The SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research
SJPR

SOAS JOURNAL OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

HERE , THERE, EVERYWHERE

Fifteen years of SOAS research in multiculturalism and multilingualism

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear Readers,

The publishing of this volume is not only special because it celebrates the fifteenth year of activity of this volunteer-based publication, but, more importantly, it represents a little light in a year of darkness for many researchers.

The year 2020 has been an extraordinarily challenging time for many. Some of us saw their research project put on a hold while the world was finding its way through the pandemic. Some other saw their ambitions and future project compromised by the precarious and unpredictable circumstances we are living through as a community.

For this reason, now more than ever, I know that for many of our writers to see their articles coming to life in this student-led publication represents a double victory. On one side, our writers can look at the future, confident that their work has been recognised by an academic publication. On the other side, our writers can keep on working on their projects knowing that a community of their peers has selected, appreciated and perceived great value in their work.

This volume also represents a rebirth for the publication as, for the first time in fifteen years, the journal has been structured in a more organic and professional fashion. It is a great success to see our issue 13 coming to life as it shows that our vision for the future of the SJPR is not merely a dream: but it is an achievable and feasible goal. For this, I would like to thank our team of Assistant Editors, who so generously donated us their time and energy throughout the entire year; my irreplaceable Co-Editors, Anna Kensicki, Natalia Matveeva, Yunzi Han who have been extraordinary companion of adventure; and, the Doctoral School team, in particular Dr Yenn Lee for her infinite patience.

As Natalia and I bid farewell to our readers after three amazing years, I can only wish my successor, Yunzi Han, a wonderful and unforgettable time running the new team as Editor-in-Chief. I am sure that, a year from now, she will have achieved even more amazing goals.

Last but not least, thank you to you, our readers, for your support and for your time. We hope that the SJPR continues to be a platform for the SOAS research community's voice to be heard and a safe haven where students and researchers can share their knowledge while showcasing their amazing projects and discoveries.

Being a community is now, more than ever, an important value upon which we should focus to rebuild our society, as a university and as human beings. Having being part of one of the little pieces keeping the SOAS research community together has been an honour, and a pleasure.

Farewell and enjoy the reading of this extraordinary issue 13.

The Editor-in-Chief
Federica Gamberini

INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers,

Welcome to volume 13 of the SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research. It is our pleasure to introduce you to our writers and their work, whom we have selected to celebrate the first – and hopefully, not last! – fifteen years of activity of this volunteer-and-student-led academic publication.

The SJPR came to life for the first time in 2005, when a group of members of the Research Student Association decided to start a publication to showcase the interdisciplinarity and diversity of SOAS postgraduate students' research. The original name, Polyvocia, reflected their intention which for several years was carried forward by new researchers and members of the RSA. The torch of the Journal was hence passed from student to student for many years, until the enthusiasm faded away and the publication was stopped.

It was in 2010 that, thanks to the brilliant minds and vision of Romina Istratii and Monika Hirmer, the Journal came back to life as a open-access and academic publication. The hard and enlightened work of Romina and Monika made the Journal one of the publications recognised by the British Library; established the Journal's annual conference; and, ultimately, rekindled the students' interest in engaging in a cross-department and interdisciplinary conversation. Research students, once again, had a place where to express themselves and to nourish that warming feeling of being part of a community.

In 2019, Romina and Monika's vision was further developed by Federica Gamberini, Natalia Metveeva and Iris Lim. Engaging the Doctoral School into the conversation, the SJPR was restructured into a more organic, compartmentalised and professional publication; a new review process was established, reaching an amazing record of thirty-three submission in one round; the first handbook of the journal was (finally) written; and a conversation to restructure the Journal's webpage started.

The SJPR's journey, as the academic publication you see now, was long and full of pitfalls. Yet, the commitment of all the people involved and the passion of its writers (and editorial team) kept the publication alive. The SJPR has been and will be for many a lighthouse for those of us who navigate the conundrum of academic research. It is a space for our community to thrive and for our mind to be broaden to new perspectives and horizons.

For this reason, the writers you read in this issue 13 are the best of the best of our community, chosen to showcase to the world what a SOAS research students are all about. Spacing through time and places, the issue 13 is a celebration of SOAS community as an interdisciplinary and open space of discussion, just as our founders envisioned it.

This year issue opens with a Maya Bhardwaj's article "**FEMINIST SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM FROM SOUTH TO NORTH**" on trade unionism, coalitions and social movement as labour relocates between the Global North to the Global South. In particular, Bhardwaj's article offers an interesting perspective on how a successful collaboration between unions and non-union social movement can exhibit explicitly feminist and decolonial modes of organising.

The first part of this issue will, then, take our readers to Asia, exploring artistic movements, traditions and social issues across time and space. This section opens with Sakhi Nitin Anita's article "**GEET GA RAHE HAI AAJ HUM**" on music sung and performed in the contemporary women's movement(s) in the 1970s India. Tracing the genealogy and context of the songs, Sakhi also traces the 'flow' of the women's movements and map the emergence and shifts of a feminist discourse in India. On the same note, Aditya Mohaman's article "**SOUNDS FROM A SILENCED DIVINITY**" explores the ritual art form known as "Theyyam", an annual recurrence in the South India state of Kerala. By exploring this ritual, Mohaman's work highlights how knowledge is ultimately a product of social hierarchy and form of expressions embedding social discrepancy.

In this section, we also find articles exploring both Mainland China and the complicated situation with the nearby Hong Kong and Taiwan. One one hand, Chih-en Chen's article

"**RHETORICAL SPACE**" explores the hybrid innovation of *yangcai*, as a revival of pictorial techniques on porcelain familiar to the Buddhist tradition but with influences from European pictoriality. Chen's argument that this blend of techniques is a reflection of Emperor Qianlong's multicultural background offers a compelling and fascinating perspectives on painted porcelain in China as an artistic form bridging the East and the West. On the other hand, Aubury Huang's article "**LATE MING COURTESAN CULTURE AND CHINA'S GENDER SYSTEM**" sheds a new light into the late Ming gender system. Adopting a gender perspective on late Ming's courtesans, the writer explores how the role of the courtesans was both defined by the market economy and the patriarchal system, ultimately preventing domestic women from entering the public realm while reinforcing the husband–wife hierarchy.

Lastly, taking us back to the 20th Century China, Eva Mazzeo's article "**THE "HONG KONG FACTOR**"" offers an interesting perspective on the political scenario in Taiwan in the aftermath of the events occurred in Hong Kong in 2019. In particular, Mazzeo's article tackles sheds some light on the political discourse strategies put into place by the Democratic Progressive Party and the Kuomintang in Taiwan as influenced by the "Hong Kong factor."

The second part of this issue will take the readers to Africa where Danny Sanders' article "**100% TZ FLAVA**" enlighten us all on the hybrid nature of hip hop from Tanzania and Zanzibar. Following this genre's development since 1990s, the article shows how hip–hop artists draw from both local and global influences, letting this musical genre acquiring a new social meaning for the Swahili community in the East African Coast.

The third part of this issue will take our readers to the Middle East, with two articles challenging the perception we have of the cultural groups in this area. David Spence's article "**FROM VICTIMS TO COLONIZERS**" uses historical analysis to explore the idea of repatriated indigenous communities, shedding light on the migration of Israelis and Liberians. In the article, Spence analyses how Israelis and Liberians people's migration from Europe to the West Africa and Palestine can be considered a form of aggressive colonisation of these two areas. Instead, Anastasia Modestou's article "**FAIRUZ AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL**" studies the disputes of the religious communities in Lebanon and

the ways these communities are unified through the music. This aspect, which is seldom examined in current academic works on Lebanese national identity, is explored in the paper by taking into account Lebanon's brief history, hence reinforcing the idea that music could be a powerful tool to create a sense of national identities among Lebanese communities.

The fourth and last regional section will take our readers back to Europe. Finlay McIntosh's article "**LET'S MAKE THEM HEAR IT IN EUROPE**" explores how social media have become a powerful tool changing the face of protest in the modern world. McIntosh's fieldwork and interviews, in particular, explore this argument by showing how London-based Chilean protest group, *Asamblea Chilena en Londres*, uses social media to mobilise Chilean communities both locally and globally.

Last but not least, this year's issue concludes with an opinion piece and a book review. On one hand, Abhishek Mohanty' piece on human and big data judgement discusses how the negotiations of big data by users should be resituated in the everyday space, and repositioned as not between human and computer-based judgements, but between the potentialities of *becoming*-human of big-data and *becoming* big-date of the user. On the other hand, Mihaela Cojocaru's book review of Iginio Gagliardone's "The Politics of Technology in Africa" explores how African countries, particularly Ethiopia, are not only passively accepting Information and Communication Technologies, but these countries are also actively using these technologies to develop.

Feminist Social Movement Unionism from South to North

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Abstract

Employer crackdowns on trade unionisation, neoliberal governments' gutting of trade union protections, and increasing bureaucratisation and risk-averseness of unions themselves, have led to declines in traditional trade union membership. This coupled with informalisation, feminisation, increased migrant labour, newer workforces, and alternate modes of worker organising, has forced trade unions to alter their methods of organising in order to retain their base and their relevance. One way that this has manifested is through social movement unionism, where trade unions explicitly partner with social movements and NGOs on campaigns and social movement work. In this paper, I assess the viability of these social movement unionism coalitions by examining several case studies in the Global North and South through secondary and primary research and identifying conditions for success and failure. I argue that due to increased migration of workers from the Global South to the Global North, the relocation of labour and capital to the Global South itself, and increasingly radical feminist lenses in worker organising and social movements, unions who have prioritised strategies led by people of colour and praxis that is explicitly decolonial, feminist, and transnational have greater success. This is true both when unions work independently and when collaborating with social movements. When such collaborations between unions and non-union social movement forces fail, it is often due to the opaque and top-down organising methods that plague traditional trade unions, and using outdated organising models that preference white, heterosexual men. But when collaborations occur successfully, these coalitions exhibit explicitly feminist and decolonial modes of organising through horizontal and diversified leadership that centre the most directly impacted organisers and activists, transparent and democratic decision-making and communications channels, and expansive and radical worldviews that reach beyond campaign wins to orient towards transformative change.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maya Bhardwaj (she/they) is a community organiser, researcher, musician, and artist originally from Detroit with roots and/or community in Bangalore and New York. Maya wrote this paper while completing a Masters student at SOAS, University of London, where she studied South Asian diaspora queerness, leftist activism, and solidarity with Black liberation. Prior to living in London, she was based between Mexico City and New York City as the It Takes Roots National Coordinator with Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, and before that worked as the Housing Lead Organizer with Faith in New York. In London she is a member of LGSMigrants and Ceilidh for Social Justice; in India, she serves on the advisory board of Haiyya: Organise for Action; in New York, she supports the work of Northern Manhattan is Not for Sale and FemJam's femme-led bluegrass, jazz, and strings; and she is also active with several QTPOC and South Asian direct action, art, music, and organising collectives and community groups in the UK, India, and the US. Maya is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Pretoria, South Africa

Keywords: trade union; social movement; social movement unionism; feminist leadership; decolonial organizing; people of colour; transnational organising

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written heralding the demise of traditional trade union politics. Organisers and activists note declining membership, erosion of political power, contract losses, and general malaise within the labour organising world. Simultaneously, neoliberalism has diminished trade union power through anti-union laws at the government level, the global flow of capital has displaced labour from historic union strongholds in the Global North, and greater worker informalisation, feminisation, and retaliation against unionisation from employers has changed the ball game on the shop floor.[1] But decentralised worker organising is also growing, with women's worker centres building power and informalised and formalised workers walking out of exploitative workplaces to fight the effects of globalised, neoliberal, racialised capitalism.[2]

Much of this organising has more recently taken place outside the traditional union model within collectives, community organising groups, and broader social movements.[3] As unions react to this shift and seek to remain relevant, we see examples of Social Movement Unionism, where unions partner with social movements and community organising groups.[4] These partnerships are at times tactical and oriented around campaign goals, and elsewhere oriented around long-term joint struggle. In many countries, particularly in South Africa and the US, as examined more deeply here, social movement unionism has provided a foundation for the revitalisation of trade union politics – but it has also stoked and exacerbated tensions between the differing organising, political, and leadership styles of unions, NGOs, and social movements.[5]

In this paper, I examine the success and longevity of these union plus social movement alliances. I explore when social movement unionism produces campaign wins and relational successes versus when it results in further fragmentation. More specifically, I

[1] David C. Lier and Kristian Stokke, "Maximum working class unity? Challenges to local social movement unionism in Cape Town," *Antipode* 38, no. 4 (2006): 802–824.
[2] Jan Breman and Marcel van der Linden, "Informalising the Economy: The Return of the Social Question at a Global Level," *Development and Change* 45, no. 5 (2014): 920–940.
[3] Naila Kabeer, "Women Workers and the Politics of Claims Making: The Local and the Global," *Development and Change* 49, no. 3 (2018): 759–789.
[4] David C. Lier and Kristian Stokke, "Maximum working class unity?"
[5] *Ibid.*

ask how social movement unionism can help us understand how unions do or do not participate in coalitions with community-based groups, activists, and/or other social movement structures, and what factors allow these unions able to successfully collaborate with other actors to meet shared tactical goals and visions for broader social transformation.

I first ground this question in a review of social movement unionism and an examination of academic texts documenting failed and successful coalitions between unions and social movements, both in the Global North and the Global South. I particularly examine texts on social movement unionism in South Africa, where there is a longstanding history of collaboration – as well as tension – between trade unions, social movements, and political parties, reaching back to the anti-Apartheid movement.

I then explore two primary research case studies of coalitions in the US, where coalitions engaged in explicitly transnational organising and grassroots membership included significant representation from migrants and members of the Global South diaspora. In these case studies, I examine what factors around decision-making, leadership models, membership consultation, and long-term goals allowed coalitions to successfully bridge between trade unions and social movements, and what factors led to difficulties or coalition failure. I use these case studies and my broader theoretical foundations to draw conclusions regarding trade unions' adaptations and shifts, and the possibility for successful alternative modes of organising with social movements.

Methodology

The analysis in this paper draws upon both secondary and primary methods. The secondary research draws upon the canon of labour studies, particularly focusing on case studies that examine social movement unionism and the impacts of informalisation and feminisation, on disrupting traditional modes of trade union organising. My primary research builds on this framework of social movement unionism and feminisation. I use these frameworks to analyse events within two social movements and the two coalitions that they were respectively active in, from June of 2015 to July of 2019. During this time, I was embedded in these social movements as an organiser as well as a researcher. My research

methods included participant observation and unstructured and semi-structured interviews, in both group and individual format.

In my participant research, I observed how trade union representatives and members interacted with social movement and NGO representatives and members during coalition meetings that took place in person and over conference calls, during strategy retreats, and during various direct actions and weeks of non-violent direct action that took place between 2015 and 2019. I also observed and documented topics discussed, processes used, and interpersonal and inter-organisational dynamics in coalition spaces.

In my unstructured and semi-structured interviews, I spoke with members and organisers from social movement groups, NGOs, and trade unions about their experience working with their respective coalitions, the relationships they built with other organisers and members from other sectors, and the tensions and challenges they observed in working in a coalitional format. Interviews did not have a stipulated list of questions but included questions on leadership; race, class, and gender dynamics; modes of organising; what constitutes success; changes social movement and/or union makeup over time; and their hopes for organising and social movement unionism in the future. The unstructured and semi-unstructured nature of interviews allowed me to dig into the particular topics that interlocuters addressed as well as probe themes that they did not bring up.

All personal and identifying data in this paper has been anonymised to protect my interlocuters, their organisations, the coalitions I studied, and the work therein. I have used pseudonyms instead of organisational and coalitional names, and I have omitted interlocuters names. I have also changed details about organisational and coalition work to prevent identification. This anonymisation is critical not only to protect my interlocuters' safety, but also to protect the integrity of the work they conduct and to allow them to speak frankly, as much of this movement work is still ongoing.

A note on research and political climate: this research and documentation took place prior to the global spread of COVID-19. This pandemic has had a massive impact on worker organising and trade union response, as COVID-19 and lockdowns have expanded worker exploitation across the globe. The topic of union and social movement organising broadly,

and social movement unionism particularly, under COVID-19, merits further study. Though I do not engage with COVID-19 explicitly in this paper, I hope my engagement with the underlying characteristics of worker organising and social movement unionism protect the usefulness of this analysis in a shifting climate.

Changes in Union Demographics and Power

The causes for unions' declining membership and reduced power are diverse. Informalisation has made worker organising more challenging, led to fragmented contracts and complex collective bargaining, and has created an underclass of workers often not captured within the traditional union structure. This has been compounded with the rise of migrant labour, both from the Global South to the Global North, as well as within countries themselves.[6] These divisions between workers have damaged the sense of a global proletarian consciousness[7], and have led to a reduction in perception of unions' relevance by many workers whose contract or employee status causes them to be shut out of formal bargaining structures.[8]

The feminisation of labour, or the growing number of women in the workforce and the sometimes particular recruitment of women due to assumptions about their ability to complete work or their docility and unwillingness to unionise, has also caused massive shifts in labour politics, particularly within informalised work. As women do indeed also organise against exploitative labour conditions, labour feminisation has shaken the often male and patriarchal model of top-down labour organising,[9] where the previous heterosexual, working-class, and often white membership no longer hold an unequivocal majority in the workplace and have to shift organising modes, from times of meeting, to styles of decision-making, to what qualifies as a union issue at all. Feminisation has pushed unions to decide whether to address misogyny and harassment in the workplace, to

[6] Pun Ngai and Lu Huilin, "Unfinished Proletarianisation: Self, Anger, and Class Action among the Second Generation of Peasant-Workers in Present-Day China," *Modern China* 36, no. 5 (September 2010): 493–519.
[7] Beverly Silver and Giovanni Arrighi, "Workers North and South," *Socialist Register: Working Classes, Global Realities* 37 (2001): 53–76.
[8] Jan Breman and Marcel van der Linden, "Informalising the Economy: The Return of the Social Question at a Global Level," *Development and Change* 45, no. 5 (2014): 920–940.
[9] Alessandra Mezzadri, "Class, gender and the sweatshop: on the nexus between labour commodification and exploitation", *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 10 (2016): 1877–1900. Alessandra Mezzadri, "Class, gender and the sweatshop: on the nexus between labour commodification and exploitation", *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 10 (2016): 1877–1900.

address issues around care labour, and whether to explicitly incorporate feminised informal sectors like domestic work into the trade union ecosystem.[10]

These changes in worker demographics have also led to an increase in worker organising outside of collective bargaining and other traditional union strategies. Feminist models of worker organising have shifted focus to policy reforms rather than a sole focus on collective bargaining and contract negotiation.[11] Support systems for women's labour have grown, including tactics like explicit spaces for childcare to support women membership in union structures. Women's worker centres have also created more active ties with social movements, as in the Women's Centre in Sri Lanka's relationships with Sri Lankan feminist organising, and the Working and Unemployed Women's Movement that grew out of gendered struggles within the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.[12]

This feminised and informalized worker organising has also taken place entirely outside of union or worker collective structures. Across the Arab Spring, rank and file workers joined the looser social movements in protests in the streets while formalised unions often stayed silent while tied down in bureaucratic decision-making structures.[13] Similarly, in the anti-austerity Indignados movement in Spain[14], and in workers movements through Occupy and teachers strikes in the US[15], workers operated outside of the structure of unions and came together in struggle through decentralised organising meetings and in the streets. And under the worldwide spread of Coronavirus, ensuing global lockdowns, and fear of disease spread, expanding worker exploitation has sparked workers to engage in work slowdowns and walkouts, some under the auspices of traditional trade unions, but many as wildcat strikes in collaboration with social movements across the globe.[16]

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[10] Naila Kabeer, "Women Workers and the Politics of Claims Making: The Local and the Global," *Development and Change* 49, no. 3 (2018): 759–789.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Naila Kabeer, "Women Workers and the Politics of Claims Making: The Local and the Global."
[13] Maha Abdelrahman, "In Praise of Organisation: Egypt between Activism and Revolution," *Development and Change* 44, no. 3 (May 2013): 569–585.
[14] Cristina F. Flesher, "Debunking Spontaneity: Spain's 15-M/Indignados as Autonomous Movement," *Social Movement Studies* 14, no. 2 (2014): 142–163.
[15] Lauren Langman, "Occupy: A New New Social Movement," *Current Sociology* 61, no. 3 (July 2013): 510–524.
[16] Michel Sainato, "Strikes erupt as US essential workers demand protection amid pandemic," *The Guardian*, 19 May 2020.

