathy, and grandiose fantasies. On the opposite side of the continuum lies healthy narcissism, conceptualized as a “core source of creativity and power... [that] if properly nurtured could result in a stable sense of self” (Arble and Barnett, 2017). This idea confirms the notion that everyone has narcissistic traits which are integral to one’s idea of self and behavior.

In all, Kohut’s theory known as self-psychology as it relates to building perfectionistic behavior is dependent on interactions between self and self-objects in childhood. When a child experiences optimal interactions between self and self-objects, as one considers mirroring, twinship, and idealization needs, a firm development of self is realized. The emergence of perfectionism is explained by Rice and Dellwo (2002) when certain self-object needs are possibly not met:

The results of chronic empathic failures on the part of parents include a fragile capacity to regulate self-esteem, increased vulnerability to shame and embarrassment, and ongoing dependence on others to validate the self. Perfectionism may be one avenue through which the regulation of self-esteem and validation from others may be achieved. (194).

Rice and Dellwo’s interpretation (2002) indicates that while perfectionism may be an avenue of the regulation of self-esteem and validation, it is consistent with the development of a maladaptive form of perfectionism—meaning it is consistent with having an external locus of control (outcomes contingent on approval/acceptance) and common trends of lower levels of self-esteem. While this may be a prevailing idea/theory, it should be kept in mind that much is taken from a more general perspec-

tive, as maladaptive perfectionism behaviors may be developed from immeasurable and intersecting components of one's self and experience.

### ***Emotional environments***

The perspective of emotional environments as an origin of perfectionistic behavior considers the idea that perfectionism also takes its roots in developmental experiences as a child. Halgin and Leahy (1989) identify two emotional environments that can cause maladaptive perfectionism: "(1) an environment of conditional positive approval and (2) one of non-approval or inconsistent approval" (223). This can be clarified as (1) only the winners get ice cream and the losers get nothing, where a child expects to only receive approval when they succeed or do something right and (2) the A could have been an A+, in which the child never learns how to receive approval from their parents. In both instances, the common denominator of the child's development is dependent on the parent's response; this connection is supported as studies surmise "excessively critical parents may encourage the development of maladaptive perfectionism" (Rice and Dellwo, 2002) and that perfectionists may evolve from perfectionistic parents. There is no question as to why a child and developing adult, when growing up in these environments, have a fear of mistakes, imperfect outcomes, and failure, as well as other maladaptive cognitive behaviors. Recounting the theory of self-psychology and emotional environments, the consistent factor between both perspectives is the role of parents in self-development and perfectionism. This may signify the idea of how intrinsic of a role parents play in the development of perfectionism in their children and the implication that deeper investigations of self and familial interactions during childhood may be best when approaching maladaptive perfectionism.

Not only do emotional environments consist of familial interactions, but societal influences as well. These influences

feature the “emphasis on achievement and perfection within the educational system” (Halgin and Leahy, 1989) and unrealistic models in popular culture. The concept of emotional environments influencing the development of perfectionistic behaviors appears to most align with an individual’s locus of control as the societal and familial influences may coincide with an external locus of control and socially prescribed perfectionism. The concepts of socially prescribed perfectionism and external locus of control (Periasamy and Ashby, 2002) encompass the belief of the individual as “high standards are expected by others and acceptance by others is conditional on fulfilling these standards” (Stoerber and Hotham, 2013). The established framework of emotional environment observes that the development of such maladaptive behavior may stem from either environment as a child.

In all, the supposition that the development of the present is self because of self-objects and emotional environments from one’s childhood is endorsed. Their dramatic influence of perfectionistic style becomes particularly evident, in certain college students, as individuals are attempting to define their adult identities separately from their parents:

Age brings with it an increasing number of rejections, with accompanying threats to self-esteem. Failure to make the Little League team is a temperate precursor to the feelings that will result if one is unpopular in high school, fails to get into the college of one’s choice...By the time that some individuals reach college, they have acquired a very fragile sense of self, and they develop a compulsive pursuit to prove their worthiness... to repair their damaged self-esteem. (Halgin and Leahy, 223)

This point of view will establish a principle for greater analysis and comprehension in the prospective discussion of maladaptive perfectionism’s association with university students, coping strategies, and treatment.

## Understanding College Students

University students in particular are associated with studies concerning maladaptive perfectionism due to the significant and increasing awareness/concern for the mental health issues exhibited by university students: “84 percent of university students [report] elevated levels of psychological distress” (Sheppard and Hicks, 2017). Initial studies examining the correlation between maladaptive perfectionism and psychological distress/mental health issues in university students were set into motion by the alarmingly high rate of suicide in university student populations, particularly amongst high-achieving, gifted students. A common factor exhibited in those students is maladaptive perfectionistic behavior, which can lead to psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and substance abuse (Rice and Lapsley, 2001; Sheppard and Hicks, 2017; Radhu et al., 2012; Rice and Dellwo, 2002).

With the framework of perfectionism previously established, it is apparent that these issues are largely persistent in university students since socially prescribed perfectionism, a subset of maladaptive perfectionism, is shown to be perceived as socially acceptable in academic settings. A study done by Joachim Stoeber and Sarah Hotham (2013), found that students perceive perfectionism regarded as maladaptive to be desirable in educational settings (629).

Though the adaptive form of perfectionism is related to positive psychological outcomes and positive educational outcomes, maladaptive perfectionism can have detrimental effects on a student’s level of success and development in college. Individuals with maladaptive perfectionism often exhibit lower levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as higher concerns over mistakes and doubts about actions. When applied to college/university students who are attempting to attain educational outcomes and goals, they are shown to be more inclined towards procrastination, self-doubt about academic success, and



lower levels of career decision-making self-efficacy (Aldea and Barnett, 2017; Periasamy and Ashby, 2002). One can see how maladaptive perfectionism can lead to procrastination from the developmental perspective of emotional environments, in which the student/individual will “fear mistakes and compulsively strive to avoid failure... [which] leads to emotional constriction and the fear of any outcome that is not guaranteed” (Halgin and Leahy, 1989). Procrastinating seems to play an interesting role as a negative/ineffective coping strategy operating as a mechanism to shield themselves from the possibility of failure when starting a task. This facet of perfectionism deals with the particular coping strategies utilized by both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists and how it affects/determines their psychological well-being when faced with academic stressors.

### **Coping Strategies**

In general terms, a coping strategy, according to the American Psychological Association, is defined as “an action, a series of actions, or a thought process used in meeting a stressful or unpleasant situation or in modifying one’s reaction to such a situation. Coping strategies typically involve a conscious and direct approach to problems” (2022). These strategies are represented as behavioral and cognitive efforts used when faced with stressful environments and situations. A basic coping strategy may look like going out for an afternoon run or going to the gym after a difficult day at work or classes; the coping strategy in this situation is the physical activity of running or working out which is used to manage or reduce the stress and negative emotions from a difficult day. Characteristics attributed to each of the dimensions of perfectionism suggest that each form of perfection uses different coping techniques which facilitate and reinforce those characteristics:

Maladaptive perfectionists typically “concentrate on how to avoid doing things wrong”; have more “avoid-

ance behavior”...this suggests that maladaptive perfectionists are more likely to use ineffective coping when facing demands...Adaptive perfectionists “focus on their strengths and concentrate on how to do things right”... this suggests that adaptive perfectionists are more likely to use effective coping strategies. (Gnilka et al., 2012)

Similar to there being positive and negative forms of perfectionism, coping strategies carry the same assumption as either utilizing ineffective/unhealthy or effective/healthy strategies. Demonstrably, maladaptive perfectionists are likely to use ineffective/unhealthy coping strategies that may reinforce or prompt their cognitive behaviors, and adaptive perfectionists are likely to use healthy/effective coping strategies to maintain positive psychological well-being.

### *Adaptive perfectionists: coping strategies*

The two identified coping strategies most used by adaptive perfectionists are problem-focusing coping and emotion-focused coping (Rice and Lapsley, 2001; Gnilka et al., 2012). Problem-focused coping is a strategy in which the user determines/develops ways of reducing stress and anxiety. Two methods of problem-focused coping are as follows. The first is seeking social support, where the individual obtains informational and emotional support from others (Gnilka et al., 2012). An example of this mechanism can be illustrated by simply seeking/contacting others, this single action can aid in reducing levels of anxiety and stress; think about going to the mall with a group of friends, this can be a passive form of seeking social support. The second is planful problem solving, where the individual completes “healthy and deliberate problem-focused actions to change stress situations” (Gnilka et al., 2012). An example of this mechanism/coping strategy can be demonstrated through the use of the same musician mentioned in previous examples; when performing, the musician makes mistakes, falling short of

their initial goal of excellence and perfection. After the concert, the musician, using the planful problem solving coping method, will evaluate which mistakes they may have made, such as nervousness leading them to have too tight of an embouchure, not having full breaths, and frequently falling behind tempo. With this information in mind, the musician will act by learning better breathing techniques, practicing with a metronome, and having someone sit in when practicing. All the mentioned solutions taken by the musician are in an effort to change the outcome of their next performance, which is a stressful situation. This form of problem-focused coping is consistent with the established characterization of adaptive perfectionists' approach when faced with failure, "adaptive perfectionistic aspects emphasize high personal standards and the desire to excel in performance to meet such standards, yet these desires and standards are experienced as motivational and encouraging" (Aldea and Rice, 2006).

The other coping strategy identified that is used by adaptive perfectionists is emotion focused coping strategy. This coping strategy, as the name implies, has to do with mechanisms/methods that help control one's emotions, and involves "positive interpretation and growth, acceptance, venting emotions, etc." (Rice and Lapsley, 2001). The mechanisms implemented in emotion focused coping include (1) positive reappraisal and (2) self-controlling. Positive reappraisal coping is the ability of one to attribute a positive meaning to a stressful situation; in other words, the individual is able to reconstruct the outcome of a stressful situation into something valuable or beneficial. In the way of a student failing an exam in school, they will reappraise that outcome/situation using it as an opportunity to learn better study techniques, refocus on school, or just an overall lesson. All of this helps to reevaluate and adapt to achieve their goal or meet their standard in the future. The second method is self-controlling, which refers to "healthy efforts to regulate emotions and behaviors" (Gnilka et al., 2012). A superficial example of this coping method is meditation.

Altogether, emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping reinforce the pursuit toward achieving the high standards and goals set by adaptive perfectionists; they allow for adaptive perfectionists to maintain healthy psychological well-being and resilience while experiencing various outcomes—achievement or failure. The application of certain coping mechanisms appears to be another significant factor in the development and contrasting attributes of maladaptive and adaptive perfectionism.

### ***Maladaptive perfectionist: coping strategies***

Maladaptive perfectionists have been shown to use dysfunctional coping and emotional-focused coping as their primary form of coping when faced with stressful situations; “maladaptive perfectionists are more likely to report less helpful coping such as dysfunctional styles of coping” (Gnilka et al., 2012). For this discussion, both dysfunctional and emotional-focused coping will be discussed concurrently as both strategies have overlapping functions and designations. Together, the methods that make up both coping strategies, for the purposes of this examination, exist under the descriptor: defense mechanisms. Dysfunctional coping refers to “strategies [that are] unlikely to yield healthy adjustments to stress” (Rice and Lapsley, 2001); a dysfunctional coping strategy can generally be displayed as excessive drinking or avoiding the problem altogether; both examples are mechanisms that bring immediate relief that may help insensate or prevent the individual from confronting the real issue/stressor but are not truly healthy adjustments. From this perspective, the form of ineffective/unhealthy coping, dysfunctional coping, is accurately characterized as inadequate emotion-focused coping and generally the absence of problem-focused coping.

The defensive styles/mechanisms of coping identified as part of dysfunctional coping include the following: disengagement, denial, projection, and splitting. The American Psychological Association provides the following definitions:

- (1) Disengagement – the act of withdrawing from an attachment or relationship or, more generally, from an unpleasant situation. (2022)
- (2) Splitting – a primitive defense mechanism used to protect oneself from conflict in which object provoking anxiety and ambivalence are dichotomized into extreme representations with either positive or negative qualities. (2022)

Disengagement, or avoidance defense mechanisms are a style of coping directly with integrated maladaptive perfectionists' common inclination toward procrastination. Procrastination, in this instance, is the disengagement/avoidance coping strategy that originates from the fear of mistakes and compulsive effort to avoid failure (Halgin and Leahy, 1989), and it is used to withdraw from the anticipated unpleasant situation/outcome of failure. Emotional focused coping is utilized by both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists; however, where the two diverge is on their perceived effectiveness, and as a result, "emotional dysregulation and defense mechanisms maintain perfectionists' negative affect and prevent them from moving beyond the distress associated with perceived stressful situations" (Aldea and Rice, 2006). Amongst maladaptive university students, this perceived distress or stressful situation stems from internal turmoil resulting from the discrepancy between personal standards and the perceived outcome/performance (Perisamy and Ashby, 2002). Students in educational settings will use dysfunctional coping strategies that are ineffective—this explains the relationship between emotional focused and dysfunctional coping strategies.

## Intervention Techniques/Treatment

For university students, treating/managing the distress caused by maladaptive perfectionism first begins with the recognition of their maladaptive behavior. This action, however, presents itself as a separate barrier to seeking assistance because of rationalization and the notion that the distress the student is experiencing is not from maladaptive perfectionism since dimensions of maladaptive perfectionism are perceived as desirable in the educational setting. Halgin and Leahy (1989) further support this idea when saying,

Their rationalizations protect them from recognizing the intrapsychic distress they feel...they become distressed by one or more of the experiences that typically accompany perfectionism—interpersonal difficulties, efficiency, depression...[and] anxiety. (223)

Along with the barriers involved among students, which may deter them from receiving treatment/intervention, the most effective method of treatment is the use of outside/professional care. With the established understanding of maladaptive perfectionism, research reveals basic implications for treatment to be used by counselors to best approach a client with maladaptive perfectionism:

- Distinguish whether the client's/student's perfectionism is maladaptive or adaptive and assess the level.
- Refrain from assuming someone's perfectionism is problematic; adaptive perfectionism is associated with healthy cognitive behavior, success in educational settings, and exhibiting a "mental health advantage" (Gnilka et al., 2012) over maladaptive perfectionism.
- Aim intervention toward developing effective coping skills and strategies.

These implications, along with others, allow counselors working directly with students who are maladaptive perfectionists to approach their mental issues/psychological distress in a proper manner, specifically targeting maladaptive perfectionist traits and behaviors. The overall goal of treatment and intervention is to allow for a change in maladaptive cognitive behavior and “retain standards and expectations but diminish the self-critical connections to those standards” (Rice and Lapsley, 2001). In more general terms, the goal is to adjust the individual’s maladaptive perfectionist cognitive behaviors and traits to those that are more adaptive in nature; an example of this would be improving one’s coping strategies to greater planful problem-focused and improved emotion-focused coping. When altering this aspect of a maladaptive perfectionist’s coping, they will learn how to have less concern over their mistakes and concern over actions which may further lead to lower levels of anxiety and stress when facing a stressful situation or outcome.

### *Specific therapeutic approaches*

For the purpose of this discussion, two effective approaches to therapeutic treatment for maladaptive perfectionism will be examined. The first approach is pragmatic blended therapy and the second is web-based cognitive behavioral therapy.