Theoretical Foundations of Social Movement Unionism

Unions, in turn, have begun to shift their strategies and modes of organising to recapture lost power and to adapt to the flow of capital and labour under globalised neoliberalism. This has given rise to increased social movement unionism (SMU), which often manifests in coalitions and alliances between trade unions and NGOs, non-profits, and community organising and activist groups. Literature exploring social movement unionism emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s as scholars more deeply examined the impacts of globalised trade and capital flow on social movement fights and struggled to define the shifting of union organising in relation to new social movements. Authors like Moody, Waterman, Scipes, Webster, and Lier and Stokke, who I explore more below, assess the shifting political climate of expanded multinational conglomerations, global free trade agreements, and the consolidation of global neoliberalism during the fall of the Soviet Union. They jointly argue that this transnational nature of capitalism provoked social movement unionism, or deeper collaborations between trade unions and social movements sparked by the need for broader worker and leftist organising.

I echo Moody's exploration of transnational capital flows, shifting migration, and subsequent impacts on organising. Moody indicates that the shift in factories and labour to the Global South provoked a new rise of worker organising. In order to contend with global capital holders based in the Global North, unions had to reach more broadly into partnership with neighbourhood and community groups, national social movements, and across borders to invest in what he terms "international social-movement unionism" (Moody 1995:52). In my case studies, I return to his argument that anti-capitalist forces in the Global South like Brazil, South Africa, and Venezuela will lead this refiguring of anti-capitalist struggle in partnership with co-conspirators in Europe, the US, Japan, and other seats of business and capital.[17]

Seidman takes this argument further, positing that these social movement unionism forces have risen out of the dynamism of the Global South, due to later industrialisation and

[17] Kim Moody, "Towards an International Social Movement Unionism," *New Left Review* 225 (1995): 52–72.

growth of working-class communities experiencing multiple intersections of power and oppression at once. He places SMU in relationship to new social movements forming both in the Global South and North that have created broader-based movements and indicates that union organising in the Global North will need to reformulate strategies to engage more explicitly with the new social movements dominating the political scene.[18]

I draw on Waterman's analysis to situate these shifts in capital, migration and organising within a landscape of debates between Marxist analyses of capital and postmodern or post-Marxist analyses. Waterman argues that new social movements have reformulated their understanding of the working class from homogeneity to heterogeneity. Trade unions must similarly shift their understanding of their base by appealing to unorganised workers from varied backgrounds and with experience of varied organising methodologies. Waterman concludes that a synthesis between these schools of analysis is necessary to properly understand the shifting strategies that can propel primarily ununionised, working poor workers into power and shared space with diverse, and sometimes factionalised international movements.[19] I assess how trade unions and social movements alike are adopting Waterman's analysis of the working-class through a Gramscian united front model. This also recalls Scipes' exploration of SMU in the Philippines that synthesised Marxist and post-Marxist debates into a framework of democracy and rights.[20]

Finally, I draw examinations of the rise of social movement unionism in its foundational case, South Africa, to indicate fractures in SMU that derive from unions' incorporation into political parties and hence, the ruling class. Through assessing collaborations between Black workers and unions, churches, NGOs, and political parties in the fight against Apartheid, Webster argues that these ties initially transcended localised barriers to form

[18] Gay Seidman, "Social movement unionism: From description to exhortation," *South African Review of Sociology* 42, no. 3 (2011): 94–102.
[19] Peter Waterman, "Social-Movement Unionism: A New Union Model for a New World Order?," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* (1993): 245–278.
[20] Scipes, Kim. "Social movement unionism and the Kilusang Mayo Uno." *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 7, no. 2 (1992).

national political unity and grow international support for a post-Apartheid government.[21]

Lier and Stokke go further in their exploration of South Africa's social movement unionism. They argue that while influence in nationwide politics allowed South African unions to build power through relationships with political parties, it ultimately led to unions' consolidation within the auspices of the state, thereby reducing the possibility for truly transformative change or liberatory Black politics. Instead, unions became side-tracked by the concerns of retaining power.[22] I apply this lens to unions' incorporation in the Global North, and the possibilities of feminist SMU to disrupt this.

Amidst these debates, there lacks a clear understanding of the impact of Global South social movement unionism on the Global North. Northern unions currently contend with an influx of migrant worker members who have organised with or whose family members participate in these new social movement forces in the Global South prior to migration. They have experienced or built democratised and militant methods on the ground.

In the subsequent sections, I argue that this South-North migration flow is contributing to destabilising regressive union politics. Global South migrants are challenging unions' fortification within liberal state power in the Global North. These workers, particularly those who are women of colour, are demanding greater fluidity in decision-making and hierarchy as modelled by social movements. Unless unions adapt, they will continue losing diaspora members to social movements that incorporate a multiplicity of issues outside of pure contract negotiation.

In the first two sections, "Pitfalls of Social Movement Unionism" and "Failed Social Movement Unionism," I explore instances where tensions between unions and Global South-led social movements in the Global North have caused ruptures of SMU. I argue that tensions around ideology and organising praxis fractured SMU and coalition spaces.

[21] Eddie Webster, "The rise of social-movement unionism: The two faces of the Black trade union movement in South Africa," In *Work and Industrialisation in South Africa: An Introductory Reader,* Randburg: Ravan (1994): 174–196.
[22] David Lier and Kristian Stokke, "Maximum working class unity? Challenges to local social movement unionism in Cape Town."

Moreover, unions' difficulty to adequately organise with Global South partners and Global South diaspora members hampered union power within social movement unionism.

Conversely, in the final sections, "New Modes of Worker Organising and SMU," and "TWRA," I explore where SMU has been successful due to centring leadership of members of the Global South, and adopting decolonial practices modes of analysis and organising. By expanding their organising framework beyond collective bargaining to multi-issue, transformative systems change, they grow what I call "feminist social movement unionism."

Failed Social Movement Unionism: Grassroots and Trades in New York City

New York City's Housing is a Human Right (henceforth HHR) coalition was comprised of non-profits, tenant organising groups, faith groups, and unions primarily from the building trades. These groups united to challenge a 2015 Mayoral plan for private, affordable housing development within new luxury housing. In this section, I assess the tensions and spaces for solidarity between unions and social movements in this coalition, based on my primary research on this group's organising from 2015–2018.

As described to me by various housing organisers, the HHR coalition was initially dominated by non-profits and grassroots social movements whose work in housing dated back decades through New York's tenants' movement. Organisers noted that conflicts existed even within the housing movement, where some organisations accepted city funding in order to conduct wider base-building under more reformist goals, while others eschewed city funding in order to pursue more militant and combative strategies targeting the mayor.

HHR was then joined by a set of major construction unions including UCW (the Union of Construction Workers), who were primarily focused on expanded construction contracts. This caused a difference in tactics and goals, where housing and community groups' agitation for affordable housing development or no development at all contrasted with the

unions' willingness to compromise if union construction contracts were ensured.[23] These conflicting tactics recall Waterman's analysis of heterogeneous working-class struggle, where the incorporation of working-class social movements with trade unions can cause frictions without a clear analysis of the end goal through a class-struggle perspective.[24]

These tensions were further exacerbated by differences in organising structure that manifested in the coalition space. I observed that decisions were often called by unions within the space of the coalition meetings, as these representatives had the mandates of their unions to speak for rank-and-file members. Conversely, most of the grassroots groups and social movements could not make an immediate decision in the space without first discussing with members, leading to accusations of movement groups slowing down the process and of unions forcing decisions through. Though there was individual rapport between union representatives and community organisers, coalition spaces often remained opaque with more decision-making happening in one-on-one calls between coalition members, as representatives avoided fanning open conflict within coalition meeting spaces. The likelihood of fragmentation simmered beneath the surface as groups harboured doubts about each other's commitment to housing and worker justice, and the unions and smaller neighbourhood movements particularly moved politically further apart.

Under agitation from these smaller housing movement groups, the construction unions moved from unequivocally supporting development as long as it offered living wage contracts, to targeting unaffordability in the Mayor's housing plan. This forced a severing of their deep relationships with the formerly leftist Mayor and also created conflict within the larger union landscape in New York. Many traditionally leftist unions in New York City embraced the Mayor's rezoning plans on the belief that the plan would create housing that, while not affordable for HHR members and New York's working-class, would be attainable for their members who made higher wages. This infighting between the unions

[23] The information in this paragraph and the following paragraphs in the section derive from my primary research as an organiser and researcher with HHR.
[24] Peter Waterman, "Social-Movement Unionism: A New Union Model for a New World Order?," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* (1993): 245–278.

themselves, and between unions and community groups, detracted energy from HHR's work and fragmented NYC's left.

Ultimately, the HHR coalition was forced to settle luxury development in exchange for small amounts of affordable housing and unionised work in a highly technical compromise that lacked community resonance. The coalition was accused of being bureaucratic, exclusionary, and severed from its people; community members accused the unions and HHR of caving to the Mayor in back-room negotiations; and HHR fell apart.[25]

This is similar to Engerman's analysis of Los Angeles' Day Without an Immigrant (Dia Sin Imigrantes) organising in 2006, where two coalitions separately organised the day due to distrust between smaller and radical movements, and non-profits and unions.[26] Like in Engerman's study, organising and ideological splits formed due to differing structures and decision-making tactics. While a separate coalition did not form as in LA, HHR's negotiations for demands that they deemed winnable and immediately implementable, and the power of union organisers over the rank-and-file member, caused tensions. Similarly, smaller community-groups felt the tactics were reformist and reported similar feelings of ineffectiveness and discontent with unclear decision-making.[27]

HHR's failure also recalls Lier and Stokke's exploration of similar discontent in recent union and social movement tensions in South Africa. As in South Africa, unions' embeddedness with local party politics in New York led to a distrust of the unions by leftist community organising groups and social movements. This similarly caused coalitional fragmentation and also sparked relationships that were adversarial between the unions and conflicting social movements. Like in South Africa, some non-union members of NYC's HHR considered some unions to be co-opted by the ruling powers of the state.[28]

In these examples, we see some of the largest pitfalls of SMU. When unions preference coalitions that favour a more top-down organising structure akin to their internal

[25] Bakry Elmedni, "The Mirage of Housing Affordability: An Analysis of Affordable Housing Plans in New York City." *SAGE Open* vol 8, no. 4, 2018.
[26] Cassandra Engerman, "Social movement unionism in practice: organisational dimensions of union mobilisation in the Los Angeles immigrant rights marches," *Work, Employment and Society* 29, no. 3 (June 2015): 444–461.
[27] *Ibid*.
[28] David Lier and Kristian Stokke, "Maximum working class unity?"

decision-making processes, processes and decisions can lose buy-in. Communication processes can feel shallow and opaque. As a result of extensive compromise, demands can feel overly reformist. This can provoke fragmentation and distrust by social movement forces and unions alike. And when unions prioritise goals around contract negotiations in coalition spaces with non-labour groups, fissures can be exacerbated, watering down transformative visions into goals and tactics that may work in the short-term but can divide the left and preclude long-term social change.

New Modes of Worker Organising and SMU

In the previous section, "Failed Social Movement Unionism" focusing on HHR coalition, I explored where SMU has fallen apart due to disconnects both in organising practice and ideology between unions and social movements. However, hope remains. In these following sections, I explore where SMU has been more fruitful, and posit that this is due to union organising that is less hierarchical, more feminist, and more led by members of the Global South.

In unions and outside of formal union structures, workers have found ways to break away from traditional union bureaucracy. Within feminised informal labour sectors like domestic work, nursing, teaching, and other care-oriented labour, workers have embraced more horizontal modes of organising in partnership with social movements.[29] There has been a marked increase of women-led chapters of unions – and independent workers collectives – who employ strategies that starkly differ from more traditional, male unions. These women workers may orient around issues outside of worker contracts, identifying sexual harassment in the workplace, lack of childcare, and other "women's issues" as equally key points for collective struggle. The type of negotiations and tactics also differ: while male-dominated union structures may focus on contract improvements and use strikes as a primary tactic, organising by feminised and informalised workforces may

[29] Naila Kabeer, "Women Workers and the Politics of Claims Making: The Local and the Global."

prioritise different tactics from targeting the boss, like creating alternate systems or fighting for policy reforms at a national level.[30]

Kafala workers organising in Lebanon have embraced both policy lobbying with the Lebanese government as well as a cooperative model of organising that brings domestic workers out into the public eye in partnership with allied social movement forces.[31] In the US, the explicitly feminist National Domestic Workers Union has made the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights a lynchpin of its strategy, and has passed this at the state level in many states across the country. NWDA achieved this through many explicit choices. Grassroots members' concerns and leadership were amplified. NWDA employed a less hierarchal decision-making structure. Organisers and members centred care and rest as a necessary component of movement work, including a significant focus on generative somatics. NWDA also integrated ancestral practices and diverse Global South organising strategies that were brought in from members who migrated from across the world. This all was combined within an explicitly decolonial and feminist lens. Moreover, this work was accomplished in a firm coalition with social movement forces.[32]

Teachers in the US have also expanded organising outside of traditional union structures, often with feminist leaders at the fore. In some cases, teachers broke rank with the teachers' unions to demand higher pay, different teaching models, and in some cases policy protections for undocumented students, and picketed with DREAMers organising groups, student organising groups, and other social movement structures. These teachers employed strikes in historically disenfranchised areas like Oakland, California and West Virginia, where much of this work was led by working-class women who articulated this organising as a resistance to the devaluing of care.[33]

[30] Naila Kabeer, "Women Workers and the Politics of Claims Making: The Local and the Global."
[31] Ghiwa Sayegh, "Resistant Borders: A Conversation on the Daily Struggles of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon," *Kohl Journal* 2, no. 2 (Winter 2016): 141–153.
[32] Magally Alcazar, "Women Workers Make All Other Work Possible: Latina Immigrant Organising at the Oakland Domestic Workers' Centre." In *Where Freedom Starts: Sex Power Violence #MeToo*. London: Verso, 2018. eBook.
[33] Campbell, Alexia Fernandez. "West Virginia teachers are on strike again. Here's why." *Vox*, 19 February 2019. https://www.vox.com/2019/2/19/18231486/west-virginia-teacher-strike-2019.

While these groups do not characterise policy wins as a pathway to transformative liberation, they articulate policymaking and alternative worker organising structures as a necessary pivot to fight new decentralised working conditions. They also use these fights to politicise their membership and to shift the public conversation to be around patriarchy and racialised capitalism in the care economy. This strengthens a grassroots feminist left. These organisers also articulate an internationalist and intersectional feminist politic, linking care workers across countries and communities and attempting to break down Global North–South divides.[34]

Global movements are also incorporating feminist social movement unionism by employing a more feminist and decolonial analysis in their organising in partnership with unions. La Via Campesina, a global social movement, collaborates with national trade unions in order to build a Gramscian worker–led united front.[35] While a more thorough exploration is outside the scope of this article, I argue that La Via's collaboration with unions and social movements across nations represents a form of feminist and decolonial social movement unionism that is being echoed in the Global North to unite differing leftisms.[36]

Workers, social movements, and peasant organisations are incorporated together in La Via's charter structure, but each group makes decisions locally in their own design, following horizontal feminist social movement praxis.[37] In India, La Via partners explicitly with unions in Kerala like the fishworker groups as well as more traditional party politics like Kerala's communist party.[38] Similarly, in Brazil, La Via has brought together the MST's landless peoples' struggle, MAB's indigenous resistance and land occupation against dams, activists and organisers in the favelas, as well as elements of worker organising.[39] La Via's

[34] Naila Kabeer, "Women Workers and the Politics of Claims Making: The Local and the Global."
[35] Harmony Goldberg, "Intro to Gramsci," *Minneapolis Study Group,* 2016.
[36] Martha Harnecker, "Forging a Union of the Party Left and the Social Left," *Studies in Political Economy* 69, no. 1 (2002): 137–155.
[37] Saturnino Borras, "La Via Campesina and its Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 8, no. 2–3 (2008): 258—289.
[38] Subir Sinha, "Transnationality and the Indian Fishworkers' Movement, 1960s–2000s," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 12, no. 2–3 (2012): 364–389.
[39] Saturnino Borras, "La Via Campesina and its Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform."

model of uniting social movements with trade unions has heavily influenced feminist social movement unionism in the Global North, as I explore in the following section.

TWRA: Just Transition and Feminist Social Movement Unionism from South to North

One group attempting to more deeply involve unions and workers in global leftist broad-based coalition and united front politics in the Global North is the Third World Roots Alliance (TWRA). While they have experienced both hindrances and success in organising with unions, the social movement unionism spaces that they have participated in have had the most success when centred around an explicitly feminist and decolonial practice. This argument derives from my primary research on their organising and movement work from 2018–2019.