Pragmatic blended therapy involves tailoring interventions/therapy that are specific to the client’s condition. According to Halgin and Leahy (1989), “Pragmatic blending is a multi-theoretical clinical approach this is well suited to formulating a comprehensive treatment plan for perfectionistic clients” (224); as the name implies, blending is used with this approach in multiple therapeutic models such as “psychodynamic, behavioral, and person-centered models” (Halgin and Leahy, 1989). This approach makes it possible for the decided treatment to respond to/consider the client’s particular experiences, behaviors, and other unique idiosyncratic components. Along with considering

the current idiosyncratic components of the client, this therapeutic approach will also open the counselor to consider early life/developmental experiences that lead to the client's maladaptive cognitive behavior.

#### Case Example:

Jacob is a freshman biology student enrolled in the honors program at a highly respected university. Jacob has exceedingly high standards and expectations about his academic work/success, leading him to experience high levels of anxiety and stress. Jacob's unrealistic expectations drive him to experience a great amount of psychological distress which, in turn, leads to a decrease in his academic performance.

The Pragmatic blending treatment implemented by Jacob's counselor would be to first address possible familial or social-emotional environments and developmental influences that may cause his maladaptive perfectionism. The next course of action would be to address the current issues that Jacob is experiencing. Pragmatic blending therapy's effectiveness is based upon its ability for the counselor to tailor intervention/therapy methods specifically toward the client's condition, however, the next approach utilizes the internet as its primary component towards treating maladaptive perfectionists.

Web-based cognitive-behavioral therapy (Web-based CBT) is "aimed at modifying the dysfunctional cognitions and behaviors associated with MP (maladaptive perfectionism), with emphasis on cognitive restructuring, exposure activities, and stress management techniques" (Radhu et al., 2012). Cognitive-behavioral therapy focuses on reducing the levels of anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms that students with maladaptive perfectionism experience. The web-based approach of this form of therapy is especially unique as it eliminates common barriers associated with students who seek treatment such as the



need for a trained mental health professional, cost, and time.

Generally, web-based CBT creates a more accessible avenue for students to treat their maladaptive perfectionism. Radhu et al. (2012) tested the effectiveness of web-based CBT and found that when applied to students/maladaptive perfectionists, they were significantly associated with “significant psychological improvements in anxiety sensitivity and negative automatic thoughts compared to the waitlist control group” (365).

## **Concluding Statements**

Maladaptive perfectionism and psychological distress are highly prevalent among university student populations as students hold high, rigid, and sometimes unrealistic expectations and standards toward academic performance and success. The development of maladaptive perfectionism is found to be rooted in developmental experiences from a young age, such as self-object experiences and emotional environments. Treatment/intervention techniques focused on early developmental experiences and the client’s current condition help mitigate the stress and anxiety experienced by maladaptive perfectionists, while also modifying their dysfunctional cognitions and behaviors to be more adaptive in nature.

## ***Future studies***

Future studies on the topic of perfectionism could focus on illustrating perfectionism as a spectrum from adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism with scales that will more precisely measure the level of perfectionism. This presents a unique approach to perfectionism as it seems most studies view the dimensions of perfectionism as having 3 separate categories (non-perfectionists, maladaptive perfectionists, and adaptive perfectionists). To accomplish the idea of the possible spectrum of perfectionism, future studies will need to discover/designate more dimensions of perfectionism.

Another possible study could examine the origin of the particular coping strategies used by adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists (e.g., emotional focused, problem solving, etc.), specifically whether coping strategies are nurtured or intrinsic. This warrants more research due to the theory of self-psychology, which presents the idea of self-objects as experiences that make imprints on one's idea of self.

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## Ginsberg's "Howl" against American Society

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*Article Abstract:*

*Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" is a poem that explores American society's tendency to censor those who operate outside of cultural norms. For example, "Howl" called out America's hypocrisy towards different groups like the queer community and those with mental health problems. In return, he was put on trial for how vulgar and outrageous the poem was. He also uses influences like Walt Whitman and his own observations from his travels within the United States and abroad. To help the reader understand the broad influences of the poem, I have divided this article into three sections. The first section provides the historical background that influenced the Beat Generation. With the second section, I analyze how the themes of the poem shed light on multiple social issues. The last section explores the poem's historical impact on music, the Vietnam War protests, and literature at the time. Today's American society still has a long way to go, but the Beat Generation and Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" help pave the road to progression.*

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## Introduction and Background

Literature evolves as society does. It goes along with society's current issues, and literature helps to express them. As literature moved from modernist to post-modernist eras, the Beat Generation began to appear and set the tone for what we see in postmodernism. The Beat Generation is a period in American literature/culture after World War II, where a group rejected modernist literature and America's political and economic systems. They began to write their own form of literature that consisted of socialist views, drugs, and sexual liberation. The three most notable people of this generation are Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs. They created literary works that would go against American values, especially during "The Red Scare," which was the nationwide fear of the potential rise of leftist ideologies such as communism. Ginsberg was an American socialist who took inspiration from Walt Whitman to convey similar ideas of individualism, including certain social issues people have faced. Ginsberg wrote "Howl" to convey a similar message by using his political and religious beliefs to critique contemporary society while also setting the tone for other historical events that followed.

Literature molds around how society evolves and acts as an expression of social movements and issues. Even more so, literature speaks on issues during specific eras. Students learn about works like Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and poetry by Emily Dickenson, which both gained great fame during their respective literary movements before the rise of the modernist movement in the early to mid-1900s. The modernist movement put more of an emphasis on the individual, their emotions, and their experiences. Walt Whitman is another modernist poet who did just that through his own works, especially in his poetry collection called *Leaves of Grass*. America also saw a rise in a diverse type of literature that showcases different sides of the American experience, including feminist, African

American, and other kinds of works that shine a light on significant issues of the country. As American society evolved and became more complex, a new era emerged in the 1950s. Now labeled post-modernism, literary works rejected the idea of absolute truth, becoming more complex and embracing unreality in attempts to go against society. At the start of this era, the Beat Generation expressed their views with outrageous works that not only emphasized the struggles certain groups face in the United States but put them in a provocative manner that went outside norms like the use of vulgar language and obscenities.

The Beat Generation began the post-modernist era and had many influences from the past that drove their literary movement. This generation had leftist ideologies that went against mainstream American society including socialism and individualism. Jimmy Fazzino said in *World Beats: Beat Generation Writing and the Worlding of U.S. Literature*, "It has been well remarked that Whitman, Emerson, and Thoreau all exerted a major influence on Beat Generation writers, yet this influence usually gets talked about in terms of Emersonian individualism or Whitmanian democracy; what they have most in common, in other words, is their Americanness" (12). Walt Whitman was a poet from the 19<sup>th</sup> century who wrote the poem "Song of Myself," which is in his poem collection. The poem showed many ideas of individualism and democracy to experience the world as a person goes through a journey of life. For example, the opening line says, "I celebrate myself, and sing myself / And what I assume you shall assume / For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you" (Whitman, lines 1-3). The poem sets up the idea of freedom, individuality, and how people should celebrate themselves. These same ideas are used in many works written by great contributors of the Beat Generation, and it's even more notable in "Howl" with the repetition of certain words and the need for individualism that both poems present. "Howl" used specific and chaotic language to emphasize the sense of individuality and nonconformity in society, allowing it to fall in line

with Walt Whitman as it shows the fundamental freedoms of the individual. Ginsberg followed Whitman because “he articulated an inspired and compelling vision defined by honesty and acceptance” (Vogel 393). Ginsberg was able to articulate a vision that aligned well with Whitman’s, and he was able to translate it into poetry during the Cold War. The Cold War era went against what Whitman envisioned due to America becoming more consumerist and experiencing a racist backlash. In a way, the Beat Generation was a modern stand-in for Walt Whitman to speak on topical issues in America while also echoing his language.