The Third World Roots Alliance functions as an "alliance of alliances" bringing together four national networks in the US. These networks focus on a host of issues, including climate justice, indigenous sovereignty, global anti-neoliberalism organising, feminist ties between the Global North and Global South, housing justice, and land justice. The concept of Just Transition or Buen Vivir unites these four national networks and each of their respective hundreds of diverse grassroots member organisations. This concept includes a decolonial view of reshaping capitalism and reducing the emphasis on capitalist growth. It also includes the goal to move from an extractive economy of racialised capitalism to regenerative and indigenous modes of land stewardship. At the heart is balance with local ecology.[40] Each of these four alliances has membership structures of grassroots organising groups, community-based organisations, non-profits, indigenous tribal membership, and worker organising groups across the US and Canada, as well as strong ties with leftist movements in the Global South. These alliances – and their member groups – previously collaborated through the World Social Forum process and the Battle of Seattle struggle in the 1990s. Both these events centred an ethic of anti-neoliberal and often anarchist organising led by people of colour in the US with deep relationships with similar

[40] Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "The World Social Forum and the Global Left," *Politics and Society* 36, no. 2 (2008): 247–270.

movements in the Global South such as La Via Campesina, the MST, and the World March of Women.[41] The four alliances thus shared this ethic through shared history.

In order to position itself as a united front vehicle for leftist people of colour in the US, the Third World Roots Alliance pivoted in 2018 to a more explicit discussion of expansion. TWRA particularly debated how to bring in trade unions in order to expand its people of the colour-led working-class base. Until this time, each of the alliances collaborated with national trade unions, but only as partners. None of the four national alliances included local or nationwide trade unions as formal members. Some of the four alliances had workers centres as formal members. However, these centres largely operated outside of traditional worker and labour movement strategies. They employed worker collective models and prioritised horizontal decision-making in order to lift up workers who are undocumented migrants, women, queer people, and other subaltern people often excluded from formalised union membership.[42]

This conflicted with many formal US-wide trade unions who employed more bureaucratic and top-down structures. In discussing expansion, TWRA had to contend with what engaging explicitly with nation-wide trade unions, rather than local worker centres, would look like. TWRA hoped to retain its core methodology and focus on members of colour and Global South strategies, but also to bring trade unions into core leadership.

TWRA experimented working more closely with SEIU, one of the US's largest unions with members of service workers in the millions, and the Blue-Green Alliance, a body of unions in partnership with environmental groups, under the big tent structure of the Grassroots Climate Action Coalition (GCAC) from 2013–2019. GCAS's core decision-making committee of this body also included environmental and climate justice groups that had often had tension with the more grassroots new social movements like TWRA. These tensions arose from strategy disputes, arguments between adopting reformist strategies within the system versus the TWRA's more Marxist systems-change an and anti-capitalist analysis.

[41] Lauren Contorno, "Turtles & teamsters revival? Analyzing labor unions' environmental discourse from the 2014 People's Climate March," *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements* 10, no. 1–2 (2018): 117–148.
[42] Somini Sengupta, "Protestors Have their Day at California Climate Talks," *The New York Times,* 13 Sept 2018.

Groups like TWRA also felt that the environmental and climate justice groups, the "Big Greens" as TWRA organisers called them, had disproportionately white middle-class membership and leadership, and that these groups took funding away from working-class people of colour who were also fighting for environmental and climate justice. Under GCAS's coalitional structure, unions, activist groups, "Big Green" non-profits, grassroots new social movements, and indigenous communities were brought together for the common goal of Just Transition away from extraction and towards a regenerative economy.[43]

During the GCAS's week of action in 2018, rank and file union members did successfully mobilise alongside TWRA's people of colour cohort of environmental and climate justice activists. Union members also held forums with TWRA-allied tribal communities exploring models for Just Transition for workers, indigenous communities, and the environment.[44] TWRA also brought in the voices of global groups like MST and MAB to work with these unions to hold a thousands-strong blockade that temporarily shut down a corporate- and government-led, and fracking-funded, climate conference in 2018. Leaders and organisers from unions and the TWRA alike adopted language that targeted this climate conference as an example of false neoliberal solutions that skirted structural problems of climate change and extraction under racialised capitalism.[45]

While these examples of rank-and-file workers and union representatives working alongside TWRA's primarily Black and Brown activists and organisers exist, differences in organising structures between TWRA and the unions caused frequent frictions. While the TWRA hoped to expand its own structure to include trade unions, the differences in decision-making structures – more top-down for the unions and more member consultation oriented for TWRA – troubled the possibility of unity under a long-term network rather than a short-term tactical coalition.

[43] Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "The World Social Forum and the Global Left," *Politics and Society* 36, no. 2 (2008): 247–270.
[44] Lauren Contorno, "Turtles & teamsters revival? Analyzing labor unions' environmental discourse from the 2014 People's Climate March."
[45] Somini Sengupta, "Protestors Have their Day at California Climate Talks."

Differing member and leadership demographics compounded these difficulties. Rank-and-file union members were often also working-class Black, Indigenous, and people of colour like the membership of the TWRA. However, the unions' leadership were much more white, male, and often middle-class, whereas TWRA's members and leaders were largely female, nonbinary, trans, queer, and people of colour. This class, race, and gender disconnect sparked both interpersonal frictions as well as larger schisms around political ideology, where the TWRA's invocation of grassroots feminist leadership and indigenous knowledge often failed to persuade union leaders.

These frictions slowed down GCAC decision-making processes, caused interpersonal tensions between coalition organisers, and created difficulties in identifying long-term goals or establishing what would quantify a victory for the groups involved. This caused the groups to ultimately pursue differing tactics in how they messaged the Climate summit shutdown and caused the GCAC to fragment after the summit, mirroring the struggles described in Engerman's analysis of the Dia Sin Imigrantes in Los Angeles[46] and tensions between unions, party politics, and activist groups in South Africa.[47]

As these fractures expanded, TWRA focused its attention on expanding partnership instead with the National Domestic Workers Alliance – a union previously examined as uniquely feminist, grassroots, migrant-led, and in opposition to the model of traditional union structure. Both bodies shared alignment around holding deep relationships with Global South movement structures, respecting ancestral practices of organising that diaspora members held through migration, and understood their vision for systems change as explicitly feminist, anti-capitalist, and internationalist.

At the conclusion of this research, conversations between TWRA and NWDA were still ongoing. Organisers shared longstanding personal ties as well as belief in diasporic decolonial practice, feminist leadership, and centring working-class members of colour.

[46] Cassandra Engerman, "Social movement unionism in practice: organisational dimensions of union mobilisation in the Los Angeles immigrant rights marches."
[47] David C. Lier and Kristian Stokke, "Maximum working class unity? Challenges to local social movement unionism in Cape Town."

These synergies allowed for more productive conversation around expanding the structure of TWRA to involve the NWDA long-term.

In this case, uniting work between social movements and unions already deconstructing patriarchal norms in their organising opened space for common ground and for sustainable social movement unionism in the Global North. We can more broadly understand this as a stronger possibility for the hope for partnerships between unions, workers, and social movements where decolonial and feminist organising practices are adopted by both, and for the possibility of social movement unionism creating global transformative change.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have traced the large impact that informalisation and feminisation of labour has had on declining membership in traditional unions, and the way that alternate models of worker organising – particularly centring migrants, women, and people of colour – have bypassed traditional union bureaucracy and politics. Unions, in response to this diminishing power, have often increased collaboration with social movements, forming what academics have termed "social movement unionism."

However, within these union plus non-union coalitions, I explore the frequent tensions that arise about decision-making structure, goals, tactics, and long-term vision, as in the Dia Sin Imigrantes protests in LA, South African worker and party politics, housing organising in New York, and global climate justice organising for Just Transition by Third World Roots Alliance. I argue that tensions arise, particularly when unions work with social movements in top-down coalition structures. Conversely, tensions can be reduced when unions centre an explicitly internationalist, feminist, and decolonial analysis. More fruitful SMU also occurs when unions reduce internal hierarchy and patriarchy within their internal structures first – as in domestic worker and teacher organising – and apply these models in their relationships with social movements.

As seen in the examples of the NWDA and the TWRA's work alongside them, unions can re-galvanise global worker resistance by embracing more these feminist, horizontal, and

transparent organising and communication structures and applying these to united front structure within social movement unionism. In many cases, unions support transformative change best when they support the existing work of social movements, rather than imposing union structures of collective bargaining and top-down decision-making onto coalition spaces with non-profits, community organising groups, and social movements.

Particularly in the current wave of uprisings sweeping the globe, and the spread of worker walkouts under exploitative conditions from Bangladesh to France resulting from COVID-19 and global lockdowns, it remains to be seen how traditional unions and worker organising will embrace – or resist – transformative change. If more unions embrace alternative, feminist, horizontal and transparent structures both internally as well as with social movements in the streets, we may see a re-articulation of social movement unionism and worker solidarity as a key component for global systems change. In this feminist process of social movement unionism, the Global North will follow the Global South.

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GEET GA RAHE HAI AAJ HUM ...[48]

Exploring songs of protet and hope in the Women's Movement(s) in India

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ABSTRACT

Music has been an essential component of people's movements towards social transformation. In the West, antiracist and class struggles often inspired poetry and music which were used to communicate revolutionary ideas to the larger public and generate a political or social consciousness favourable to the ideologies of the movements. As a feminist scholar from India, I locate my interest in tracing the history of songs and poetry – of protest, of change, of invocation, of imagination, and of hope – that were sung and performed in the contemporary women's movement(s) that flourished from the 1970s in India. What I call the 'women's movement(s)' here are the myriad, multifaceted and multi-layered voices and strands of feminist political engagement in India that came together at particular moments towards a common goal, while at times also parted ways and spoke to each other from standpoints of difference. In tracing the genealogy and context of the songs that were composed, sung, performed, and re-written during these political engagements, I also hope to trace the 'flow' of the women's movement(s) – or perhaps certain aspects of it – and map the emergence and shifts of a feminist discourse in India as expressed through the songs and poetry it generated. What were the issues highlighted in these songs? What were the metaphors they expressed, and why were they relevant in the liberatory politics espoused by those who sung them? How did they change and evolve over time, and do their changes reflect the shifts in the discourse of the movement as well? These are some of the questions I shall explore in the paper.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sakhi Nitin Anita is a PhD student at the Centre for Gender Studies at SOAS. As a feminist researcher, she is interested in exploring and expanding the connections between gender, education, development, and feminist praxis. She is also passionate about feminist

[48] The first line of a popular song during the student movements of the 1970s in India. See Number 3 in List of Songs. Translates to: "Today, we sing a song…"

epistemologies, endeavouring to 'engender' knowledge from a space of creative tension with academia. Beyond her PhD, Sakhi hopes to reimagine the classroom beyond its four walls, as a transformative space which empowers young people to critically examine and creatively challenge the systems of oppression we live in and which live within us.

KEYWORDS:
social movements, women's movements, feminism, protest music, India

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to Prof Ilina Sen, who read it first in 2015, during a transformative course she taught on Women's Writings in India.

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INTRODUCTION: A STORY OF TWO SONGS

Growing up, my life was quite confusing. It was almost as if I inhabited two very distinct and often contradictory universes. One universe was that of my grandparents, with whom I spent the day while my parents were at work. At my grandparents', life was simple. I had a daily routine of school, homework, and TV. Every evening, my grandparents performed a worship ritual (*puja*) and lit a small oil-lamp in front of a shrine dedicated to their – for that time, *our* – Hindu gods. One of the Sanskrit prayers that my grandmother taught me to recite during this *puja* was:

शुभं करोति कल्याणं आरोग्यं धनसंपदा | शत्रुबुद्धि-विनाशाय दीपज्योती नमोऽस्तुते |	*Shubham karoti kalyanam, arogyam dhana sampada,* *Shatru buddhi vinashayam, deepa jyoti namostute.*

A rough translation of this would be, 'I pray to the divine light which brings prosperity, good health and well-being, and removes malice and evil thoughts.'[49] In this clunky English translation, the prayer feels strange, alienated from its familiarity and ubiquity in most Hindu Brahman households as the first prayer taught to children. And yet, my grandparents never explained its meaning to me, nor do I remember asking. It was just something we all did – a daily ritual offering of piety to God, along with lighting the lamp and incense and letting its fragrance waft through the house. It was, in its own way, quite fun.

And then there were the songs I learnt in my other universe. Every evening, after leaving from work, my parents would pick me up and bring me back to their home. The journey from my grandparents' home to my parents', on my dad's scooter, felt like traversing through a wormhole which would transport me into another universe altogether. This was

[49] This and all following translations of non-English songs and poetry are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

my parents' world – a world of Ideas and Ideals; a world that intrigued me, made me wonder, and to a certain extent, a world that discomfited me as well.

My parents worked in a nonprofit organization, Abhivyakti,[50] which they had founded together four years before I was born. It was their first offspring. Abhivyakti was a defining part of my life in this universe, and my most memorable associations with it are the workshops, trainings, and protests I attended with my parents. Sitting on my mother's lap, I learned to sing songs in Hindi, Urdu, and Marathi, with lyrics such as "*Le mashalein chal padein hai log mere gaon ke…*"[51] (Bearing torches, the people of my village are on the move) and "*Girenge zulm ke mahal, banenge fir navin ghar*"[52] (The palaces of oppression will fall one day, and new homesteads will take their place).

The lyrical simplicity of the songs made it easy to imagine and infuse meaning into their metaphors – the arrogant opulence of the *"zulm ke mahal"* (the palaces of oppression), the revolutionary light of the *"mashalein"* (torches), and the promise of a brave new world evoked by *"Phool hum naye khilaenge, taazgi ko dhundte hue"*[53] (We'll bloom new flowers, heralding a fresh start). These metaphors, and the imagery they evoked, encouraged me to inquire into the deeper meaning of the songs.

In their subtle way, these songs opened a pandora's box of questions about the world with which other aspects of my life never bothered to engage. Where I was taught to respect and adhere to normative ways of being and doing, these songs invited me to question and challenge them. In the late 1990s and at the turn of the millennium, as India, pushed towards a neoliberal economic agenda, the following verse portrayed a very different picture of the economy:

[50] Abhivyakti Media for Development is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Nashik, India. It has been active for over 30 years on issues related to alternative and community media, education, governance, and development. For more information, see www.abhivyakti.org.in
[51] *Le mashalein chal padein hai*. Hindi. Composed by Vallisingh Cheema
[52] *Tu zinda hai toh zindagi ki jeet par yakin kar*. Hindi. Composed by Shankar Shailendra
[53] *Geet ga rahe hai aaj hum*. Hindi. Composed and sung by the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini

वर्ल्ड बँक के द्वार पर खडा था एक इनसान हमने पुछा नाम तो बोला मै हूं हिंदुस्तान कटोरा लिये खडा था…[54]	*World Bank ke dwar par* *Khada tha ek insaan* *Humne poocha naam to bola* *Main hun Hindustan* *Katora liye khada tha…*	There was a man standing on the steps of the World Bank When asked his name, he said, "I am Hindustan." He was carrying a begging bowl…[55]

It is from an engagement with such songs during my childhood that I draw inspiration for this paper. As my academic focus is gender studies, I aim to explore the songs and poetry – of protest, of change, of invocation, of imagination, and of hope – that were sung and performed in the contemporary women's movement(s) that flourished from the 1970s in India. What I call the 'women's movement(s)' here are the myriad, multifaceted and multi-layered voices and strands of feminist political engagement in India that came together at particular moments towards a common goal, while at times also parted ways and spoke to each other from standpoints of difference.

I imagine the movement(s) as a river, a continuous flow that did not have a single origin source but rather grew out of the intermixing of various 'tributaries'; a flowing that took new directions as required; which at certain places broke into smaller streams that made fertile long-parched lands. The songs, I imagine, are like the fish in this river – flowing in and out of different currents, forming 'schools' at certain locations but swimming to other parts as well, responding to the 'flow' of the waters.

The fluidity of the movement(s), as well as the songs within them, do not allow for 'signposting' the music to specific historical periods in the women's movement(s). Nor can they be assigned to particular groups as they were popularised by different groups at different times. Rather, I hope to trace the 'flow' of the women's movement(s) – or perhaps certain aspects of it – and map the emergence and shifts of a feminist discourse in India as

[54] *Jageera sara rara*. Hindi. Composed and sung by the Disha Sanskritik Manch, Haryana
[55] This and further songs shall be presented in such a format: Lyrics in *Devanagri* (script for Hindi and Marathi) and English, followed by my own translation into English. More details about the song given in endnotes.

expressed through the songs and poetry it generated. What were the issues highlighted in these songs? What were the metaphors they expressed, and how and why were they relevant in the liberatory politics espoused by those who sung them? How did they change and evolve over time, and do their changes reflect the shifts in the discourse of the movement as well? These are some of the questions I shall endeavour to explore in the paper.

I acknowledge a limitation of my location, which is language. The songs I heard growing up were in Hindi, Urdu, and Marathi, and it is these songs I shall be studying in this paper. Here I also acknowledge another limitation – my caste location as a Brahman (privileged caste) which limited my exposure to Ambedkarite music. The music of the Ambedkarite movement and its music was an integral part of anticaste articulations and the Dalit[56] movement, which played a distinct historical role, as Sharmila Rege argues, in the emergence of a 'Dalit counterpublic' (Rege 2008). My lack of knowledge of these songs limits me from engaging with them critically, yet I will attempt to locate them within Dalit feminist voices that arose as a discursive challenge to the feminist 'mainstream' in India. Finally, I want to reemphasise that it is extremely difficult to put certain songs into fixed categories as they were sung, in different contexts, by various groups.

Historical Background: Sing a Song of Revolution

Music has been an essential component of many movements for social transformation. R. Serge Denisoff (1968) has explored in depth the role of 'propaganda' songs, used "to communicate an idea, a concept, or a total ideology to the listener" and to generate a "political or social consciousness favourable to the position of the movement." (229). The Left movement has used such songs performed in the folk idiom as a "means of creating class consciousness" (ibid.) in the people. Antiracist movements too were enriched by 'Negro folk music', as it was called by Lawrence Gellert, a white music collector who documented and collected songs of the Black protest tradition from the 1920s to 1940s (Garabedian 2005). Gellert (1969) saw Black folk music as propaganda, stating that he "wasn't

[56] Dalit', meaning 'downtrodden', is a self-referential term of identification and belonging as well as political activism, used by members of the formerly 'untouchable' castes in India.

interested in just music for its own sake, but rather as a weapon in the service of Black freedom." (quoted in Garabedian 2005, 182)

In India, political music can trace a historical lineage to the Bhakti tradition, which arose in different parts of South Asia during the sixth century (Bhagwat 1995). The Bhakti movement established a 'philosophy of devotion' through which anyone regardless of their social positioning could experience a direct connection to god, and which also challenged the established hegemonic structure and ideology of religion at that time. Vidyut Bhagwat has written about women saints from the 13th to the 18th century AD who used the oral medium of devotional songs (such as *ovi* and *abhanga* in Maharashtra) as an "imminent critique of patriarchal oppression" (ibid., 25). Sharmila Rege also locates a caste critique in songs which were expressed by women in the 'private sphere', such as the *ovi* (song of the grinding stone) and *palna* (song of the cradle) which adopted "overtly political themes of a caste society." (Rege 2008, 17).

Music was a rallying force in the nationalist movement for independence from colonial rule. The nationalist movement produced much poetry and music that furthered its rhetoric of patriotic devotion to the imagined 'motherland'. We have examples of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhaya's '*Vande mataram*' (I salute thee, mother) and VD Savarkar's "*Ne majasi ne parat matrubhumila, sagara pran talmalala*" (Take me back to my motherland, oh ocean, I pine for her) evoking anguished sentiments for the imagined nation as a mother who needed to be saved from the clutches of 'outsiders'. While the poetry of the nationalist movement is a separate area of inquiry, beyond the scope of this paper, it offers an insight into the legacy of music and its enduring connection to social and political movements.

Part I: We Shall Overcome

Denisoff, in his analysis of 'propaganda' songs – songs of protest and persuasion – presents an overview of their functions within a social movement. These are six: 1. To arouse and solicit support for a cause, 2. To reinforce the value system of the individuals within the movement, 3. To create cohesion and solidarity, 4. To recruit individuals to join the movement, 5. To propose solutions and means of achieving a desired goal, and finally, 6. To

draw attention to a problem situation or discontent, generally by invoking the sentiments of the people. (Denisoff 1968, 229). These functions, he further states, are achieved by the employment of two distinct types of propaganda songs – magnetic songs and rhetorical songs. Rhetorical songs use a provocative and polemic style to describe a particular social condition and appeal to people's emotions. They often pose a challenge to the existing institutional structures but do not propose any call for action or "offer any ideological or organisational solutions, such as affiliating with a particular movement." (ibid., 231). Magnetic songs, on the other hand, appeal to the audience with a view to convert them into a particular ideology or to follow a movement. In the Left movements, they are operationalised to create a political consciousness of class. Denisoff states further that:

> The magnetic song contains the three elements of class consciousness: awareness of class position, differentiation from others as indicated in the content of the songs, and finally, the desire or willingness to join a movement as suggested in the lyrics of the propaganda song. (ibid.)

While Denisoff presents an interesting framework for analysing songs from a functional perspective, his analysis is limited to the context of leftist folk songs from the United States. Deploying this frame to study songs of protest in India, I find that the distinction between magnetic and rhetorical songs is not quite as fixed. The closest examples of rhetorical songs are Adam Gondvi's '*Sau me sattar aadmi*' and Sahir Ludhyanvi's '*Woh subah kabhi to ayegi*'. They use powerful and provocative metaphors to conjure a picture of India that has failed to live up to the promise of independence. It is a nation fraught with inequality, where human dignity is trampled upon daily. Is such a country truly free?

सौ में सत्तर आदमी फिलहाल जब नाशाद है दिल पे रखकर हाथ कहिये देश क्या आजाद है? कोठियों से मुल्क के मेयार को मत आंकिये असली हिंदुस्तान तो फुटपाथ पर आबाद है।[57]	*Sau mein sattar aadmi* *Filhal jab nashad hain* *Dil pe rakh kar hath kahiye* *Desh kya aazad hai?* *Kothiyon se mulk ki* *Mayyar ko mat aankiye* *Asli Hindustan to* *Footpath par aabad hai.*	When seventy of every hundred Indians are troubled Can you say from your heart that our country is free? Do not measure the progress of this nation by its palaces, You will find the real 'Hindustan' living on the sidewalks.
माना कि अभी तेरे मेरे अरमानो की कीमत कुछ भी नहीं मिट्टी का भी है कुछ मोल मगर इन्सानों की कीमत कुछ भी नहीं इन्सानों की इज्जत जब झूठे सिक्कों में न तोली जायेगी वो सुबह कभी तो आयेगी।[58]	*Mana ki abhi tere mere Armaanon ki keemat kuch bhi nahi* *Mitti ka bhi hai kuch mol magar Insaanon ki keemat kuch bhi nahi* *Insaanon ki izzat jab jhoote Sikkon mein na toli jayegi* *Woh subah kabhi to aayegi…*	The world may not value your dreams, or mine In this world, where even dirt has value But people do not, There will come a dawn, someday When people's dignity is not measured In false coin.

I call these songs rhetorical because they do not address solutions or ideological commitments that need to be made in order to transform the status quo. The appeal to an emergence of a 'new dawn', while provocative, does not discuss the means of achieving it. In contrast, songs popularised by socialist groups such as the Rashtriya Seva Dal in the 1970s,

[57] *Sau me sattar aadmi*. Hindi. Composed by Adam Gondvi
[58] *Woh subah kabhi to ayegi*. Hindi. Composed by Sahir Ludhyanvi

heavily emphasize '*sangharsh'* or revolutionary struggle as the only means to reach the desired goal:

इसलिए राह संघर्ष की हम चुनें ज़िन्दगी आँसुओं से नहाई न हो[59]	*Isliye raah sangharsh ki* *hum chune* *Zindagi asuon se nahai na ho*	We choose this path of resistance so that Our lives will not be drenched in tears

The magnetic appeal of these songs lies in their rousing call to join the movement, to come together and harness the power of solidarity and overthrow the prevailing systems of oppression. However, challenging Denisoff's (1968) categorisation, these songs also encompass rhetorical elements, especially in their provocative attempts to arouse empathy for marginalised and powerless groups. The revolutionary songs of this time are rooted in the experiences and struggles of the marginalised – poor peasants, workers, landless labourers, oppressed castes, and tribal people – and yet they reflect a spirit of buoyancy, a hope that with this new political consciousness, the revolution will not be too far behind:

रुके न जो, झुके न जो, दबे न जो, मिटे न जो, हम वो इन्कलाब है जुल्म का जवाब है हर शहीद, हर गरीब का हम ही तो ख्वाब है![60]	*Ruke na jo, jhuke na jo,* *dabe na jo, mite na jo,* *Hum woh inqalab hai,* *zulm ka jawab hai,* *Har shahid, har gareeb ka hum* *hi to khwab hai!*	We are the revolution that will not stop, not cease, not bow down, Not be trampled upon or destroyed

[59] *Isliye raah sangharsh ki hum chune*. Hindi. Composed during the Narmada Bachav Andolan
[60] *Ruke na jo, jhuke na jo*. Hindi. Composed during the Bihar Sampoorna Kranti Revolution

		We are the hope of the poor, the martyrs!
हमारे कारवां को मंज़िलों का इन्तज़ार है, यह आंधियों, ये बिजलियों की पीठ पर सवार है, तू आ कदम मिला के चल, चलेंगे एकसाथ हम अगर कहीं है स्वर्ग तो उतार ला ज़मीन पर! तू ज़िन्दा है तो ज़िन्दगी की जीत में यकीन कर![61]	*Humare caravan ko manzilon ka intezaar hai* *Yeh andhiyon yeh bijliyon ki peeth par sawar hai* *Tu aa kadam mila ke chal, chalenge ek saath hum* *Agar kahin hai swarg to utar la zameen par* *Tu zinda hai to zindagi ki jeet par yakeen kar!*	Our journey is nearing its destination Riding this wave, this hurricane of revolution Come join us, we'll walk hand-in-hand And if there is a heaven somewhere, We will bring it down upon the earth. You are alive, so believe in life's victory!

PART II: BREAKING THE SHACKLES

The songs above were popularised by several student uprisings and youth movements or '*chalval*' that were emerging in India in the 1970s. These movements were inspired by leftist

[61] *Tu zinda hai toh zindagi ki jeet par yakin kar*. Hindi. Composed by Shankar Shailendra

ideology, but they were also distancing themselves from traditional Marxism. Vidyut Bhagwat (1995) recounts her experiences of participating in the youth movements:

> The young radicals from all quarters were throwing off the shackles of dogmatic versions of Marxism, democratic socialism, and for that matter even liberalism. They were adopting new conceptual frameworks and experimenting with new strategies of action. Problems of the various oppressed sections of the Indian society – the tribals, cultural and religious minorities, slum-dwellers, landless labourers, the non-organised sections of the toiling masses, etc – were highlighted and discussed in depth. (24)

It is out of this space of dissent and dialogue that the first women's groups emerged in cities, comprising mainly of middle-class, educated women (Kumar 1989). In Maharashtra, such autonomous groups began to form in Mumbai and Pune and shared an umbilical (even if reluctant) bond with leftist and socialist groups. The context for their emergence, as articulated by Indu Agnihorti and Veena Mazumdar (1995), was the growing disenchantment with the post-Independent state, which had failed in the provision of rights postulated by the Constitution. Women in these groups demanding socioeconomic and political mobility felt constricted by the "long-standing patriarchal social hierarchy" (ibid., 1869) of the Indian state.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Mathura rape case became the "rallying point" (ibid., 1870) for the women's movement and gave it visibility. Women's groups organized protests and campaigns against gender-based violence and demanded amendments to the law. Other forms of violence were also highlighted: violence in the personal sphere such as dowry, wife-battering and sex-selective abortion; state-sponsored violation of women's bodies through population policies, forced sterilizations and unsafe drug trials; political violence wherein women's bodies became battlegrounds for religious and communal conflicts; and government complicity in the atrocities done to women by the armed forces in the conflict-ridden AFSPA areas (McDuie-Ra 2012).

The women's movement also invoked the second-wave feminist slogan of 'the personal is political' in its analysis of structural roots of women's oppression and violation. This

analysis got shaped into the songs which appealed to women to 'break the prisons' of patriarchy, to free themselves from the bonds of domesticity and servitude that had shackled them for centuries:

इरादे कर बुलंद अब रहना शुरू करती तो अच्छा था। तू सहना छोड़ कर कहना शुरू करती तो अच्छा था। सदा औरों को खुश रखना बहुत ही खूब है लेकिन खुशी थोड़ी तू अपने को भी दे पाती तो अच्छा था।[62]	*Irade kar buland ab rehna* *shuru karti toh accha tha* *Tu sehna chhod kar kehna* *shuru karti toh accha tha* *Sada auron ko khush rakhna* *bahut hi khoob hai lekin* *Khushi thodi tu apne ko bhi de pati toh accha tha.*[63]	I wish you could strengthen your resolves And instead of suffering silently, speak out It is noble to nurture another's happiness, but I wish you could keep some happiness for yourself too.
दरिया की कसम मौजों की कसम यह ताना बना बदलेगा तू खुद को बदल तू खुद को बदल तब ही तो जमाना बदलेगा[64]	*Dariya ki kasam,* *maujon ki kasam* *Ye taana –baana badalega* *Tu khud ko badal,* *tu khud ko badal,* *Tab hi to zamana badlega*	The seas promise, the waves promise This warp and weft of our lives will change But you need to change yourself Only that will change the world.
या देशाच्या बायांना आया बहिणींना सांगाया जायचं हाय गं एकी करून आणि लढा पुकारून ह्यो तुरुंग फोडायचा हाय गं[65]	*Ya deshanchya bayanna* *aya bahininna* *sangaya jayache hai ga* *Eki karun ani ladha pukarun* *ho turunga fodayache hai ga*	We appeal to all women – sisters, mothers, daughters of this country – Let's unite and raise our voices – to break the prisons confining us!

[62] *Irade kar buland*. Urdu. Composed by the Pakistan Women's Movement. Adopted into Hindi by Kamla Bhasin
[63] This song is based on an Urdu *ghazal* that was initially sung in the Pakistani women's movement. It was rewritten for the Indian women's movement by Kamala Bhasin
[64] *Dariya ki kasam*. Hindi. Composed for the Stree Utsav, 1981
[65] *Ya deshanchya bayanna*. Marathi. Composed by Madhav Chavan

Many songs also had an uplifting spirit, evoking a picture of women who had already broken their shackles and were joining the movement. It beckoned to the possibility of women determining life on their own terms, as well as the role they could play in effecting a larger change in society:

तोड़ तोड़ के बंधनों को देखो बहने आयी हैं ओ देखो लोगों, देखो बहने आयी हैं आएगी, ज़ुल्म मिटाएंगी , वह तो नया ज़माना लाएंगी[66] तारीकी को तोड़ेंगी वह खामोशी को तोड़ेंगी हाँ मेरी बहने अब दर को पीछे छोड़ेंगी निडर, आज़ाद हो जाएंगी, वह तो नया ज़माना लाएंगी	*Tod tod ke bandhano ko* *dekho behne aayi hai* *O dekho logo, dekho* *behene aayi hai* *Ayegi, zurm mitaegi, woh* *toh naya zamana layegi…* *Tariki ko todengi woh* *khamoshi ko todengi* *Haan meri behne* *ab dar ko peeche* *chhodengi* *Nidar, azad ho jayengi,* *woh toh naya zamana* *layegi…*	Look, our sisters have come, breaking their fetters Look everyone, our sisters have come They're here, now they will end all injustice And herald a new world They'll blot out darkness, they'll smother silence Yes, my sisters will cast away their fear Fearless and free, they will herald a new world!
पर लगा लिए है हमने अब पिंजरों में कौन बैठेगा? जब तोड़ दी है ज़ंजीरें तोह कामयाब हो जायेंगे	*Par laga liye hai humne* *Ab pinjaron mein kaun baithega?* *Jab tod di hai zanjeerein* *Toh kamyaab ho jayenge* *Zara sun lo!*	Now that we have wings Why should we stay in cages anymore? Now that we have broken our chains We are certain of victory Do you hear us?

[66] *Tod tod ke bandhano ko*. Hindi. Composed by Kamla Bhasin

जरा सुन लो!⁶⁷		
बदलत आहे जग हे सारे नवा जमाना घडे ग बदल जागा सांग तू ही आता टाक एक पाऊल पुढे ग!⁶⁸	*Badlat aahe jag he saare* *nava zamana ghade ga* *Badal jaga sanga tu hi aata* *tak ek paul pudhe ga…*	The world is a-changing, a new milieu takes shape Women, take a step forward, and change with the world…

PART III: SPEAKING OUT

As the movement progressed, specific issues were picked up, which found expression in songs as well as street-plays performed by *kalapathaks* (troupes of folk artistes-activists) on gender and women's rights. The 'Stree Mukti Sanghatna' (SMS) was a leading group in Maharashtra to launch various *kalapathaks* that took up questions of discrimination and violence, sex-selective abortion, and dowry to various corners of the state through the mediums of plays and songs. In 1983, the SMS wrote '*Mulagi zali ho!*'[69] (A girl is born!), a musical satire about the life of a woman in a patriarchal society. It was a huge success and has more than 3000 performances to date.

[67] *Par laga liye hai humne*. Hindi. Composed by Kamla Bhasin
[68] *Badlat aahe jag he saare*. Marathi. Composed by Yashwant Lokhande
[69] See http://streemuktisanghatana.org/programs/cultural-troupe/ for more details

One of the SMS' songs, '*Hunda nako ga bai*' (I don't want a dowry, dear), part of another musical by the same name, is a sharp satire on the issue of dowry. By detailing the 'gifts' demanded by the groom's family upon marriage, it reveals that despite a strong and punitive anti-dowry law in India, the custom of demanding dowry persists in various subtle and not-so-subtle ways, taking on a more material manifestation in an increasingly neoliberal and consumerist society:

हुंडा नको ग बाई, मला हुंडा नको ग बाई... माझ्या मुलाचा रुबाब मोठा, नाही पैश्यांचा आम्हा तोटा करा थाटात साखरपुडा, ठेवा जावयाचा मान तेवढा द्या अंगठी शर्ट-पीस बाई, पण मला हुंडा नको ग बाई... ... द्या स्टीलच्या भांड्यांचा सेट, सोफा सेट आणि कपाट द्या फ्रिज किंवा कुकर बाई, पण मला हुंडा नको ग बाई... (हिला सगळंच हवं ग बाई, पण हुंडा नको ग बाई!)[70]	*Hunda nako ga bai, mala* *hunda nako ga bai* *Mazhya mulacha rubab* *motha, nahi paishyancha* *amha tota* *Kara thatat sakharpuda,* *theva javayacha maan* *tevhada* *Dya angthi, shirt-piece bai,* *pan mala hunda nako ga bai* *...* *Dya steelchya bhandyancha* *set, sofa set ani kapaat* *Dya fridge kinva cooker bai,* *pan mala hunda nako ga bai* *(Hila saglach hava ga bai,* *pan hunda nako ga bai!)*	I don't want any dowry, dear... My son is very virtuous; we have more than enough money I only expect a lavish engagement ceremony And for my son a gold ring, new clothes and other gifts But no dowry, of course! ... I want steel utensils, a sofa-set and cupboard, A refrigerator or rice cooker will also do, but I'm not asking for a dowry! (She wants everything

[70] *Hunda nako ga bai*. Marathi. Composed by the Stree Mukti Sanghatna

		but a 'dowry'!)

Another issue connected to women's marital lives was their husbands' alcohol addiction. Men's alcoholism is connected to increased domestic violence and intimate partner violence. A group engaged in anti-alcohol campaigning in Shahada, Maharashtra wrote the song '*Bai mazya kachachya barnit'* (The Woman in My Bottle), imagining alcohol as the '*savat'* (mistress) who had swayed the husband and who needed to be kicked out of the house.

बाई माझ्या काचंच्या बरणीत बाईला वतली गल्लासात ग बाईला लाविली तोंडाला ग … बाईने इस्कोट ग केला, इस्कोट ग केला अशी बाई लागली कीड सौंसारा ग बाई लागली कीड सौंसारा[71]	*Bai mazhya kachachya barnit,* *Bai la vatali gallasat* *Bai la lavili tondala ga* *…* *Bai ne iskot ga kela,* *iskot ga kela* *Ashi bai lagali keed saunsara ga bai lagali keed saunsara*	This Woman is in my glass bottle He pours Woman into the glass He puts Woman to his lips … Woman has burned my house down This Woman is an infestation in my marriage…

The song uses an interesting metaphor of the 'mistress' who lures a woman's husband away, makes him spend all his money on her, and brings discord into the conjugal life. This 'bad' woman needs not only to be kicked out but also killed and buried. While playing on the patriarchal binary of the wife/mistress as the 'good' versus 'bad' woman, the song nevertheless managed to become quite popular and resonated with many rural women suffering due to their husband's addictions.