### **Analysis of Themes in “Howl”**

Themes throughout “Howl” shine a light onto multiple social issues right after World War II in a language that may be confusing to the reader, yet that also aligns well with post-modernism. “Howl” was one of the most controversial poems of the 1950s with its vulgar language, attacks on contemporary society, and tributes to visionary thinkers and rebels. The poem opens with “I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked...” (Ginsberg, line 1). With the opening, the reader automatically knows his stance on American society like their tendency for censorship of others. He uses references to drugs and sex throughout the first part of the poem to show that society shouldn’t censor or turn their backs against those who may be perceived as abnormal. These include, for Ginsberg, members of the Queer community, those addicted to drugs, and those in psychiatric hospitals, much like the man that the poem is contributed to, Carl Solomon. Since mainstream society has a more heteronormative outlook, it oppresses those who are part of these communities and traps them in the “notions of social ‘values’ which they so vehemently tried to subvert with their public acts of sexual non-conformity” (Pradhan 7). The emphasis of the poem is individual freedom at the social level. However, laws at the time prevented people from being



able to achieve those freedoms. Due to the obscene nature of the poem, Ginsberg was tried in attempts to censor and ban both the poem and the book that it was published in, as there were laws that repressed parts of the first amendment right for freedom of speech. No matter how beautifully written a piece of literature was, if it had "...frank sexual language or depicted sexual acts, it was considered obscene and banned in the U.S." (Morgan).

Before the poem starts, Ginsberg gives a dedication to Carl Solomon, a friend who he met in a psychiatric hospital and gave him writing tips. Wigand indicates that after Ginsberg left the hospital, he found out that Solomon had been put back into the hospital and had to undergo shock therapy for his depression, which caused Ginsberg to write "Howl" (Wigand). There are three parts to the poem, and the first one establishes his views on conforming to society. However, his choice of words emphasizes his views by using positive words for concepts that society typically perceived as negative. For instance, Ginsberg references getting high on drugs as "the ancient heavenly connection" to say it's like a religious experience, even though most Americans during the 1950s and 60s would have found this to be profane (Ginsberg, line 3). Connecting religion to different concepts is a common theme throughout the poem along with his observations as he traveled the world. Ginsberg comments on different parts of the United States and connects them to the overarching theme of the poem: individualism in a society that does not seem to support it. Instead of speaking on what each location is like, he speaks on specific instances, for an example, he said "...who jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge this actually happened and walked away unknown and forgotten into the ghostly daze of Chinatown soup alleyways & fire trucks, not even one free beer..." (Ginsberg, line 57). This repetition shows his observation of what the world truly is, and in a way, he's conveying to the audience that there are different types of nonconformers. Doreen Bauschke and Anna Klambauer best explained this when stating, "The poem explores the nature of madness itself, in re-

lation to the surrounding world, as well as responses to madness and sanity by focusing on the city and those who inhabit it” (90). Ginsberg sheds light on the nature of madness within different cities he traveled to and conveying in the poem that there isn’t a singular type of madness due to the mixing pot that is the United States. This is his way of critiquing society’s prejudices against those who don’t conform, like Carl Solomon.

Part two of the poem shifts into what seems to be chanting to a force called Moloch. The reader gets the sense that Ginsberg is chanting with his repetition and use of exclamation points after each phrase or sentence. Moloch is a Hebrew deity that is commonly associated with child sacrifice. In this part of the poem, Ginsberg uses the idea of Moloch to personify America while also the associations with the deity. A line in the third part says, “Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies! Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch whose ear is a smoking tomb” (Ginsberg, line 83). He describes Moloch with humanoid characteristics like the mind, the blood, the fingers, the ears, and the breasts. Each part of the body is connected to different parts of America, like Moloch’s blood is capitalism and his fingers are the military. He further explains different characteristics to parts of America like its love for oil and whose soul is ingrained with banks. Moloch symbolizes many things that make up America, which he seems to critique later in this section of the poem as he shows the other side. He says “Visions! Omens! Hallucinations! Miracles! Ecstasies! Gone down the American river. / Dreams! Adorations! Illuminations! Religions! The whole boatload of sensitive bullshit” (Ginsberg, lines 91-92). Ginsberg lists a series of words with positive and youthful connotations, then squashes them with the sentences that follow. By extinguishing the youthful connotations, he links the poem back to the meaning of the deity and further critiques society by stating that America is making its own child sacrifice. If Moloch is American society, then the people are the children

within. In a way, Ginsberg is stating that the child sacrifices in society are not necessarily them dying but them being raised in such a hateful society that values work over individualism.

The last part of the poem comes full circle as he begins to talk directly to Carl Solomon. Ginsberg addresses Solomon by repeating "I'm with you in Rockland" nineteen times (Ginsberg, lines 94-112). It is assumed that "Rockland" is symbolic of the hospital as he says he's with him while his friend is in the hospital. At first, Ginsberg seems to be empathetic and even shows a glimpse of his own life by saying "...where you imitate the shade of my mother" (Ginsberg, line 96). Ginsberg relates Solomon to his mother, and it is assumed based on this line that his mother was also put in a psychiatric hospital and may have undergone similar treatments to his friend. Naturally, he will feel a connection to his friend due to his own experiences. Yet, this part of the poem still uses the same themes as the other parts have, despite there being a shift of tone for the audience. While relating to Solomon and telling him that he will be there, Ginsberg still critiques America, especially with how they treat their mentally ill. The reader begins to see this critique when he says, "...where you bang on the catatonic piano the soul is innocent and immortal it should never die ungodly in an armed madhouse" (Ginsberg, line 105). During this time in America, lobotomies and shock therapies were socially acceptable despite the looming Patient's Right Movement in the 1960s and 70s. This line of the poem shows how he truly feels about these inhumane acts, and his criticism continues in the following lines when he says, "...where fifty more shocks will never return your soul to its body again from its pilgrimage to a cross in the void" (Ginsberg, line 106). In a way, these practices restrict freedom from the people by giving them inhumane treatments. Ginsberg believes that there should be more freedom for the people, but if there is oppression against certain groups, society will not see those freedoms. This can also connect to Moloch in the second part of the poem by showing all the sacrifices that society will

make to keep their traditional views. By the end of the poem, the reader sees that Ginsberg is using the treatment of his friend in the psychiatric hospital to critique the oppressions on which society tends to turn a blind eye.

## Historical Impact in Society

Once the poem was published, there was a literal howl across America. “Howl” even was put on trial for vulgarity. Madrid said in *A Countercultural Vision of America: Allen Ginsberg and the Beat Generation* that this case became a landmark for literary censorship cases and put the Beat Generation on the map, inspiring many literary works such as *Catcher of the Rye* (Madrid 22). “Howl” challenged injustices and critiqued society in a way that resembled the counterculturalism of the Vietnam War era. The ideals the poem was based on were shared by many events that took place in the 1960s and 1970s like the Vietnam Protests and Woodstock ‘69. The protests called for the United States military to pull out of the Vietnam War and promoted pacifism as opposed to violence. What is more, the Beat Generation influenced the formation of Rock and Roll music, including Bob Dylan who brought folk music and poetry together. The lyrics in Dylan’s songs were much like Ginsberg’s in the sense of their abruptness. In Cotkin’s *Feast of Excess: A Cultural History of the New Sensibility*, he explains that Dylan was also inspired by Ginsberg’s poetry along with other poets, which helped him to write his songs. Casey Rae discussed in her book *William S. Burroughs and the Cult of Rock “n” Roll* how William Burroughs, another main influencer of the Beat Generation, inspired well-known artists including David Bowie, Paul McCartney, and Kurt Cobain.

The Beat Generation emphasized their ideologies in their works in such a way that went outside the norm. In Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl,” he critiqued the way American society ignored certain injustices in such a way that made society question him as a poet. When he was put on trial, it put himself and the rest

of the Beat Generation writers on the map and it serves as an inspiration to those questioning mainstream society. Now, 60 years later, America still faces injustices and we are still fighting for human rights and social justice. The ideas of the Beat Generation and the social ideology encased in "Howl" continue to pave the way for current thinkers, activists, writers, artists, and cultures, just as they did during the peak of their times. Some injustices that we see today include the anti-LGBTQ+ bills being put through legislation along with the Black Lives Matter protests. Today's American society still has a long way to go, but the Beat Generation and Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" help pave the road to progress.