In the 1990s, as the movement space began to be claimed by NGOs and other development bodies, the pitch of the songs too underwent some changes. In contrast to the broad, magnetic appeals of 'changing the world' and 'creating a new tomorrow', the songs in the 1990s talk about concrete, achievable goals for women. Included in these is the political representation of women, which was picked up by women's rights groups with great fervour after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1993 that allotted a quota of 33% seats in local governance bodies to women. Songs about women's representation in governance ranged from the rhetorical '*Vichara aaplya manala'* to the magnetic *'Aata vidhansabhet jayacha'*:

[71] *Bai mazhya kachachya barnit*. Marathi. Composed by the Shahada Andolan

विचारा आपल्या मनाला – गावाच्या पाण्यावर बाईचा अधिकार किती? गावाच्या संपत्तीत बाईचा वाटा किती? पंच बाई आल्या म्हणून अविश्वास ठराव किती? ३३% आरक्षण असल्यामुळे पुरुष सत्ताधाऱ्यांची ओरड किती?[72]	*Vichara aaplya manala* *Gavachya panyavar* *baicha adhikar kiti?* *Gavachya sampattit* *baicha vata kiti?* *Vichara aaplya manala* *Panch bai aalya mhanun* *avishvas tharav kiti?* *Tehtees take arakshan* *aalyamule* *Purush sattadharyachi* *orad kiti?*	Ask yourself – How many women can claim a right To the village water sources? What is their share in the village assets? Ask yourself – How many 'No Confidence motions' are passed when A woman claims the elected chair? How much anger and opposition from men threatened by the 33% reservation for women?
आता विधानसभेत जायचं अन लोकसभेतही जायचं सत्तेत सामील होऊन आता राज्य करायला शिकायचं!**[73]**	*Ata vidhansabhet jayacha* *an loksabhet hi jayacha* *Sattet samil houni ata* *raja karayla shikaycha!*	Now our march is towards the parliament and state assemblies We are getting our share in the power And we shall learn how to govern!

PART IV: DIFFERENT WOMEN

[72] *Vichara aaplya manala*. Marathi. Composed by the Mahila Rajsatta Andolan
[73] *Ata vidhansabhet jayacha*. Marathi. Composed by Jyoti Mhapsekar

Another shift in the women's movement during the 1990s was marked by the emergence of the voices of Dalit women that challenged the inherent Brahmanism of the autonomous women's movement. It poised itself against what Sharmila Rege (1998) describes as the "universalization of what was, in reality, the middle class, upper-caste women's experience." (43). The women's movement so far had relied upon personal experience, especially centred on sexuality, as the epistemological foundation of its anti-patriarchy stand. In doing this, it failed to pursue a deeper analysis of patriarchy as being located in and expressed through other intersecting identities – specifically through caste. Thus, Rege concludes, a "feminist politics centring on the women of the most marginalized communities could not emerge." (ibid.). In the 1990s, certain songs reflect the emerging voices and awakening consciousness of women who spoke from locations of difference:

रेशमाच्या साड्या नेसून बंगल्यात तुम्ही राहणार तुम्हाला दुखं कसं कळणार?[74]	*Reshmachya sadya nesun banglyat tumhi rahnar,* *Tumhala dukkha kasa kalnar?*	You wear silk sarees and stay in palatial homes What do you know of sorrow?

These songs may be said to come from what Rege (1998) articulates as the 'Dalit standpoint'. The songs are similar in their expression to Black women's songs of protest (Sharp 1992), which addressed 'sympathetic' White women:

They come up to a miner's wife, say "I know how you feel"
These dirty, rich aristocrats who never missed a meal
They never spent a lonely night, or heard their children cry
Or had to tell their children why daddy had to die
(Sarah Gunnings, 'Hello, Coal Miner')

The miners' songs of protest remind me of another powerful and provocative expression of caste consciousness in the song '*Hadachi kada'*:

[74] *Reshmachya sadya nesun*. Marathi. Composer not known

कागद आम्ही बनवला, त्यावर तू धर्मग्रंथ लिवला विणली फुलांची परडी, अन देव तू पुजला अस्पृश्यांची परडी वापरून देव नाय बाटला का? हो दादा रं ... तवा तू कसं इचारलं नाय की आमची जात कंची हाय नी आमचा धर्म कंचा हाय!**[75]**	*Kagad amhi banavla,* *tyavar tu dharmagrath livla* *Vinli phulanchi pardi,* *an dev tu pujala* *Dada, dev tu pujala* *Asprushyanchi pardi vaaprun* *dev nay baatla ka?* *Ho dada ra ...* *Tava tu kasa icharla nay,* *Ki amchi jaat kanchi hai* *Ni amcha dharma kancha hai?*	Oh, big brother... Why did you not care about our caste, our religion When we did all your work? We made the paper; you wrote your scriptures on it We wove flower- baskets; you used them in your worship Tell us, big brother How was God not polluted by the baskets we wove?

This song offers a sharp critique of the reality of caste domination that pervades the very core of Indian society. It exposes the paradox of the purity/pollution rhetoric that undergirds the hegemonic system of caste, which accords the Brahmans and other 'upper' castes power and legitimacy through the notion of religious purity, while at the same time appropriating the labour of the 'polluted' castes in the maintenance this supposed 'purity' of the upper castes.

[75] *Hadachi kada*. Original song composed by Cherabanda Raju. Translated into Marathi by Avhan Natya Manch

CONCLUSION: THIS SONG HAS NO END

These songs – of which I have managed to capture only a few here – are a rich legacy of counterhegemonic thought, written in a simple, alliterative but provocative style; a way to appeal to a mass audience. They constitute a treasure-trove of memories – They do not only evoke nostalgia but also are what Rege (2008, 20) terms "critical memory markers" which enable us to hold on to the energy and vibrancy generated in the new social movements in India. Perhaps, these songs also help to sustain our politics (and preserve our sanity!) in a political climate that is becoming increasingly antithetical to the goals of equality, freedom, and social justice.

These songs – of protest, largely, but also of celebration and of hope – are part of an oral tradition of music in India. They have not been recorded, except by certain NGOs or activist groups which have recorded them in cassettes and CDs (although not so much on the internet) and compiled in small booklets. In the contemporary milieu, they appear to fade out as the spaces of dissent are snuffed into nothingness. Not only are they fading, but they are actively being strangled into silence by an openly paranoid and fascist regime occupying the central government. Folk-troupes or *shahirs* (folk-singers) who use these songs in their performances, such as the Kabir Kala Manch – a cultural troupe espousing Dalit and working-class affiliations – are arrested under the draconian UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) for having 'Naxalite' connections.[76]

In such a bleak scenario, it makes me wonder if the messages in most of these songs – of unity, solidarity, and hope that a new, better world is possible – have lost their punch. Is such a world ever possible? Or does it only exist in dreams and empty rhetoric? But perhaps, for our particular milieu, in our very fraught, fragile, reaching-the-edge-of-hope world, the appeals made by the songs are more relevant than ever. They require an urgent revisiting, an engagement to reinvigorate and reimagine their invocations of solidarity and hope. I conclude this paper with a final song – a love-ballad for and about women, and what this coming-together in the movement(s) has meant for us:

[76] See https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/mockery-being-made-of-right-to-privacy/article29847089.ece for more details

तुम्हारा साथ मिलने से एहसास–ए–कुव्वत आया है नयी दुनिया बनाने का जूनून फिर हम पे छाया है | कुछ तनहा–तनहा मैं थी कुछ तन्हाई तुम में थी दोनों में थी लाचारी, दोनों थी थक के हरी इजहारे राज़ करने से घुटन को कुछ घटाया है | हम–ख्याल है जैम हम–तुम हमसफ़र भी बन जायें चाहे जैसे हो मौसम इक दूजे को अपनायें इन्ही सपनों के रंगों ने हमें फिर गुदगुदाया है |[11]	*Tumhara saath milne se,* *ehsaas –e –kuvvat aaya hai* *Nayi duniya banane ka,* *junoon phir hum pe chhaya hai.* *Kuch tanha –tanha main thi,* *kuch tanhai tum mein thi* *Dono mein thi laachari,* *dono thi thak ke haari* *Izhaar –e –raaz karne se,* *ghutan ko kuch ghataya hai.* *Hum –khyal hai jab hum tum,* *humsafar bhi ban jaaye* *Chaahe jaise ho mausam,* *ik dooje ko apnaye* *Inhi sapnon ke rango ne,* *humein fir gugudaya hai.*	Having you with me, I feel emboldened Impassioned to create A new world with you I was isolated, alone. So were you Both of us were helpless, Tired and weary After sharing my heart's secrets with you, I do not feel suffocated any more Our dreams are similar, Let us become fellow travelers Promise to accept each other, come what may Together, our dreams will become rosier Reinvigorating, refreshing, rejuvenating us…)

[11] *Tumhara saath milne se*. Urdu. Composed by Kamla Bhasin

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SOUNDS FROM A SILENCED DIVINITY

The Interaction of Caste with Music in the Theyyam Rituals of Kerala

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ABSTRACT

The ritual art form popularly known as 'Theyyam' occurs annually in the northern regions of the South Indian state of Kerala. The ritual is orchestrated and demonstrated by Dalit communities, who were formerly treated as untouchables throughout the history of the subcontinent. The impact of caste dynamics on this form of religious expression is explored in this work through ethnomusicological analyses, wherein the musical elements of Theyyam are compared to forms of music practised by upper-caste communities in the same region. This work aims to highlight how knowledge, in essence, is a product of social hierarchy and forms of expressions birthed from knowledge are subtle representations of social discrepancy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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KEYWORD:

Theyyam, ritual, caste, music, information, transmission.

INTRODUCTION

'Theyyam' is a term used to refer to a ritual that occurs in the Kolathunadu area of the Indian state of Kerala, roughly ranging from Kasargod to Kannur. The term 'Theyyam' is colloquially used for both the ritual and the channelled deity, although the word '*Theyāṭṭam*' is preferred by the performing communities. What makes this ritual an important subject for study is the fact that out of roughly 400 different variants of this ritual, every single occurrence is orchestrated by Dalit communities. Dalit (Sanskrit for 'broken') communities, across the Indian subcontinent, have been treated as untouchables within the rubric of the Indian caste-system for millennia and even today, many bear the brunt of this age-old socio-cultural conditioning. Practices revolving around untouchability in the state of Kerala, while rampant until the early 20th Century, have undergone reformation through the efforts of personalities such as Sri Narayana Guru, B.R. Ambedkar, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, and other such personalities who worked toward the dissolution of caste-induced oppression. Albeit casteism lies prevalent in the attitudes and mores of contemporary Kerala, even though it is widely emphasised in the socio-political arena that the state and culture have managed to do away with casteism. This work intends to analyse the extent to which casteism influences the socio-political dynamics of Kerala, if it does at all, through ethnomusicological analyses.

If one were to view the occurrence that is Theyyam as a form of ritualised theatre, a dissection of different art forms that coalesce to form Theyyam – painting, craftsmanship, narration/singing, music, dance and, showmanship become apparent to the viewer. Although, by no means is Theyyam to be viewed simply as an "art form' in the modern understanding of that term, as the performers and the viewers ascribe sacredness to the act as well as the setting. It is undeniably the case with indigenous and historical forms of art in India and many other parts of the globe – art and religion often work in a confluent manner, whereas the interactions of religion and politics form overarching sectarian patterns of interaction. The focus of this study is the music that contributes to the *Theyāṭṭam,* colloquially known as '*vādyam*', and the similarities it shares with the music performed by upper-caste temple music ensembles (such as the *Periya Mēḷam*). This is done with the

intention of understanding how art and politics interact through the medium of religion in the North Malabar area of Kerala. This comparison is studied in terms of instruments, performance techniques, and theoretical knowledge. The aim, therefore, is to demonstrate how in spite of these shared elements, perceptions and practices stemming from the caste system have contrastingly affected the social privileges resulting from the cultural understandings of these art forms as music and the communal identities of the performers.

Research Background

Theyyam is performed predominantly by three castes in and around the town of Payannur – the Vannan, the Velan, and the Malayan, although tradition indicates that there are nine castes that contribute to this performative oral tradition. All of the aforementioned castes have a history that is rooted in untouchability and casteism. As of today, they are recognised as Scheduled Castes by the Government of India. What is interesting to note is that even while donning the garb of a god, a Brahmin individual is still not supposed to come into physical contact with the Theyyam. In the district of Kannur, *mēḷam* as a form of music is performed exclusively by people from the Mārār caste, who come under the subdivision of 'Ambalavasis' – upper caste communities who were historically skilled labourers within the temple compound.

Theyyam, outside of the local art and academia circles of Kerala, is a relatively unscrutinised subject. This paucity of available data, ubiquitous in anthropological, archaeological, and historical circles of Western academia owes itself to the fact that much of the research done regarding this subject is in Malayalam, the native tongue of Kerala. Even while going through the Malayalam literary compendiums on Theyyam, one can recognise them as attempts at creating organised lists of the different kinds of Theyyams that exist, often combined with oral and culture–historical narrative elements. Since the analyses being done here pertains to the musical elements in *Kaḷiāṭṭam* (the colloquial term for Theyyam performances, which literally translates to "dance performance'), these works will not be considered here as they are not relevant within the scope of this research.

Most works on the subject of Theyyam are situated within larger narratives of South Indian history. Kurup[78] provides a brief history of Theyyam and a rough account of the ritual performance. Others, such as Damodaran[79] and Pereira,[80] have analysed Theyyam in a historical/anthropological light and have also emphasised on its importance in the task of creating a more inclusive historical narrative of the North Malabar region.

Theyyam rituals are conducted over a particular season every year, which ranges roughly from November to May. Locations of Theyyam performances are known via word of mouth, which happens to travel swiftly to adjoining areas. The nature of these rituals contradicts the Puranic Hindu idea of 'sacred' as they are being performed by untouchable communities, which essentially ruptures the rules of the caste system. Additionally, ritual elements such as blood sacrifices, consumption of meat, and other factors contribute to this apparent contradiction. The ritual is performed by communities who have historically been treated as untouchables, continuing into the modern era. It has been claimed that various early elements of these folk rituals date back to the Neolithic and Chalcolithic eras[81] and were incorporated and tailored to fit the Brahmanical religion[82] through the process of Sanskritization. The chronological map pertaining to the evolution of this ritual remains a matter that requires further effort, but given the Tantric aura surrounding the rites and the performance (such as the offering of 'impure substances' such as blood and meat) as well as the presence of forms of arts that seem to echo a common beginning (such as the Bhuta Kola rituals from the Tulu region of South Karnataka and Mudiyettu rituals that occur further down south in Kerala) suggest a chronology that stretches back to great antiquity within and adjoining the studied region.

The performance requires the *Kōlakāran* (the man who is to embody the Theyyam) to observe a lifestyle of abstinence starting a fortnight before the main ritual. The main ritual

[78] Kurup, "Teyyam – A Vanishing Ritual Dance of Kerala," 125 – 138.
[79] M.P. Damodaran, "Theyyam Is the Best Tool for Reconstructing the History of North Malabar," *Anthropologist* 10 (2008): 283–287
[80] Filipe Pereira, "Ritual liminality and frame: What did Barbosa see when he saw the Theyyam?" *Asian Theatre Journal* 34, no.2 (2017) : 375–396.
[81] Bridget Allchin and Raymond Allchin, *The birth of Indian civilization : India and Pakistan before 500 BC* (Penguin Books, 1968), 309.
[82] K.K.N. Kurup, '"Teyyam – A Vanishing Ritual Dance of Kerala," in *A Panorama of Indian Culture : Professor A. Sreedhara Menon Felicitation Volume*. Ed. Kusuman ,K. K. (Mittal Publications, 2008), 126.

goes on for 3–6 days, with different stages of the Theyyam being performed on different days. The musicians play at different cadences through the different stages of the ritual. For a *Kōlakāran* and his retinue, the first day usually begins with a '*Thorram*', which is a prayer song recital where the performer only dons a smaller part of the ritual crown. The next day is the '*Veḷḷāttam*', in which half the attire is donned, and the body and face are painted, but the divine crown is absent. This stage could be understood as a psychological warm-up for the main ritual. The day after the *Veḷḷāṭṭam* comes the final stage of the ritual, wherein the *Kōlakāran* dons the sacred headgear, and the metamorphosis from the depicter to the depicted reaches its apotheosis. What ensues next is the embodied enactment of the *Kōlakāran* as the Theyyam from the *Thorram* songs. To aid the climactic tone of this phase of the ritual, the percussions sound more vigorously than ever. For a more lucid description of the Theyyam ritual, refer to Seth (2009).

Based on the presence of counter-hegemonic religious sanctions (such as meat and alcohol) and the worship of deities from Tantric pantheons such as Shiva and Kali, the extent of the influence of Tantric sects, as highlighted by Freeman[83], cannot be understated in understanding Theyyam. Freeman[84] has analysed the ritual and religious development as well as nuances of the *Bhairavan* Theyyam that occurs in the Malabar region. The key element of this work is the exploration of the ritual links shared between the Shaivite Bhairava Yogis and the *Bhairavan*/*Kuṭṭicātan* Theyyams of the local Malayan caste. The importance of the theme of Brahminicide in the background stories of the *Bhairavan* Theyyam is noted by the author, which paradigmatically highlight socio-religious frictions experienced by the performing communities and the Brahminical authority, which could potentially explain the extant link between historical lower caste narratives and ritual imagery with Tantric elements. Since the chronology surrounding Theyyam is predominantly conjectural due to the paucity of historical and archaeological evidence, it would be unwise to assume that the Theyyam rituals were first performed by "Jogi' castes Freeman discusses. While the rigour of the author's analysis cannot be undermined even

[83] John Richardson Freeman. "Shifting Forms of the Wandering Yogi." In *Masked ritual and performance in South India: Dance, healing, and possession,* edited by D. Shulman And D. Thiagarajan, (Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 147–183.
[84] Freeman, "Shifting Forms of the Wandering Yogi," 147–183.

slightly, the author does not discuss the potential of the 'Jogi' castes having sought the appropriation of their *Bhairavan* cult via the prevalent regional ritual paradigm of Theyyam through representing *Bhairavan* as a Theyyam.

Seth's observation and documentation[85] of the legend and the rituals of the *Mucilōṭṭu Bhagavatī* Theyyam, who is worshipped in the Malabar as an aspect of Durga, is indispensable for the study of Theyyam as the work provides the nuanced account of the Theyyam's ritual in conjunction with thematic elements from the mythological narrative in great detail. While the work does sacrifice critical inquiry in exchange for a detailed account, Seth does note that "wronged women" form a category of Theyyams who are worshipped as goddesses[86]. The *Pāṇayakāṭṭu Bhagavatī* Theyyam[87] (see Fig. 2) would come under a similar classification. This understanding can be extended to 'wronged men' in this case of the *Kaṇḍanār Kēḷan* Theyyam[88] (see fig. 1), who perished in a forest fire while fulfilling his duties, which were enforced by the caste system.

Ahammed[89], through a socio-psychological lens, has highlighted the role of Theyyam in the periodic alleviation of the collective historical trauma endured by the performing communities through the ritual reemphasis of their identity. This recognition of the psychosocial potential that comes from this reclamation of divinity contributes to the scope of this work, wherein information is understood as a set of values functioning within and being transmitted through the rubric of the caste system.

This work essentially views Theyyam, drawing on the understanding posited by Ahammed, as not simply an art form, but as a means of religious expression which intends to counteract the socio-psychological effects of the iniquitous caste system. This idea could be well elucidated in the words of Manmasih Ekka[90], "A Dalit poem is simple, direct, forceful, and writing of it is not a joy-ride in aesthetics but … (a) long-drawn cry for socioeconomic

[85] Seth, Pepita. "The Muchilottu Bhagavathi Cult in Kerala." In *Goddess Durga: The Power and the Glory*. Ed. Pratapaditya Pal. (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2009).
[86] Seth, "The Muchilottu Bhagavathi Cult in Kerala," 152.
[87] Mohanan, Aditya, *Pāṇayakāṭṭu Bhagavatī Theyyam,* 2019, digital photograph, author's collection.
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[89] Shaima Ahammed, "Caste-based Oppression, Trauma and Collective Victimhood in Erstwhile South India: The Collective Therapeutic Potential of Theyyam." *Psychology and Developing Societies* 31, no. 1 (2019): 88–105.
[90] Manmasih Ekka, "Liberation Theme in Tana Bhagat Prayers," In *Doing Theology with the Poetic Traditions of India: Focus on Dalit and Tribal Poems*, ed. Joseph Patmury (Bangalore: PTCA/Sathri, 1996), 184.

change for liberation from suffering." The ideological essence of this statement can be distinctly seen in the counter-caste/patriarchy origin narratives of many Theyyam deities, even though the *Kaḷiāṭṭam* is as much ritual as it is art. Particularly pertinent to this stream of thought is the *Poṭṭen* Theyyam legend, wherein the god Shiva dons the garb of a *caṇḍāla* (a member of the undertaker caste) to educate the Brahmanical Hindu leader Samkara about the inequities and injustices propagated by the caste system[91]. A counter-patriarchy theme can be inferred from the origin story of the *Mucilōṭṭu Bhagavatī* Theyyam, wherein a young girl's chastity is unjustly brought into question and is used to slander her reputation by the males of her community, which lead to her being transformed into a goddess by the god Shiva[92]. It is interesting to note the presence of Shiva in these counter-hegemonic narratives, an occurrence that possibly results from non-Brahminical or 'impure' attributes (such as meat, sex, alcohol, and blood) that are associated with this deity as well as many local practices across India. It is also extremely important to note that even though Goddesses are depicted through male performers, women do not play a role in any part of the ritual at any stage. Even when one observes the devotees of the Theyyam, there's a stark discrepancy in the number of men and women, with the latter hardly being present. Though this work views Theyyam as a Subaltern expression against hegemonic forces such as the Brahmanical orthodoxy and feudalism, the gender hegemony within the local caste dynamics of the region will become apparent to anyone who observes.

Thus far, there have been no academic works that have centred around the music and rhythm accompanying the *Kaḷiāṭṭam*. One of the most authoritative works in understanding South Indian temple music (*Periya Mēḷam*) was done by Terada[93], which is the main source used in this work for contrasting Mēḷam with music in *Kaḷiāṭṭam* (known by musicians within and outside the communities as *Vādyam,* and in rarer, more formal cases as *Ceṇḍā Mēḷam*). In his work, Terada elucidates the complexities associated with the practices of temple musicians. It can be gleaned from this work that particular sections, *rāgams* (musical scales) and *tāḷās* (rhythmic counts) are meant to be employed to suit

[91] J.J. Pallath, "Theyyam Myth: An Embodiment of Protest," In *Life as a Dalit: Views from the bottom on caste in India,* ed. S. Channa And J.P. Mencher, (Sage Publications, 2013).
[92] Seth, "The Muchilottu Bhagavathi Cult in Kerala," 153.
[93] Yoshitaka Terada, "Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India: "Periya Mēḷam" and Its Performance Practice," *Asian Music* 39, no. 2 (2008): 108–151.

specific ritual phases through the day. The existence of codified frameworks that convey this information, as seen in Terada's work[94] is integral to this work's comparison between the temple's *mēḷam* and the Theyyam's *vādyam*.

Groesbeck's invaluable analyses[95] look into the dialectics of the interactions between "classical" and "folk" forms of music in India. The analyses done in this work are informed by the threefold classification of the defining traits of Indian classical music – i) legitimation based on an ancient theoretical tradition, ii) preserved disciplinarily through generational training, iii) understanding of melodic configurations through the concept of *rāgam*. The utility of these specific traits in any analyses that is concerned with "Classical" and "folk" forms of music cannot be understated, but a fourth imperative trait must be addressed when enquiring into Indian music, a point the author himself discusses later in the article[96] – the understanding of time through rhythmic patterns and note subdivisions, which is more often than not referred to as *tāḷā* across the subcontinent. Indian music relies heavily on percussive patterns to captivate and steady the attention of its listeners, be it the north Indian *tablā* or the south Indian *mṛdaṅgam*. This point is pertinent to the course of this work because the concept of *tāḷās* is invaluable to understand *vādyam* as means of musical expression. Groesbeck has also highlighted the problems with construing "Classical" and "folk" forms of music as mutually exclusive, given that there are numerous elements that are constantly shared by both the aforementioned groups[97]. His claim that the distinction between "Classical" and "folk" music is not maintained by performers and audiences are fundamentally challenged by the findings presented in this study.

Theoretical Framework

This work is ethnographic in nature, enquiring the manner in which social identity and privilege that stem from the functionings of the caste system. In doing so, it borrows from Redfield's notion[98] of 'little' and 'greater' tradition and applies it to the context relevant

[94] Terada, "Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India: "Periya Mēḷam," 121–122.
[95] Rolf Groesbeck, ""Classical Music," "Folk Music," and the Brahmanical Temple in Kerala, India." *Asian Music* 30, no. 2 (1999): 88.
[96] Groesbeck, ""Classical Music," "Folk Music," and the Brahmanical Temple in Kerala, India." 90–92.
[97] Groesbeck, ""Classical Music," "Folk Music," and the Brahmanical Temple in Kerala, India." 90–92.
[98] Robert Redfield, "The Social Organization of Tradition," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1955): 13–21.

here, as done by Kurup[99]. This theoretical tool helps contextualise and elucidate the interactions and exchanges between the 'greater' Brahmanical tradition and the 'little' local, and in many cases, pre-Brahmanical traditions. Informational and theoretical values from the musical traditions of both the Brahmanical and the Dalit communities, are juxtaposed. The socio-cultural impacts of this juxtaposition are further used to infer contrasting privileges experienced by communities from both ends of the caste spectrum.

Albeit dated, the theoretical frameworks of 'Universalisation' and 'Parochialisation'[100] are also used to contextualise the observed phenomena. These tools help elucidate how local elements of faith interact with 'greater' Hindu elements. Instances would be the presence of the pan-Indian Shiva in local *Poṭṭen* Theyyam narratives. Another clearer instance of Parochialisation would be the enactment of the Narasimha Avatar of Vishnu through the *Viṣṇumūrtī* Theyyam[101] (see Fig. 3).

This work draws from and contributes to Subaltern theories on caste and class privilege, but employs ethnomusicological analyses to discern the values and functions of the observed musicological elements. Socioeconomic impacts resulting from the inferences are further used in the portrayal of the contrast in experienced caste and class privileges, or the lack thereof, by the two categories of musicians studied here.

Research Methodology

The nature of this study would qualify as qualitative as factors such as privilege, both monetary and systemic are observed and analysed. All observations were done in and around the town of Payannur in Kerala. Over the course of one week, 8 Theyyams were observed in 4 different *kāvu* (sacred ancestral properties containing a shrine dedicated to gods/ancestors, which are usually the loci of Theyyam activities). To 'participate', in the general academic understanding of the word, is not possible in these contexts as the acts are only to be performed by the caste communities that conduct these rituals, who are linked through either blood and marriage. But as to the role of the 'viewers' of the ritual,

[99] Kurup, "Teyyam – A Vanishing Ritual Dance of Kerala," 125 – 138.
[100] McKim Marriott, "Village India: Studies in the Little Community." *American Sociological Review* 21, no. 1 (1956): 100–101.
[101] Mohanan, Aditya, *Viṣṇumūrtī Theyyam,* 2019, digital photograph, author's collection.

they are seen as passive participants in the ritual, with almost every ritual ending with people receiving blessings from the divine characters, which is often compensated monetarily for. In many Theyyams, such as the *Thaṭṭum Veḷḷaṭṭam*, the audience forms a relatively more active part of the ritual by willingly being chased around by the infuriated Theyyam as well as taunting and luring him; whereas in the other Theyyams, the viewers take on more of a passive, nevertheless a subtly interactive role. In the case of this study, one of the observed Theyyams titled *Kaṇḍanār Kēḷan,* a fire ritual performer, often does not cease performing until the audience pleads him to do so. In ways such as these, the viewers become a covertly active element of the ritual. This form of 'passive participation', naturally, challenges the dichotomous paradigm of interaction posited by the traditional notion of participant–observation.

It is through the perspective elucidated above that multiple subjects were interviewed over the course of this study, most of them being the ritual percussionists themselves, whereas some were local devotees (the 'passive participants') of both, the Theyyams and the Brahminical temple deities. Two of the subjects were local intellectuals from Payannur. The musicians were often seen taking rests between the different *kalāshams* (phases) of the ritual and were eager to answer questions. This work focuses on colloquial projections and depictions of art forms over formal and theoretical ideas that make up the bodies of the studied forms of music.

As of the past decade, the growing smartphone culture has resulted in locals dedicatedly recording the performances using their own devices, to which the performers often express no discontent and often even encouragement. This made obtaining video documentation of the performances a seamless endeavour.

Ethical Constraints

In the manner described earlier, the interviews were done verbally, and there was no objection to the recording of any performance materials. Almost unanimously, every performer refused to sign a consent form, their reasoning suggesting that they are public performers and do not see any distinction between academic researchers and curious citizens. The performers willingly gave verbal consents for their performances to be

recorded and for their statements to be used verbatim, but refused to sign a consent form as they see their knowledge and expertise as public heritage. To avoid ethical conundrums, the interviewees will not be named in this work.

Another ethical concern informing the course of this work one addressed in the "Transmission of Tradition" by Shelemay[102], whereby the fieldworker acknowledges their role in the transmission of this tradition and thereby implying a mutual growth of the performers and the perceiver/transmitter of knowledge, that is the fieldworker. This, in turn, leads to cultural evolution that stems from the dissolution of certain boundaries that earlier distinguished the researcher and the researched. This point becomes pertinent when the upper caste and class privileges of the author are addressed, whose upper-caste ancestry has played a role in the aforementioned oppression of the performing communities. Therefore, the intention and the predicted results of this work stem from a sense of solidarity that transcends the borders of caste and class. Hence, this work aims to promulgate and contribute to dialogues regarding caste and its implications, rather than "making representations predicated on the Other's absence[103]."

Findings and Comparisons

Performance Structures

Both, the *mēḷam* and the *vādyam* performers are responsible for the creation of a sonic ambience that the deity embodies. At first sight, it may seem that the *vādyam* is being played to random rhythmic tendencies, but when one observes the parallel performances of the *kaḷiāṭṭam* and the *vādyam,* it becomes evident that the sound of the *vādyam* is intended to complement the impulsive motions and theatrics employed by the *kaḷiāṭṭam* performer, and therefore is largely improvisational in essence. In stark contrast, we see the *mēḷam* performers from temples having a definite musical structure which prescribes different instruments and *rāgās* to be employed in particular rituals and through particular

[102] Kay Kaufman Shelemay, "The Ethnomusicologist, Ethnographic Method, and the Transmission of Tradition," *Shadows in the Field : New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (2008): 141–56.
[103] Johannes Fabian, "Presence and Representation: The Other and Anthropological Writing," *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 4 (1990): 771.

stages of the day,[104] wherein improvisation plays a distinct role in its larger, more curated compositional structure. The cultural implication of the aforementioned structural differences between the temple and Theyyam performances can be recognised by the word '*mēḷam*' being used by the locals particularly to refer to temple music performances, whereas the word '*vādyam*' is used colloquially not only in reference to Theyyam but also as a general term meaning 'rhythm', which makes it usable in other contexts as well. Locals, who have been conditioned through the consistent viewing of both performers in both contexts, evidently view *mēḷam* ensembles as having a distinct identity of their own, whereas the *vādyam* players are seen as marginal contributors to a larger demonstration. The reasoning behind this perspective is often explained using the claim that the *vādyam* performers lack the education and skills that the *mēḷam* performers possess. The causality of this ascribed discrepancy can be traced back to the first instance of the systematisation of the musicological elements of the *periyā mēḷam* by Ramasami Dikshitar, an 18th century Brahmin musician from Tamil Nadu[105].

Such systematisation is not found in any Theyyam performances, but there is a strong oral tradition that harks back to a king who was likely to have belonged to the Kolathunadu dynasty, often referred to as 'Chirakkal Thamburān', a title the locals used for the same "Kōlattiri Rāja" from the *Bhairavan*[106] and *Muchiloṭṭu Bhagavathī* Theyyam[107] narratives recorded. It is this king who is said to have brought in another character known as 'Maṇṇanār Gurukkal', who is supposed to have created a codification of the narratives reenacted in the Theyyam performances. The historicity of this character has not yet been verified thoroughly, but he is found in the narratives of the *Bhairavan* Theyyam as the Tantric figure knowns as "Kurikkaḷ", and also is venerated as the *Kurikkaḷ* Theyyam by certain Vannan families[108].

[104] Terada, "Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India: "Periya Mēḷam," 121–122.
[105] Terada, "Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India: "Periya Mēḷam," 119.
[106] Freeman, "Shifting Forms of the Wandering Yogi," 170.
[107] Seth, "The Muchilottu Bhagavathi Cult in Kerala," 153.
[108] Freeman, "Shifting Forms of the Wandering Yogi," 170.

Instruments

It should be noted that Theyyam musicians have far fewer instruments in their performances, which could very likely be due to the lack of access to newer resources, very possibly resulting from the socioeconomic constraints propagated by the caste system. One can observe the presence of only the *ceṇḍā* and the dual flat cymbals that are used to keep musical time. Melodic aspects are mostly absent, save for very rare cases where a small wind instrument that mimics the *nādasvaram,* known as the *chīñi korram,* is a part of the ensemble. In stark contrast, the *mēḷam* performers are seen to be using a plethora of instruments such as the *nādasvaram,* the *tavil,* the *ceṇḍā,* the *maddaḷam,* and other instruments that have been observed by Terada[109] and Groesbeck[110]. In particular, the percussive instrument made of wood and stretched leather known as the *ceṇḍā* is the most observable similarity between both the forms of music. The *ceṇḍā* comes under the classification of instruments known in South Indian musical traditions as '*Asura Vādyam'*, a term which roughly translates into 'demonic rhythm', whereas the class of percussion instruments used in Classical musical traditions is known as '*Deva Vādyam'*, which translates into 'rhythm of the gods'. It is interesting to note that even though the classification that *ceṇḍā* comes under is hardly a flattering one, it is by far the most commonly used instrument in any form of musical performance across the state of Kerala. If we were to view *ceṇḍā* as a pre-Sanskritic invention by the local populace of South India, following this stream of narration could lead to further understandings of how 'little traditions' are treated and inculcated into society by the 'greater traditions', often through the process of Universalisation in Indic context.

Music and Education

To find further insights into the effects of the caste system on musicological elements, questions regarding the forms of transmission of knowledge were asked, to which the responses proved to be contextually relevant. *Mēḷam* performers have access to institutions of learning whereby they are educated in measuring time, melodic structures,

[109] Terada, "Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India: 'Periya Mēḷam,'" 108–151.
[110] Freeman, "Shifting Forms of the Wandering Yogi," 147–183.

and compositional patterns that are used in temple ritual performances, alongside Hindu theology and the accompanying ritual prescriptions. In contrast, Theyyam *vādyam* performers learn technical and theoretical information at the household level, where they learn through watching their older family members perform, as every generation holds the responsibility to carry forward the traditions of their communities. This transmission of information often begins during early childhood years and is usually received only by the males of the families. Doubts are often cleared out through repeated demonstrations, but there are no extant organised syllabi or terminologies that elucidate musical or musicological concepts efficiently and succinctly, as seen in the case of *mēḷam* performers.

Interestingly, both the *mēḷam* and *vādyam* performers learn their musical counting using a verbal counting technique known as *akshara kāla*.To visibly and aurally experience the differences between temple and Theyyam music, yet the musical similarities shared by both, see Sujith[111] and Mohanan[112].

Socioeconomic Implications

As of today, both of these forms of art have been affected by rapid globalisation and the capitalisation of local industries, whereby labour that would earlier contribute to the preservation of their culture has now been diverted towards better-paying modern jobs. The *mēḷam* performers have a source of fixed income which resulted due to government reforms from the early 20th Century, even though the salary proves to be inadequate in most circumstances[113]. This, in comparison with the income schema of the *vādyam* performers, can be seen as a privilege for the *mēḷam* performers, as the former do not have any access to regular income through the performance of their art form and procure income through their art only during the part of the year when Theyyam performances take place. Even in this case, there are no guarantees as donations are their main source of income, the amount of which depends entirely on the grace of the donors. Most *vādyam* instrumentalists have to share these uncertain revenues with their peers which they receive from the *kāvu*

[111] KM Sujith, "Incredible India- kerala chenda melam," *Youtube* video, Uploaded on January 25, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zki6vYLhSg4.
[112] Aditya Mohanan, "Pulikandan Theyyam Chenda Vadyam," *Youtube* video, Uploaded on January 07, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKBAAO0Kwpo&feature=youtu.be
[113] Terada, "Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India: "Periya Mēḷam," 133.

committees that host their performances, with no real concern for any specialisation[114]. Theyyam performers are exempt from the state's tourism capsules such as the 'Responsible Tourism Project' since their work is perceived as quasi-artistic due to the ritualistic nature of their performance[115]. Temple performers often reap their benefits via the Devaswom Board, a socio-religious trust that works in accordance with the Government of Kerala. In the case of the Theyyam performers, no such organisations exist that possess the power to negotiate with the government, which essentially has resulted from the historical and modern pauperisation of Dalit communities.

Discussion

As seen above, the association of Theyyam with the Kolathunadu dynasty has been recorded in a few Theyyam narratives and therefore suggests that the aforementioned codification happened after the rise of the Kolathunadu dynasty in 12th century A.D[116]. The character known as 'Gurukkal' or 'Kurikkal' has also been observed to be a part of multiple Theyyam narratives. The manner in which this character appears in the narratives of multiple communities certainly strengthens the veracity of his existence and his role in the codification of *Theyyāṭṭam*, but by no means does it establish historicity. The discrepancies in the practices and narratives of various Theyyams make the task of understanding the degree to which Theyyam practices follow this supposed codification deserving of independent inquiries. It is important to note that even though the narrative surrounding various Theyyams may have been codified at some point in history, this organisation has not been extended to musical patterns that accompany the *Theyyāṭṭam*. Therefore, no two Theyyam performances, in both the cultural and the chronological sense, ever produce the same musical instances.