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## **Explanatory Factors for the Decline of Left-Wing Parties across Europe: A Cross Sectional Time Series Analysis**

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*Article Abstract:*

*The decline of left-wing parties across Europe has consequently led to the rise of authoritarian right-wing parties. This decline has led to several harmful consequences such as polarization, Euroscepticism, and chaotic political atmospheres. Notably, decreases in trade union participation in certain countries can be seen as a direct hit to the support base for left-wing parties across Europe. Since trade union membership is political at the core, the waning of these institutions in some countries has reduced an important support base for these parties. The present study employs a cross-sectional, time-series analysis of more than a dozen European countries from 1990-2020 to assess the impact trade union membership has had on left- and right-wing party support. The findings reveal a strong connection between trade union membership fluctuations and party support, which outperforms other causal factors in predicting party support. The implications for the future of these parties, countries, and the European Union, is assessed as well.*

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## Introduction

The decline of left-wing parties across Europe has consequently led to the rise of authoritarian right-wing parties. This decline has led to several consequences such as polarization, Euroscepticism, and chaotic political atmospheres. Polarization is the phenomenon that happens when voters and parties have two entirely different views on an issue and these different views cause parties to use extreme explanations in order to appeal to voters; this is a cause for chaotic political atmospheres. Euroscepticism, or voters and parties being extremely critical of the European Union (EU) and its policies, is an example of how polarization can fuel other issues. Numerous parties have used the EU as a scapegoat for the financial issues in many countries across Europe, and the criticisms these parties use as explanations have made European citizens wary of the EU and its practices. Events like the Eurozone Crisis, where the EU bailed out Greece and other countries' economies, and the Immigration crisis, where a massive influx of immigrants from the Middle East came for refuge in Europe, have led to populism becoming an attractive form of government to those who were disgruntled with left-wing governments previously. These right-wing parties took the nations by storm and used propaganda along with fear-based rhetoric, including demonizing the EU, opposing parties, and immigrants. These fear tactics encouraged voters to turn away from left-wing parties as an escape from the problems in their countries in an effort to change. However, this change has not yet occurred and the political situation across Europe is increasingly polarized and descending into chaos. The decline of trade union participation in certain countries can be seen as a direct hit to left-wing parties across Europe. Since trade union membership is political at the core, these institutions as they have declined have also shown a decline in left-wing parties.

Trade union participation and left-wing party support have a strong positive relationship due to their dependence on

one another while rightist party support has a strong negative relationship with trade union participation due to the strong ties between leftist parties and trade unions. Waddington and Hoffman discuss this relationship in reference to post World War II Europe, in which they describe Trade Unions as “central to the institutions of the post-war settlement.” This established relationship shows their strength in improving Europe’s economy. Keynesian economics was a major breakthrough for these unions in which institutions at all levels implemented and gave way to trade unions and their wishes for the workers. Given that the political climate in post-war Europe was very anti-fascist because of the horrors from the Nazi regime and other fascist groups all around Europe, left-wing parties emerged quite victorious in this era, establishing a strong tie between trade unions and left-wing parties back in the 1940s (Waddington and Hoffman).

It has been quite clear throughout the post-industry age that trade unions have been a friend to the left, because in reality they share the same political agenda. This shared political agenda has created strong political ties between the two, and has since then been a factor in the downfall of leftist parties across Europe. This is because trade union membership has gained less traction and in some countries like Poland and Hungary, and it has completely disappeared in accordance with the disappearance of the leftist vote. These countries both have ties to the communist bloc, and it can be seen that the fear of leftist parties after the fall of communism is in line with the fear of trade unions. The relationship that this variable has with both leftist and rightist parties will further be explored and this article will speak to the significance of this variable along with the further implications and political ties that could be seen in the future.

The decline of left-wing parties has given rise to extremist leaders Victor Orban and Andrzej Duda, as seen in Hungary and Poland, both previously communist countries, who were afraid that communism would arise gradually. However, this decline can be attributed to the discontentment with left-wing

parties in parliaments and their empty promises. The political situation in most of Europe is still stable and has not descended into the chaos of Poland and Hungary; however, this rise of authoritarian right-wing parties could collapse the previous stability of Europe.

This article will examine as explanatory factors the effects of gross domestic product per capita, unemployment rates, trade union participation, immigration, percentage of the population with a college degree, and net migration flows on the decline of left-wing parties across Europe. This article will show the significance of the relationship between trade union membership on the percentage of the left and right-wing vote in Parliament and furthermore elaborate on its role in the decline of left-wing parties across Europe.

## Literature Review

In order to accurately reflect on the decline of left-wing parties in Eastern Europe, the history of these parties must first be introduced. Much of Eastern and Central Europe was coerced by Russian influence to adopt communist policies. This sore spot in Eastern Europe's history led to a major decline in left-wing parties for fear that communism could return and rule again. For example, until the past 4 years, the fear of right-wing nationalism was so high in Germany after the trauma from Nazi Germany, there had not been a right-wing nationalist party in parliament since World War II (Kumar, Sunil, and Ramachandrappa 2018). In contrast to the fear of left-wing parties, there has been a massive influx of nationalist right-wing parties in past years that have capitalized on the fear of communism.

Changhong writes in the *Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* about the dilemmas facing left-wing parties in the face of populist right-wing parties and the legacy of communism. He discusses the social foundation of politics in reference to left-wing parties, stating that many of the supporters

of left-wing parties come from the lower classes of society. He discusses the different types of left-wing parties and their ideological differences as a key point in understanding the decline of this sector. Table 1 of his article shows the low number of seats for even moderate left-wing parties to illustrate the change of power in Europe (Changhong 2018).

Like Changhong and Ishiyama, Berman discusses the need to rebrand left-wing parties into more moderate ideologies in order to regain some political advantage. Berman expresses the new world of capitalism and the fact that there is no purpose for communism in this globalized society, therefore turning more and more parties to the moderate center on their economic placements. This rebranding into placements such as Social Democrats have become especially successful in West Europe in previous years. However, in recent years, this tactic has been on the downfall according to Berman (Ishiyama 1995; Berman 2019; Changhong 2018).

The competition of right-wing populist parties and left-wing parties with the lower class has become a power struggle given the previous stronghold left-wing parties held in the lower classes. Lourenco writes on a scope methodology of the evolution of left-wing parties since the fall of the Berlin Wall in accordance with the challenges of retaining voters. The article discusses the misconception that there is a lack of literature; figure 1 shows that since 2015, research on left-wing parties more than doubled in articles. The article breaks down the emergence of parties like Green Parties, which have come to have a following especially in the youth of Eastern Europe, and the effect it has had on the health of left-wing parties across the board (Lourenç and Pedro 2021).

Evans discusses the social bases of political divisions in his article where he states the low civic society, which can be characterized as a society that does not participate in democratic elections, in Eastern and Central Europe has led to weak political parties given that there is no history of political parties. The

strong political interest is not there, given the history of Authoritarian communism, and these parties and voters are not strong in their decision making. He discusses this lack of civic society in accordance with the lack of societal structure, also due to the communist past in these countries. In reference to Yugoslavia, he states that the lack of societal structure caused ethno-conflicts to arise in the wake of post-communism because there were no strong political structures to combat the militias. Evans discusses the shift from economic issues to cultural and social issues by both sets of political parties to increase the polarization on key issues. Lastly, he discusses class-based political socialization issues, wherein Eastern European class-based voting is much stronger than Western European class-based voting because of the legacy of communism and the extreme inequality felt by this region due to overbearing communist governments (Evans 2006; Berman 2019).

Political transition processes by Welsh, like Lourenco, show the decline of left-wing parties in wake of post-communism and the fear of communism coming back into politics. The article shows in table 1 the processes that Eastern and Central Europe had to undergo in order to achieve political and economic transition. The reforms of political structures began with electoral systems, reforming the media, creating a new political elite, and purging communist sympathizers. Economic reform comes in a complete wipeout of the previous system and the creation of entirely new institutions (Welsh 1994; Lourenço and Pedro 2021).

The anti-communist umbrella, a massive coalition of many different parties against socialism and communism beginning in the 1990s, is still a prevalent way to keep left-wing parties at bay in the current-day politics of Eastern and Central Europe. The lack of party tradition and previously instituted political parties besides the communist parties have proved a dilemma for Eastern and Central European parties because the lack of party tradition has easily given rise to dominating au-

thoritarian extremist right-wing parties such as in Hungary and Poland that have diminished opposition in left-wing party form. Ishiyama also writes on political transitions; however, she focuses on Communist parties and not parties on a general scale. Communist parties had no opposition during their reign and the political transition to a pluralist party system has not treated them well (Jae-Jae 2019; Costello, Thomas, et al. 2020).

Left-wing parties in general after the fall of communism were shunned out of developing in parliaments for fear they would rise to power again. This is a common theme shared by research done on most post-communist countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The intraparty conflicts also had a massive impact on the decline of left-wing parties in post-communist Eastern and Central Europe. Parties like the Communist Party of Moravia and Bohemia had internal conflicts that could not be resolved due to the fragmented leadership, and the party ultimately dissolved into smaller, less effective parties. Berman also writes on this fragmentation, where he shows the difficulty facing left-wing parties through multiple identity crises, and he pinpoints this phenomenon as a key problem in voters shying away from left-wing parties (Welsh 1994).

According to Ishiyama, the lack of a coherent political identity is one of the reasons why left-wing parties are declining so rapidly. This incoherence turns voters away and directs them to parties that appear to have a comprehensive plan. These left-wing parties have been forced to adapt to the current political era and environment to attempt to stay relevant in Eastern and Central European politics. The effort to stay relevant is clearly seen in “Decline and Mutation” by Luke March and Cas Muddle; this article contradicts the previous literature in discussing the popular Green and New Politics parties. These parties, after gaining anti-nuclear momentum, have captured the youth of Eastern and Central European countries, allowing for left-wing parties to return under a new ideology. Green parties have been so successful according to March and Muddle because they have

stayed true to the identity of their party and participated in extra parliamentary actions for their cause. This evolution has gained them many followers and much attention as they begin to win in parliaments across Eastern and Central Europe (Ishiyama, 1995).

Berman and Kumar both write on left-wing party decline in Eastern and Central Europe, associating with this decline with a rise in authoritarian right-wing parties. Berman discusses how authoritarian right-wing parties have capitalized off the lower classes by showing a distinct incoherence within the left-wing parties, therefore turning voters to their cause and away from left-wing parties. These populist movements, like in the Czech Republic with the ANO party, lured voters away from social democracy with their populist rhetoric (Berman 2019; Kumar, Sunil s., and Ramachandrappa 2018).

It is no secret that left-wing parties and trade unions have become quite close given that they want the same outcome. Trade Union membership in Denmark, for example, has always been quite high with at least 75% of the workforce unionized, therefore, left-wing party support has been unwavering since 1990 due to this close connection. Sweden also follows this trend with high left-wing party support and a very high percentage of the workforce that is unionized. On the other hand, Poland in 1990 had 53% of its workforce unionized, but as the left-wing vote declined, trade union membership declined rapidly. Hungary has also experienced this phenomenon. Both of these countries are currently under right-wing nationalist dictators who control these factors. This theory can be confirmed by examining other nations. Estonia is quite the outlier in which they had 90% trade union participation, with only 10% of the left-wing vote. This trend clearly cannot be applied to each nation in which they all have separate and different political patterns and histories, however it can be a clear indicator of how the citizens will vote for both left-wing and right-wing parties. The countries involved in the communist bloc clearly exemplify this pattern with trade

union membership, given that it was closely connected with communism, and many feared its emergence through the success of left-wing parties (Skorupińska-Cieślak, 2021).

Kumar also discusses voter volatility in his article, “The Emergence of Right-Wing Politics,” where he discusses the main failings of left-wing parties and the electoral brilliance of right-wing parties to capitalize on voters. Kumar writes on the main failings of left-wing parties, where he discusses the problems with immigration, security, and employment that left-wing parties did not solve (8). The failure of these parties to solve these crises in addition to the immigration from the Middle East and the Eurozone crisis, led to even more disdain for left-wing parties and a nationalist push against the globalization that caused it. Right-wing parties tweaked their ideology in order to perfectly combat these problems in theory. In reality, writes Kumar, these parties produce xenophobic views, Euroscepticism, and fascism. The rejection of the core concepts of left-wing parties in general, like individualism and social progress, have allowed for right-wing parties to encapsulate “traditional” values such as nationality and ethnic purity. The rhetoric of ethnic and economic fear due to the immigration crisis, the willingness of left-wing parties to accept immigrants and the EU’s judgment, and the Eurozone Crisis have become driving factors in these authoritarian parties coming to power (Kumar, Sunil s., and Ramachandrapa. 2018).

Euroscepticism is a clear force in both left- and right-wing parties. The immigration crisis, the Eurozone Crisis, austerity measures, and increased nationalism all across Europe have led to an extreme pushback from citizens across the EU. Euroscepticism on the left-wing spectrum arises from welfare state cuts due to austerity measures and the ongoing push of market liberalism (Elsas 2016). Right-wing parties, on the other hand, oppose immigration, globalization, and the lack of sovereignty when it comes to EU decisions. Brexit, the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU, gave many other countries and their political parties an extra push to criticize the EU. Elsas



explains that extremist left- and right-wing parties have joined in their disdain for the EU beyond Euro-integration, which is the key factor for right-wing parties' opposition to the EU (Elsas 2016).

Immigration also plays a key role in Euroscepticism as well as the decline of left-wing parties. The immigration crisis led many refugees into places that were not in any condition to take on new immigrants such as Greece. While the Eurozone crisis was at its peak, refugees and immigrants traveled from war torn areas such as the Middle East to get away from the fighting and to find a home; however they were met with hostility and no infrastructure to house them in many European nations which led to a major backlash against left-wing parties and the EU due to their unpreparedness for another crisis. Consequently, this led to the decline of left-wing parties in Europe (Elsas 2016).

As seen above, there are many different factors in the rise and fall of political parties, yet trade union participation has had the most profound impact. Trade unions and left-wing parties have an intertwined history in post-World War II Europe, which remains true in many European countries today. Therefore, the effect trade union participation has on right-wing parties must too be examined in order to deduce whether this relationship has significance in the rise and fall of political parties.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

This article seeks to analyze the decline of left-wing parties across Europe from 1985 to 2022. A cross sectional time series analysis will be used to deduce the impact of the independent variables on the center right and the center left parties in Europe. The independent variables are as follow: gross domestic product per capita, unemployment rates, trade union participation, immigration, education, and net migration flows.

The dependent variables will be measured by researching election results and using the percentage of the vote for the

center left and center right parties to discuss either the increase or decline in popularity for left-wing parties. These statistics can be found on many different news websites as well as the individual countries' official websites. In earlier works, the dependent variable has been quantified using either the number of left-wing parties in parliament, the percentage of vote for all the left-wing parties, or the percentage vote for the center left, as this article uses.