Based on the discrepancies previously elucidated in the 'Findings' section, it can be argued that the differences in the treatment and transmission of musical information in *mēḷam* and

[114] Anjuly Mathai, "Gods must be stingy," *The Week*, April 12, 2015, https://www.theweek.in/theweek/leisure/Gods-must-be-stingy.html\

[115] Priyamvada Rana, "COVID-19, Caste, Joblessness: What Ails The 'Gods' Of Malabar, The Theyyams?" *Youth Ki Awaaz*, 11th April, 2020, https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2020/04/in-kerala-covid-19-add-to-woes-of-gods-of-malabar-theyyams/

[116] M. G. S. Narayanan, *Re-interpretations in South Indian History* (Trivandrum: College Book House, 1977), 6-10.

vādyam have resulted from overarching sectarian norms and caste dynamics, which also resulted in differential attitudes towards the codification of information in both the observed forms of expression. These differences can be argued to have stemmed from educational and socioeconomic conditions propagated by the caste system, as the upper caste art form seen here has found its place in a 'greater tradition', the rules of which have systematised temple music in Kerala and other parts of South India. Hence, it has had the privilege of being codified and also has had access to different *rāgās* (musical scales) and *tāḷās* (time divisions/signatures) that one can see in Brahmanical musical systems such as in Carnatic music and in other "Classical" forms of music across India. Though some of these elements are employed by *vādyam* performers, close to none of the organised presentations of musicological values can be discerned from the educational experiences of the Theyyam performers. The *tāḷās* employed by the *vādyam* players, when enquired, were casually said to be dictated by the impulsive instincts of the *kolakāran* and fellow musicians in action. This approach to percussion, even though it has the potential to sound similar to the improvisational temple art form of *tāyambaka,* is fundamentally different as the latter focuses on improvisation as the essence of the performance.

The chronology of which instruments predates which remains to be a matter of conjecture, but the popularity of the *ceṇḍā* over any other percussive instrument in ensembles across South India points to a local, pre-Brahminical origin. This claim remains a conjecture until further evidence is presented. What is important is this claim is made by tribal and Dalit communities across Kerala that the *ceṇḍā* predates other instruments, particularly the Brahminical instruments referred to earlier. A deeper understanding of the sentiments that back this claim can be obtained through a Subaltern reading of the festival of Onam.

The association of *Mahābalī,* an *Asura* king from Hindu mythological narratives, with the Onam festival tradition of Kerala is an aberrant aspect of the region's Hindu culture that could possibly lend an understanding into how pre-Sanskritic elements of the region were classified under the tag of '*Asura*' after the advent of Brahmanical orthodoxy. In most cases in India, it is either the gods or the goddesses that are the valorised and worshipped through festivals. Interestingly, in this case, it happens to be an *Asura* around whom the festival revolves. In mythological contexts, *Asuras* have been treated as anti-gods, but

when we come to a socio-political sphere, the term also seems to have been used to make an often pejorative classification between local, and thus often pre-Sanskritic elements of culture. This classification is more of a connotation and hence is not very explicit. Narratives centred around *Mahābalī* by some tribal communities within the state of Kerala have been recorded by Kalidasan[117], wherein a virtuous tribal chief known as *Mahābalī* or *Māvēlī,* was wronged by encroaching Brahmins using deceitful means to strip him of his land and in a few instances, of his life. These indigenous accounts likely precede the modern, Brahminical mythological origin narrative, as these stories hark back to the time when the Brahmins arrived. Even though the antiquity of these narratives is uncertain, the conflict of the tribal communities with the Brahminical orthodoxy can be discerned with clarity. These narratives regarding the festival of Onam are marked by a sense of realism, which challenges the notion that mythologies are purely fictitious and thereby apolitical in nature. Following the line of reasoning perpetuated through the tribal narratives, it would appear that *Mahābalī,* who is seen by the tribes as a historical indigenous leader, was proclaimed an *Asura* during the Sanskritisation of Kerala for the material and political benefit of the succeeding oligarchy. But extant culture often refuses to be wiped out completely and instead, has to find a symbiotic relationship with the contemporary status quo. This could explain why an *Asura* such as *Mahābalī* and an *'Asura Vādyam'* instrument such as the *ceṇḍā*, continue to thrive as an indispensable element of Kerala's culture even today.

When in conversation with local performers and academics, a dichotomy in the cultural imaginary becomes evident – *shāstric* and local knowledge, *Asura Vādyam* and *Deva Vādyam,* lower caste (Velan, Vannan, and Malayan) and upper caste (Mārār) music are some of the twofold distinctions that are made by the general populace. Contrary to what Groesbeck[118] has argued, there are distinctions made by the artists between Classical and folk traditions, not as much when it comes to upper-caste "folk" music as his work refers to, but when it comes to the music of the untouchable communities, as demonstrated in this work. Caste and status play an important role in the structuring of musical elements and

[117] Vinod Kalidasan, "A king lost and found: Revisiting the popular and the tribal myths of Mahabali from Kerala." *Studies in South Asian Film & Media* 7 (2016): 103–118.
[118] Groesbeck, "'Classical Music,' 'Folk Music,' and the Brahmanical Temple in Kerala, India." 89–90.

transmission of musicological values. This claim is not meant to contribute to the dichotomous understanding of "classical" and "folk" music in Western academia but is intended to highlight the differences, both perceived and ascribed, in a more nuanced manner when caste and community are brought into the analyses.

Similarities exist in musical techniques and theoretical elements that are seen in both, the Theyyam's *vādyam* and the temple's *mēḷam*. Employment of elements such as usage of triplets and quadruplets in creating syncopated rhythms, bass drums hitting the first note of every bar while the *ceṇḍā* works on the superseding improvisational layers of the rhythm, the use of cymbals to keep the overall count of the ensemble are just some of the many similarities found in both the forms of music. The differences have more in tandem with the societal perception of these forms of music than real musical differences. In spite of these similarities, a stark contrast that one can see regarding both these forms of music in the cultural imaginary is betrayed through their colloquial depictions – the music of the temple has a distinct name for itself; whereas the term used for the music of Theyyam is *vādyam,* which in translation merely means 'rhythm'. Privilege need not necessarily be understood from the procurement of special provisions for a community, but in this context can be recognised through the possession of a distinct cultural recognition of an art form that is reflected in speech. This distinction here, recognised verbally, translates itself distinctly into the socioeconomic sphere idiomatically.

Conclusion

Well into the 21st Century, one can still observe differences in the privileges and general cultural recognition of these art forms, perceptions that are rooted in caste-based divisions and identity politics. Questions regarding whether or not the *ceṇḍā* predates other percussive instruments in the South and the extent to which pre-Sanskritic musical practices informed the religious music in vogue today are yet subject to much debate. Whether Theyyam predates the Brahmanical presence in Kerala is also a debate that remains open to argumentation, but it is an observable reality that the contrast in privileges propagated by the caste system has been cemented by the advent of the class system. The

ritual, in its very essence, is a form of anti–caste demonstration through the reclamation of divinity.

The socioeconomic implications of the musical differences between the discussed ensembles, in spite of shared elements, continues to grow discrepantly. While the distinction between "Classical" and "folk" forms of music are not to be divided further, reconciliation would be impossible without the recognition of this divide. The distinctions highlighted in this work are not intended to further the observed divide, but to sociologically analyse the many ways in which musical and musicological elements affect and perpetuate privilege or the lack thereof. Many of the arguments presented in the paper above may be subject to change under future archaeological, literary, or historical evidence, but the equation of the downtrodden in society with the *asura* in Indian mythology is somewhat of a 'felt', or an experienced form of knowledge in the Subaltern cultural consciousness. This work is intended not to provide a voice to any community, but seeks to recognise the submersion of voices and thereby create a shared space where further dialogues regarding oppression and expression can ensue. As of the previous decade, Theyyam has been meticulously documented by local filmmakers and academics, and this work intends to contribute to that fervour by introducing Theyyam to the modern academic populace, through the acknowledgement of the problems faced by those who live this way.

APPENDIX A

Fig. 1: The Kaṇḍanār Kēḷan Theyyam from the Kannur district of Kerala.

Fig. 2: *Pāṇayakāṭṭu Bhagavatī* Theyyam from Kankol, Kerala.

Fig. 3: Viṣṇumūrtī Theyyam from Kankol, Kerala.

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Fig. 1: Mohanan, Aditya. *Kaṇdanār Kēḷan Theyyam*. 2019. Digital Photograph. Author's Collection.

Fig. 2: Mohanan, Aditya. *Pāṇayakāṭṭu Bhagavatī Theyyam*. 2019. Digital Photograph. Author's Collection.

Fig. 3: Mohanan, Aditya. *Viṣṇumūrtī Theyyam*. 2019. Digital Photograph. Author's Collection.

RHETORICAL SPACE

Culture of Curiosity in Yangcai under Emperor Qianlong's Reign

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ABSTRACT

This research is arranged into three sections in order to elaborate on the hybrid innovation in *yangcai*. Firstly, the usage of pictorial techniques on porcelain will be discussed, followed by the argument that the modelling technique in the Qianlong period could be the revival of Buddhist tradition combined with European pictoriality. The second section continues the discussion of non-traditional attributes in terms of the ontology of porcelain patterns. Although it has been widely accepted that Western-style decorations were applied to the production of the Qing porcelain, the other possibility will be purported here by stating that the decorative pattern is a Chinese version of the multicultural product. The last section explores style and identity. By reviewing the history of Chinese painting technique, art historians can realise the difference between knowing and performing. Artworks produced in the Emperor Qianlong's reign were more about Emperor Qianlong's preference than the capability of the artists. This political reason differentiated the theory and practice in Chinese history of art. This essay argues that the design of *yangcai* is substantially part of the Emperor Qianlong's portrait, which represents his multicultural background, authority over various civilisations, and transcendental identity as an emperor bridging the East and the West.

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KEYWORDS: transculturalism, *yangcai*, *aotufa*, Emperor Qianlong, Postcolonialism

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the fifteenth century, porcelain has been one of the most important exporting merchandises in China due to its stunning delicacy and highly decorative characteristics. Chinese porcelain was massively traded to Europe through the Middle East or Maritime Silk Route by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The trend reached its zenith under the *Pax Manjurica*,[119] or the so-called High Qing era (1683–1839).[120] Owing to the political and economic prosperity as well as the emperors' profound involvement in the design and manufacture of artworks, the quality and the quantity of porcelain peaked during the *Pax Manjurica*. The popularity associated with porcelain was especially palpable during the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1735–1796). During this time, a significant amount of extremely high-quality porcelain was fired under imperial-directed commission. This achievement was derived from three main reasons: First, Jesuit missionaries serving as painters in the imperial Qing court imported and introduced Western pigments and pictorial techniques into China. The Jesuits' perspective nourished the field of Chinese art, producing varieties and novelties. Second, Qing Dynasty was an empire composed of multiple cultures (Manchu, Mongolian, Han, and Tibetan) even before the Europeans arrived; therefore, multiculturalism and transculturalism incubated the Emperor Qianlong's relative tolerance of European pictoriality. Third, due to the grand connoisseurship in the art of the Emperor Kangxi 康熙 and the Emperor Yongzheng 雍正,[121] as their successor, the Emperor Qianlong's desire to surpass their achievements was readily obvious in every aspect. This desire drove the art supervisors at the time, such as the superintendent of the Jingdezhen imperial kiln Tang Ying 唐英 (1682–1756), and those who served at the Qing Imperial Household Department (Neiwufu 内務府) and the Qing Imperial Workshops (Zaobanchu 造辦處) to conduct research into finding innovative ways of designing porcelain to please and fulfil the demand within the imperial precinct. Therefore, numerous original and revolutionary glazes and unprecedented motifs were created in a short period of time.

[119] The *Pax Manjurica* is a term coined in Latin, standing for "Manchu Peace," which is to better represent the status quo race-wise in the High Qing era compared to *Pax Sinica* (Chinese Peace).
[120] Wakeman, "High Ch'ing: 1683–1839."
[121] The first and the second Emperor during the time of *Pax Manjurica*, reigned from 1661 to 1722 and 1722 to 1735, respectively.

Emperor Qianlong was different from two of his predecessors in terms of his relationship with European Jesuits. The Jesuits arrived in China and served the Qing imperial court before Emperor Qianlong was born. As a result, some of the Jesuits even became Qianlong's mentors in his youth. Therefore, in order to understand the aesthetic perspective of the Emperor Qianlong and the ingenious design of the porcelain fired under his reign, the Sino-European relations and Jesuits' influences within the imperial precinct are fairly paramount. The importance of Sino-European relations in terms of Chinese art history was reinforced in *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese painting*, where Cahill argues that China was fascinated by European visuality at the time.[122] Most of the present scholarship focusing on the account of Sino-European pictorial perspective concentrates on the contribution of the Jesuit painters who served in the Qing imperial court in terms of the rendition of paintings. For example, one of the earliest studies of its kind was conducted by Cécile Beurdeley in *Giuseppe Castiglione: a Jesuit painter at the court of the Chinese emperors*.[123] Even though the more recent study by John W. O'Malley et al. makes a relatively broad overview of Jesuits' impact on Chinese culture, his work still focuses closely on paintings in those chapters concerning Chinese art.[124] The other studies dedicated to the linear perspective brought to the Qing imperial court by the Jesuits were likewise limited to the scope of the two-dimensional pictorial surface.[125] However, the Sino-European artworks unapologetically and inextricably became part of Chinese art history in every aspect and various representational media, including the manufacture of porcelain and works of art. The European pictorial techniques that were adopted in Chinese paintings were found in the design of porcelain in an alternative representation. For example, the standard European pictorial techniques, such as foreshortening, linear perspective, and *chiaroscuro* can be seen on *yangcai* 洋彩 produced in the Jingdezhen imperial kilns during the Qianlong period.[126] The term *yangcai* was first adopted by Tang Ying in the thirteenth year of the Yongzheng reign (1735), where he defined the term as "imitating the West" and applied it to the ware which he innovated and introduced into the

[122] Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, 70, 223.
[123] Beurdeley and Beurdeley, *Giuseppe Castiglione, a Jesuit Painter At the Court of the Chinese Emperors*.
[124] John W. O'Malley et al., *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*.
[125] Finlay, "The Qianlong Emperor's Western Vistas"; Kleutghen, "The Qianlong Emperor's Perspective"; Musillo, "Mid-Qing Arts and Jesuit Visions"; Musillo, *The Shining Inheritance: Italian Painters at the Qing Court, 1699–1812*.
[126] Liao Baoxiu, *Huali caici*, 19–21.

canon of Qing imperial aesthetics.[127] In Liao's study, she argues that *yangcai* was deeply influenced by European pictoriality and possesses three main differences compared to traditional Chinese *falangcai* 琺瑯彩, which was polychrome enamelled porcelain produced under the imperial-directed commission in the kiln directly run by the Qing Imperial Household Department inside the Forbidden City. The differences are as follows: Western edge décor, exotic patterns, and the usage of light and shadow. Although these three aspects are readily relevant to the European perspective, the ontological background underlines that the design on porcelain could be far more complicated than a single explanation can express. Given that a multicultural eambience dominated the High Qing era, a purely single cultural appropriation was hardly taken place. Craig Clunas describes the openness of China as a "culture of curiosity" in *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*, which means that the Chinese attempted to fill the gaps in their own narrative by taking advantage of the multicultural environment.[128] Chinese appreciated the interstitial human geographical society and learned from other cultures to complete their categories. Therefore, European/Christian imagery and iconography was only part of this openness to exotic cultures. Instead of attributing *yangcai* exclusively to European pictoriality, we should consider the manufacture of porcelain under Emperor Qianlong's reign as an outcome of a "culture of curiosity."

Pictorial Techniques on Porcelain

The conception of modelling and pictorial perspective in terms of painting varies from cultures to cultures, and the recognition of this conception is a process of integration and evolution. Some studies argue that European pictoriality brought tremendous influence on Chinese painting and nurtured Chinese history of art in depth.[129] Even though the European contribution to Chinese paintings (particularly the Qing imperial court painting) from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries is an undeniable fact, the East-West exchange and the following Sino-European mutual interpretation commenced long before Jesuit painters served in the Qing imperial court. For example, the application of light and shading

[127] Ibid., 10, 14.
[128] Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*, 173.
[129] Beurdeley and Beurdeley, *Giuseppe Castiglione, a Jesuit Painter At the Court of the Chinese Emperors*, 150–52.

in painting came to Chinese attention prior to the introduction of the European perspective in the sixteenth century. Chinese artists adopted the shading and highlighting from Indian Buddhist painting in the Liang Dynasty (502–557) and subsequently used this modelling technique often in religious painting.[130] Even though we rarely find the same technique in the latter *shanshui hua* 山水畫 (mountain and water landscape painting). Therefore, to deconstruct the ontology of European pictoriality requires a hermeneutic explanation between both the East and the West and should be traced back to the period before the Qing Dynasty.

The trading of porcelain between the East and the West is one of the most important primary sources for studying transculturalism between these two worlds in the historiography of Chinese history of art.[131] Liao contends that the Western elements presented over paintings on porcelain by using two examples from the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, which were exhibited in *Stunning Decorative Porcelains from the Qianlong Reign* in 2008. The first example is a pair of gall-bladder vases in *yangcai* enamels with figure décor attributed to Tang Ying, dated to the tenth year of the Qianlong reign (1745) (accession number: 故-瓷-017952, figs. 1-1, 1-2, and 故-瓷-017953). This pair of vases was painted with two windows, or the so-called *kaiguang* 開光 in Chinese,[132] with a blue-enamelled *chilong* 螭龍 (Chinese hornless dragon) pattern geometrical edge design. The pattern besides the *kaiguangs* was relatively flat compared to the scenes inside the *kaiguangs*, which are more three-dimensional, with shading and hatching, further creating an illusionistic pictoriality by the two yellow-enamelled *ruyi*-cloud circular frames overlapping the blue *chilong* windows (fig. 2). In this piece, Tang Ying successfully created at least two spaces of these vases: one is on the glazed surface, and the other is beyond the surface. The subject matter in the *kaiguangs* is the Eighteen Lohans 羅漢 from Buddhism, and the background is full of decoratively auspicious clouds to create a spiritual and religious ambiance. Liao argues that the figures and the clouds painted in the background, with strong contrasts between light and dark, suggest the appropriation from the

[130] Wang Min, "Tianzhu yifa yu aotuhua xi."
[131] Gordon, *Chinese Export Porcelain*.
[132] *Kaiguang*, which has its long tradition of application, refers to a frame decorated with a recurring design (usually flora and fauna), enclosing the subject matter on Chinese decorative art.

chiaroscuro brought by the Jesuit painters;[133] however, according to the subject matter as well as the painting technique used, the minute designs on this pair of vases more closely resemble the traditional Buddhist paintings imported from India before the tenth century AD. The Buddhist paintings focus on creating an illusionistic space within the pictures for the purpose of religious worship and pilgrimage. Therefore, lighting and shading naturally became a pivotal part in Buddhist paintings in order to bring the representation of Buddha close to spiritual and visual reality. The mural paintings in Gra Thang Dgon (扎塘寺 ཀྲ་ཐང་དགོན) in Tibet have numerous examples of illusionistic space creation.[134] These murals were painted in a technique similar to that on the pair of *yangcai* vases in terms of the representation of the clouds in the background. The second example is a pair of *meiping* 梅瓶 vases in *yangcai* enamels with a figure in the landscape and imperial poem decoration, dated to the eighth year of the Qianlong reign (1743) and attributed to Tang Ying (故-瓷-017203, fig. 3-1, 3-2, 故-瓷-017204). The figure in the painting, an old chrysanthemum seller, was painted using the technique of Western *chiaroscuro*, according to Liao's study.[135] The potters used a white glaze to demonstrate the convex areas of the face (nose, chin, and cheeks) and dark glaze to stand for the concave areas on the face (eyes, ears, and neck). A similar methodology was also applied to the figure's limbs, which, surprisingly, resembles the style found in the mural painting located in the Cave 181 at the Kizil Caves in Xinjiang, China (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region),[136] and some examples can also be found in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET) in New York (accession number: 51.94.5, fig. 4) and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin (accession number: III 8839, fig. 5), which date from the sixth to the seventh centuries AD. This light-and-highlight methodology was a standard feature of *aotufa* 凹凸法 (concave-convex method) that originates in India instead of Renaissance *chiaroscuro* from Europe. Aotufa was brought to Tibet in the sixth century AD and became a popular pictorial understanding in mainland China from the sixth to the tenth centuries AD. The painting technique was generally used on the mural paintings in the Dunhuang Caves, and it is fairly obvious in

[133] Liao Baoxiu, *Huali caici*, 20, 152.
[134] Wang Min, "Tianzhu yifa yu aotuhua xi."
[135] Liao Baoxiu, *Huali caici*, 20.
[136] Gu Ying, "Lun xiyu yangshi aotufa yu tianzhu yifa," fig. 3.