Gross domestic product per capita can be found on World Bank's data website (World Banks 2022). GDP per capita is an important explanatory factor, as it is important in domestic and regional economic success, affecting voters, public policy, and parties. Unemployment rates can be found on the European statistics website where every European country is listed for their unemployment rates from 1990 to 2022 (Eurostat 2022). Unemployment shows the health of an economy and can be an explanatory factor for party decline due to citizen content with the economy and the public policies. The number of active trade unions can be found on the European worker participation website where they track trade union participation across Europe (Cleverway 2018). The number of active trade unions per country in Europe is relevant to this article due to the left-wing encouragement of trade unions, and their increase or decrease can be an explanatory factor for either the rise of right-wing parties or the decline of left-wing parties across Europe. Trade unions can also show how healthy the economy is as well as the active role of public policy in the workforce that can drive voters to or from left-wing parties. Immigration can be deduced on the European statistics website where the number of immigrants that enter a country are tracked (Eurostat 2022). Immigration is a polarizing subject in European politics due to the massive influx from the Middle East and North Africa due to conflict, and left-wing and right-wing parties have both taken stances on this issue. Immigration shows not only the health of an economy to take in immigrants and assimilate them, but it also shows the strength

of public policy on immigration. Left-wing parties are more open to immigration than right-wing parties so if the general public is not content with immigration, there will be a decline in left-wing parties. Education can be quantified by deducing how much of the GDP is spent on public education, therefore leading to a more educated country (World Bank 2022). Education can track party decline by showing the movements to either left or right-wing parties. Education affects public policy in the way of social spending policy and the party movement across Europe. It can be an explanatory factor for either the decline of left-wing parties as the general masses moves away from them or the increased support of right-wing parties as the population moves away from social spending. Net migration flows can be found on the migration data portal, which tracks the movements in and out of a country (Migration Data Portal 2022). Net migration flows can be an explanatory factor for the decline of left-wing parties across Europe by showing the movement in and out of either left-wing or right-wing dominated countries along with deducing contentment with public policy as they move in and out of a country.

## **Dependent and Independent Variables**

The dependent variables are as follow: left-wing party support in parliaments across Europe and right-wing party support in parliaments across Europe. This article will look at the effects of all the independent variables on both of the dependent variables to make sure both sides of the political spectrum have been shown. The independent variables are as follow: trade union participation, gross domestic product per capital, unemployment rates, immigration, and net migration flow.

These social, economic, and cultural variables will give a wide-range view of the different party strengths across Europe.

## Hypotheses

The higher trade union participation is, the greater left-wing party support will be in Parliament, and the lower right-wing party support will be. This is my first hypothesis due to the polarizing support that trade unions have on parties across Europe. The higher GDP per capita is, there will be more left-wing party support in Parliament. GDP per capita is an excellent way to see how high or low a country's economy is functioning; therefore it was an important factor to include in this study. The higher unemployment rates are, the less left-wing party support will have in Parliament. Like GDP per capita, unemployment rate is another economic factor that can show the strength of an economy; therefore it was included in this study. The higher immigration is, the more left-wing party support will have in Parliament. Immigration is a social, cultural, and economic factor in which countries must have the capacity to take in many immigrants; therefore immigration shows a multitude of different factors that are important to deducing party success. The higher net migration flow is, the less left-wing party support will have in Parliament. Net migration flow also speaks to social, cultural, and economic status; this factor will widen the scope of the study to include more variables that could sway party support across Europe.

These hypotheses were tailored to the specific issues Europe has faced over four decades in order to show how and why party support changes, and to show with empirical data what variables cause this shift.

## Methodology

As stated above, this article will use a correlation analysis and cross-sectional time series analyses along with figures deduced from said analyses to show the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable from 1990 to 2022 to

either support or disprove hypotheses 1-5. In order to look at both dependent variables, this study will include a dummy variable which will look at how left-wing party decline has affected the rise of right-wing parties across Europe from 1990 to 2022.

The research on this subject mainly includes the rise of right-wing parties, however this article aims to deduce how the factors that have led to the decline of left-wing parties has consequently supported the rise of right-wing parties across Europe. The above hypothesis will be testing both along with deduction of a positive or negative relationship to show either support for or invalidation of the stated hypotheses.

## Findings and Discussion

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	OBS	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Left	227	43.38	16.41	0	93
Right	227	41.26	5.93	0	88
GDP per Capita	216	25,038	22,263.88	49	116,014.60
Unemployment Rate	194	9.97	5.93	2.35	30.41
Trade Union Participation	130	37.57	23.1	4.5	92.2
Asylum Seekers	204	37,835	94,794	5	769,753
Percentage of the Population with a College Degree	62	31.39	39.27	5.73	92
Refugee Population	187	16,640	72,627	5	769,753

These descriptive statistics show that across Europe, the vote for left-wing parties is just a bit higher than the vote for right-wing parties. These two datasets both have a standard de-

viation of about 16 and that shows quite high variance in the data across Europe. GDP per capita has a massive variance in the data, which can be expected because of the massive wealth disparities in Europe when looking at ultra-wealthy establishments such as France and the United Kingdom against struggling nations like Romania and Greece. The unemployment rate has been skewed by the inclusion of Greece, which dates back to the Eurozone crisis. However, there are still conclusions that can be pulled from this that show with the low level of variance in the data, that unemployment is not exactly an issue throughout Europe. Trade union participation on the other hand has massive variance in the data; looking at the minimums and maximums it is shown that different countries have different levels of participation. The mean at only 37% of the workforce associated with trade unions can present a clear theory that trade union membership is on the decline, even with the large variance of data and the large maximum. Asylum seekers also has large variance in the data which can be assumed is due to lack of entrance points in central Europe for asylum seekers to go to, while the Mediterranean countries have easy access points in which they can enter from the sea. Percentage of the population with a college degree also has a large variance in the data which is expected given the wealth disparity among different countries in Europe. Refugee population follows the same lines as the number of asylum seekers data in which there is a massive variance in data.

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis**

Left	Right	GDP per capita	Unemployment rate	Trade union participation	Asylum	Percentage of population with a college degree	Refugee population	
Left	1.0							
Right	-0.65	1.0						
GDP per capita	0.08	-0.39	1.0					
Unemployment rate	-0.02	-0.03	-0.60	1.0				
Trade union participation	0.36*	-0.18	0.60	-0.34	1.0			
Asylum	0.3	0.02	0.40	-0.23	0.74	1.0		
Percentage of population with a college degree	-0.05	0.17	-0.08	-0.24	-0.21	-0.09	1.0	
Refugee population	-0.18	0.1	0.11	-0.14	-0.11	-0.11	-0.03	1.0

Trade union participation was found to be significant in this correlation analysis while all other variables were found to be insignificant. Trade union participation, as stated above in the literature review, has its merits in being a significant political factor due to the close political and economic ties that lie between left-wing parties and trade unions, for they are after the same end goal. Therefore, it is not surprising in the data that we find this variable supported; while it was expected that other variables would be supported in this analysis, they were not and it can clearly be seen that trade union membership is a defining factor in left- and right-wing politics.

**Table 3: Cross Sectional Time Series Analysis**

Left	Coefficient	Standard Err.	Z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
GDP per capita	.00	0.00	0.42	0.68	0.00	0.00
Unemployment rate	-0.13	0.23	0.55	0.59	0.58	0.32
Trade union participation	0.25	0.09	2.95	0.00	0.08	0.42
Refugee population	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.79	0.00	0.00
_cons	31.58	5.13	6.15	0.00	21.52	41.64

In the correlation analysis, once again, trade union participation was the only significant variable at a 95% confidence level. These findings are highly significant in showing that the decline of left-wing parties and trade union membership are a highly significant relationship. This calls into question the relationship that can be seen throughout the raw data, especially in Norwegian countries, which is discussed in the literature review where it can clearly be seen that in these countries these variables do in fact have a positive relationship. The decline of trade union membership also has led to a decline in left-wing parties, and this variable explains the decline in left-wing parties across Europe.



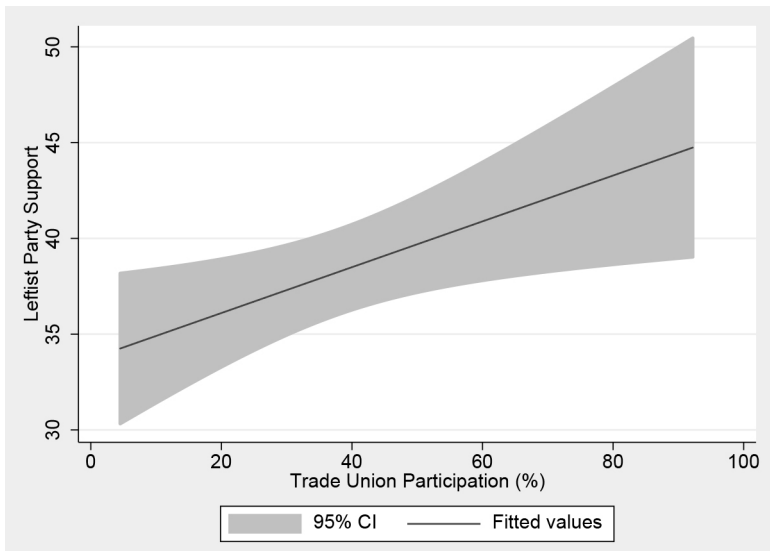
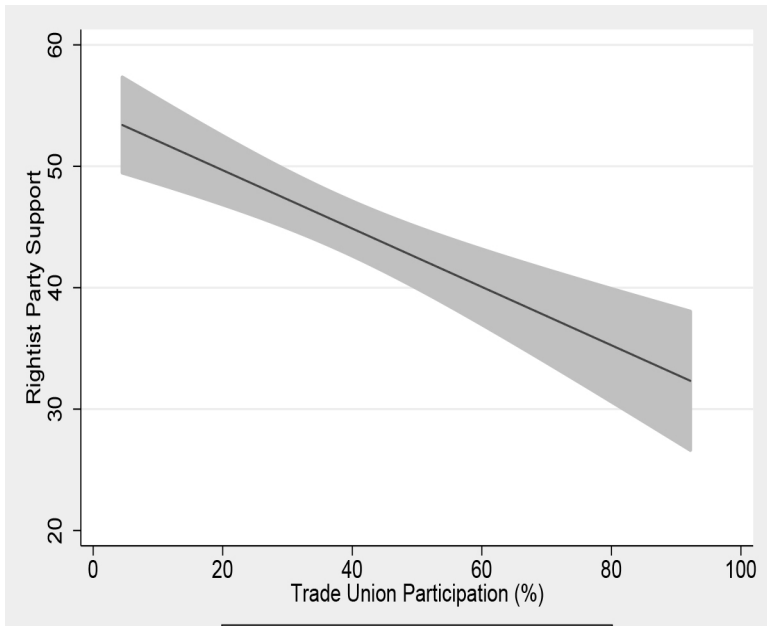
**Figure 1**

Figure 1 clearly demonstrates the positive relationship between leftist party support and trade union participation. This figure shows the significance of this variable, tested against the dependent variable, and shows the implications that arise from this finding. This figure illustrates the positive relationship along with showing in the shaded area where the confidence interval fits best and where the findings are most significant. Between around 30% and 50% of trade union participation is where the confidence interval best fits and this can show the relationship and the significance between these two variables. This positive relationship can also allude to and show the effects of the decline of left-wing parties, which would also show a decline in trade union participation, further exploring the veracity of hypothesis 5 and detailing the significant connection between these two variables.

**Table 4: Cross Sectional Time Series Analysis of Right-Wing Support**

Right	Coefficient	Standard Err.	Z	P> z	(95% Conf. Interval)	
GDP per capita	0.00	0.00	0.41	0.68	0.00	0.00
Unemployment rate	-0.24	0.29	-0.85	0.40	-0.80	0.32
Trade union participation	-0.35	0.10	-3.40**	0.00	-0.55	-0.15
Refugee population	-0.00	0.00	-0.48	0.63	0.00	0.00
_cons	59.34	6.19	9.58	0.00	47.20	71.48

Table 4 indicates a significant negative relationship with trade union participation and right-wing parties. The negative significance of this variable is highly important when looking at the rise of right-wing parties and consequently the decline of left-wing parties. The significance of this variable in both cross-sectional time series analyses speaks volumes to the important role of trade union membership and politics. It shows that trade union membership is a key factor in how an election will go, given the percentage of workers that have unionized. When referring back to the literature review, this outcome can clearly be seen in countries like Hungary and Poland where the vote for left-wing parties is nearly negligible and trade union membership is extremely low as well. The level of impact that trade union membership has on the outcomes of elections is clearly illustrated in all of the analyses, while no other variable was significant.

**Figure 2**

This figure shows the negative relationship between rightist party support and trade union participation. While this is a negative relationship, it is also an inverse relationship in which the decline of rightist party support would lead to higher trade union participation and vice versa. This finding is extremely significant in which the shaded area of the confidence interval is much closer than in figure 1; from 25% to 50% of trade union membership, the confidence interval is highest in its ability to predict rightist party support. The narrow nature of the shaded area shows the high significance of this variable in both figures and also further elaborates on the significance of this one variable in accordance with the other variables that were proved insignificant. These findings further strengthen hypothesis 5 and give a clearer picture as to the role that trade unions play in politics. Furthermore, it can be deduced by the above figure that this

inverse relationship can either bode well for left-wing or right-wing parties in their efforts to be in control of parliament.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Hypothesis 5 was clearly supported by the evidence in this study, with hypotheses 1-4 rejected. The data was quite surprising in the fact that no other variables proved to be significant, however, the clear and steady relationship between trade union participation and both leftist and rightist party support was an incredible find. Further elaborating on the positive relationship between leftist party support and trade union participation, it was stated above that these two institutions have been close throughout history, and it can further be seen that the modern-day implications of civic society and social welfare are seen more in leftist party agendas than rightist party agendas. This positive relationship speaks to countries such as Denmark and Sweden in which leftist parties have maintained a massive monopoly on parliament over the past 30 years, while maintaining trade union membership in 80-90% of the workforce over that same time period. The countries discussed above represent the findings found in the data. On the other hand, looking at countries like Poland and Hungary, which have never had high levels of trade union membership and since the fall of the communist bloc also have not had high levels of leftist party support, we see the other side of this data in which low levels of leftist party support also lead to low levels of trade union membership, showing a positive relationship.

Exploring figure 2 and the rightist party support data, it can clearly be confirmed that trade union membership is an important factor in determining the level of rightist party support. This inverse relationship shows that a decline in rightist party support leads to an increase in trade union membership; it can also be seen that a rise in right-wing party support consequently shows a decline in left-wing party support. This inverse relation-

ship can be exemplified by the raw data when looking at Estonia. Estonia in 1990 had high levels of trade union membership with mediocre left-wing party support. However as the party support for rightist parties grew the level of trade union membership went down, further illustrating the connection of this inverse relationship with the positive relationship seen in figure 1.

To further this study, this article could improve upon variables and bring in more countries around the world to elaborate on whether these findings are only applicable to Europe or if they could have worldwide implications. Given the chance, this article could further be improved upon with the inclusion of qualitative data in a mixed methodology, to see if the outcomes of the qualitative data match those of the quantitative, and to further explore the implications of these significant findings. If these findings were replicated in significance in both manners of data collection, then they would be firmly applicable to Europe and possibly the world if this study was to be continued further. The addition of new variables such as COVID death rates and social welfare rates could also be applied to this study to find more explanatory factors for the decline of left-wing parties across Europe, and potentially the world.

The findings of this article conclude that the decline of trade union membership is an explanatory factor for the decline of left-wing parties across Europe. The ties between leftist parties and trade union membership have been broken by the populist emergence of right-wing parties and show the inverse relationship between rightist party support and trade union membership. The application of these findings can be of use to campaign strategists in explaining how to gain a stronghold once again in parliament by reorganizing trade unions to their advantage. In conclusion, trade union membership is a key significant explanatory factor in deducing the decline of left-wing parties across Europe, and the findings of this study support hypothesis 5. The findings of this variable being highly significant in each of the analyses demonstrates its power for voters and for parliament.

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