Dunhuang Mogao Cave 285 and Cave 321.[137] Dunhuang mural painting applied *aotufa* on their pantheons, especially on the faces of Buddha, and the face presented by *aotufa* is addressed as a "five-white face" due to their usage of white paint on the forehead, nose, cheeks, and chin. Therefore, the application of *aotufa* in the Qing imperial *yangcai* wares could be another perspective from which to interpret the existence of light and shade found on the painted figure of the *yangcai* enamels vase.

The basic concept of European *chiaroscuro* and Buddhist *aotufa* is substantially different. They also serve distinct purposes under dissimilar cultural environments. There are two main differences between *chiaroscuro* and *aotufa*, and these differences can help us understand the ontological integration of the firing of *yangcai* attributed to Tang Ying. Firstly, *chiaroscuro* assumes a fixed source of light, whereas *aotufa* does not. Take The Matchmaker by Gerrit van Honthorst in 1625, for example. Van Honthorst uses a single candle to illuminate the scene, and this single fixed source of light converges the whole picture together. The basis of *chiaroscuro* is mathematics, and it follows Alberti's orthogonals of light and his idea of a "veil" between a painting's subject and human eyes.[138] In contrast, *aotufa* is a conceptual representation of light. The source of light in the picture is often unclear, and the light and highlight are used instead of the light and shadow in *chiaroscuro*. Secondly, the purpose of light and shadow is different within these two methodologies. *Chiaroscuro* applies mathematical theory based on painting skill to imitate an exaggerated reality and create a single subject matter focus on the canvas. In *The Matchmaker*, by using intense coverage of shadow, the light from the match is exaggerated in order to illuminate the young women with her half-exposed areola, which conveys a sexual message. The usage of light can disorient viewers from the detail of the painting, preventing the spectators from finding the painting unrealistic. On the other hand, the purpose of *aotufa* is more spiritual than *chiaroscuro*. The initial usage of *aotufa* served a religious purpose in order to create both a visual and incorporeal sacrosanct place for inviolable pilgrimage activities. Avoiding the usage of shadow is a way to draw the worshipers into the religious picture's illusionistic world. In *chiaroscuro*, even though it

[137] Wu Di, "Lun Dunhuang bihua gongbi zhongcaihua yu xiyu aotu yunranfa de guanxi."
[138] Alberti, *On Painting*, 81–84.

looks very close to reality, the great amount of shadow limits the possibility of illusion in the paintings. For example, if *The Matchmaker* is placed in a well-illuminated room in a museum, viewers will find that it is a painting immediately. However, if it is placed in a dark environment like the painting itself, the imitated reality will be well-presented and deceive the spectators. However, *aotufa* uses light and highlight to avoid the limitation of the ambience surrounding the painting. Without the shadow, the *aotufa* painting can be viewed in any angle and any environment without visual confusion. Furthermore, highlighting brings the painting into another level of consecrated pilgrimage and blurs the perception of beholders.

Tang Ying's *yangcai* porcelain should be regarded as a derivative of cultural encounters, including the Southeast Asian *aotufa* and the European *chiaroscuro*. *Yangcai* is a complex built upon multiculturalism or the Chinese "culture of curiosity." Liao's statement regarding the Western perspective being the single force leading to the invention of *yangcai* is based on Tang Ying's report to the Emperor Qianlong, in which he wrote: "Imitating the Western style, so it is called *yangcai*." Therefore, Liao's argument is well-based on the primary textual source from Tang Ying; however, a historical written text can have multiple interpretations. What was written and recorded sometimes does not represent the entire truth. In the case of the representational technique in *yangcai*, as I have mentioned above, the Buddhist *aotufa* seemed to weigh more than European pictoriality. In addition, the Emperor Qianlong himself piously practised Buddhism himself despite his multicultural background; hence *aotufa* was used regularly in the Buddhist pantheons painted in the imperial Qing court. Tang Ying also lived in the same cultural background, and he must have come into contact with Buddhist paintings. Therefore, I suppose that *yangcai* mainly adapted to the Buddhist *aotufa*, even though *yangcai* was developed at the time when Jesuit painters played an important role in the imperial Qing court, and the Emperor Qianlong appreciated their contribution sincerely. European *chiaroscuro* happened to be a trigger for this innovative application because Tang Ying needed a novel statement for his creativity.

ONTOLOGY OF PORCELAIN PATTERNS

The pattern design of *yangcai* is readily distinct from *falangcai*, or the traditional Chinese enamelled porcelain. In some cases, even though the pattern designs are extremely similar and employ the same subject matter, they can possess entirely different visualities. Take two designs dated to the Qianlong reign as examples, both found in the collection of the National Palace Museum Taipei, a yellow ground *yangcai* gu vase (accession number: 故-瓷-017034, fig. 6-1, 6-2)[139] and a pair of *yangcai* flowers and birds dishes (accession number: 故-瓷-017875, fig. 7, and 故-瓷-017876, fig. 8).[140] The vase and the dish share a similar pattern of tangled vines, lotus and exotic flowers, but the pictorial impressions are quite polarized on these pieces owing to the application and the representation of light. The *yangcai* enamelled gu was painted with light and highlighted with opaque glass (leadless and non-arsenic famille-rose pigment), while the light and shadow on the *falangcai* enamelled dishes were painted using a traditional technique used in Chinese landscape painting (i.e., leaving the surface of porcelain blank to stand for light). In addition, the *yangcai* enamelled gu vase possesses a more three-dimensional design by showing foreshortening on the flowers and the leaves, complicated overlapping between vines, and the combination of modelling skill and superimposed patterns. Liao claims that the pattern designs in *yangcai* were also a cultural appropriation and inspired by Renaissance *chiaroscuro* and the European concept of foreshortening, while I contend that the design of *yangcai* is more complicated in terms of its exotic components. As I have mentioned in the last section, Buddhist *aotufa* can also offer an alternative explanation for the light and highlight in the pattern design as it does in the painting on porcelain. However, whether the influence was *chiaroscuro* or *aotufa*, both were originally developed in painting rather than pattern design on three-dimensional artefacts. In order to trace the originality of *yangcai* pattern and its exotic attributes, two aspects will be discussed in the following paragraphs: firstly, I will go back to the beginning of the similar tangled vines and flower pattern in blue and white porcelain in Yuan and Ming Dynasty in terms of the modelling technique; secondly, I

[139] Liao Baoxiu, *Huali caici*, Plate. 36.
[140] Ibid., Plate. 90.

will explain the similarity between *yangcai* and *tongjing hua* 通景畫 (penetrable-scene paintings) in the Qianlong period.

Different aspects of the invention of blue and white porcelain can be traced back to different periods. Cobalt oxide (blue pigment) imported from the Middle East was first used on porcelain in the Tang Dynasty (618–907). However, the pattern design of blue and white porcelain at the time was comparatively simpler than the design in the Qing Dynasty. In the Song Dynasty (960–1279), owing to the influence of pattern design from Jizhou kiln, the tangled vines and lotus became an important part of the traditional pattern in blue and white porcelain, but it was less popular at the time and not produced in great quantities. The closest prototype of Qing Dynasty blue and white porcelain dates back to the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), in which the complicated designs were applied to the patterns.[141] Single overlapping and double overlapping designs were rarely found at the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty, but they dominated the pictorial surface of blue and white porcelain when entering Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), especially after the Yongle period (1403–1425). In the Ming Dynasty, the overlapping design was not combined with a modelling technique, as seen in the *yangcai* of the Qing Dynasty. Therefore, the patterns were still quite flat compared to those identified in *yangcai*. The manufacture of blue and white porcelain reached its zenith during the Kangxi period (1622–1722), and the design of pattern faced a revolutionary innovation. Kangxi was the first emperor to rule the so-called *Pax Manjurica* period, in which the economy and culture prosperously developed and the politics was stable; therefore, a great amount of social resource was put into the artisan industry. Techniques for the application of cobalt blue pigment on porcelain made great progress and almost mimicked traditional Han Chinese ink painting on silk and paper in terms of the density of colour;[142] therefore the term *mo fen wucai* 墨分五彩 (ink could have five colours), which means there are five distinguishable cobalt blues based on the density of pigments, was also adopted to describe blue and white porcelain. This innovative technical development made modelling become tenable on blue and white porcelain, and it was the first prototype of the combination of modelling and overlapping design on porcelain. The design, both the

[141] Zhu Yuping, *Yuandai qinghuaci,* 10–12.
[142] Feng Xiaoqi, *Ming Qing qinghua ciqi,* 39.

pattern and the gradient glaze, on *yangcai* is quite similar to the blue and white porcelain applied with the technique of *mo fen wucai*, fired during the Kangxi period. The only difference is that *yangcai* is polychrome, yet blue and white porcelain is monochrome (only cobalt blue is applied). The first European Jesuit arrived in China in the late Ming Dynasty and started to bring the Western pictoriality to the East. Italian Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining 郎世寧, 1688–1766), who arrived in China in 1715 under the Emperor Kangxi's reign, officially introduced Renaissance *chiaroscuro* and one-point perspective to China. As a result, we can find a foreshortening pattern in blue and white porcelain in Kangxi period. Therefore, Liao's claim regarding the influence of the Western pictoriality on *yangcai* could be, in fact, an indirect appropriation from the Kangxi period blue and white porcelain.

Although the omnipresent usage of light and highlight in *yangcai* is quite similar to the one in *aotufa* in terms of modelling figures, Buddhist *aotufa* painting does not contain any pattern design resembling *yangcai*. Therefore, the highlighting pattern in yangcai could be an innovation by the Jingdezhen imperial kilns superintendent Tang Ying, or it could be traced to another source. The *tongjing hua* by Giuseppe Castiglione and his apprentices can offer an alternative explanation for the design in *yangcai*. *Tongjing hua*, which is also called panoramic/penetrable-scene painting, is a special genre of art representation in the imperial Qing court. The extant *tongjing hua* is extremely rare, and all of them are attributed to Giuseppe Castiglione and his Jesuit and Chinese followers (e.g. Louis Antoine de Poirot 賀清泰 and Jin Tingbiao 金廷標). *Tongjing hua* is an illusionistic painting attempting to create another space within space. The painting itself is like a gate that connects architecture to an imagery heterotopia. In order to attain perspectival illusion, Castiglione applied light and highlight in *tongjing hua* instead of the traditional methodology used in *chiaroscuro* and *quadratura*. According to Kristina Kleutghen's recent study, Castiglione made this choice because of the Emperor Qianlong's personal dislike of shadow;[143] therefore, he developed this new way based on his own Italian *chiaroscuro* training and Buddhist painting in China. The similarity between *yangcai* patterns and *tongjing hua* is readily obvious; for example, the *tongjing hua* on the ceiling of

[143] Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions*, 106.

Juan Qin Zhai 倦勤齋 (Studio for Retirement from Diligent Service) in the Forbidden City, in which the bamboo and the wisterias were painted with a number of highlights to reach deceptive illusion, is very similar to the technique used in *yangcai*. Moreover, *yangcai* was invented just after the achievement of *tongjing hua*; therefore, the mutual influence on interdisciplinary communication stands a great chance.

Given the complex cultural situation during the Qing Dynasty, art historians should attempt to conduct exhaustive research in terms of the referential source on style. Another example which was attributed to the Western influence in Liao's study is the edge décor on *kaiguang* (windows). *Kaiguang* was first painted on ceramics during the Song Dynasty (960–1279) in China, and it was earlier than the Renaissance period in Europe. Song Dynasty ceramics were exported in great quantities to Europe via the Middle East in the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries AD; therefore, even though the edge décor of *kaiguang* in *yangcai* resembles the one in French faience, it is not a satisfactory argument to maintain that *yangcai* appropriated faience design.

Style and Identity under the Qianlong's Reign

Although the Qing Dynasty was not the first Dynasty in Chinese history with multi-racial composition, it was the first Dynasty with European intervention in the imperial studios. Therefore, this unprecedented condition brought the artistic hybridity of Qing Dynasty to a distinct level. The artworks derived from multicultural encounters have been relatively well discussed in Western art historical discourse since the beginning of Orientalism in the 1970s,[144] which contributed to the contact between the East and the West. Orientalism argued against the Eurocentric historical discourse, collapsing the purity of European culture, and released the voice from the Other. Followed by the development of colonialism and post-colonialism, the whole concept of Orientalism evolved into the dispute of representation of historical narrative: the history of the colonizer and the colonized. This dispute continued through the 1980s under the schema of primitivism, in which the definition of modern art was reconstructed. In 1984, William Rubin's exhibition Primitivism

[144] Said, *Orientalism*.

in 20th-century art: affinity of the tribal and the modern brought numerous discussions regarding decolonization.[145] The usage of transcendental "affinity" made the exhibition controversial and drew a number of negative critical reviews. James Clifford responded to Rubin's curatorial conception by saying that colonialism is a two-way process and should be considered a hermeneutic problem instead of using affinity to circumscribe its legitimacy.[146]

The polemical and continuous disputation from Orientalism to post-colonialism generated the necessity of redefining the works of art under this interstitial human geographic environment. This equivocality rejects the historical narrative from both the colonizer and the colonized. The hybridity comes from an in-between heterotopia where the power of various cultures reaches balance. In order to identify this hermeneutic mutuality, Homi K. Bhabha contends that the relation between the colonizer and the colonized is interdependent;[147] therefore, it is necessary to reconstruct the ontology of this in-between space. He applied the term "the third space of enunciation" to elaborate on the existence of this in-between space, arguing that all cultural contradictories are constructed in this third space.[148] Under this agenda, the ambivalent "hybridity" of artworks could be explained, and the historical narrative of this third space could be independently framed. There are numerous scholars who continue to adopt the third space theory, such as Edward Soja, who developed Bhabha's third space by focusing on the spatiality of human life, demonstrating the hybridity by human geography.[149] In The middle ground: Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region, Richard White used the term "middle ground" instead of third space to elucidate the same idea of reproduction of hybrid space.[150]

The concept of post-colonial hybridity is a possible schema for interpreting multicultural society in Qing Dynasty and its artworks; however, as James Elkins claims that art historians must develop an alternative research schema and theoretical analysis for

[145] Rubin, *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art*.
[146] Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture,* 7.
[147] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 295–296.
[148] Bhabha, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences."
[149] Soja, *Postmodern Geographies,* 123–136.
[150] White, *The Middle Ground*.

Eastern art history because the substantial different cultural background cannot be regarded as an analogy.[151] In the Qianlong period, owing to the Emperor Qianlong's personal passion for works of art, his own preference and his multicultural and multi-religious background became an essential part of the hybridity in the Qing Dynasty. For example, as mentioned in the previous section, Giuseppe Castiglione investigated a novel way of illusionistic painting due to the emperor's dislike of shadow, and Tang Ying was able to show his innovative *yangcai* because of the Emperor Qianlong's tolerance and his obsession with European culture. All of these were part of the Emperor Qianlong's personal revolution which then became an indispensable portion of Han- and Manchu-Chinese history of art. Tang Ying might have the concept of *aotufa* and *chiaroscuro* before the invention of *yangcai*, yet he was only able to perform it under the Qianlong's reign due to his artistic passion and curiosity-leaded tolerance.

Conclusion

The rhetorical space, glazed on the surface of porcelain, for the "culture of curiosity" in *yangcai* is a historical witness of the encounter of the East and the West. *Yangcai* is a combination of multicultural artisans, transcultural remediation, the technical prowess of both East and the West, the emperor's will and preference, and the recreation of Sino-European pictoriality. This essay provides an alternative perspective to examine the ontology of *yangcai* wares fired under the Emperor Qianlong's reign, elaborating the danger of attributing the inspiration of *yangcai* pattern exclusively to the perspective from European court painters, proposing a reexamination of transculturalistic and post-colonial artisan environment of the High Qing era ruled by Manchu. The assumption of Western vista as the underpinning of *yangcai*, which might have sabotaged and endangered our understanding of the artistic profile in China's long eighteenth-century, has been revisited and averted. Moving across time and space, drawn to the evolution of porcelain firing from the Kangxi period blue and white porcelain, penetrable-scene painting within the Qing imperial precinct, and ancient India *aotufa* representational technique for Buddhist space, the present research has substantially explored the culture

[151] Elkins, *Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History*, 81–83.

of curiosity to unveil the secret carried by the rhetorical space created within the surface of *yangcai* ware.

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APPENDIX A: IMAGES

Figure 1–1A yangcai gall-bladder vase © National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 1– 2A yangcai gall –bladder vase (other view) © National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 2A yangcai gall -bladder vase (other view) © National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 3-1A yangcai meiping © National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 3–2 A yangcai meiping (other view) © National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 4 Kizil Caves mural painting © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Figure 5 Kizil Caves mural painting © Museum für Asiatische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin

Figure 6-1A yangcai gu vase © National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 6-2A yangcai gu vase (other view) © National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 7 A yangcai flower and bird dish © National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 8 A yangcai flower and bird dish © National Palace Museum, Taipei

LATE MING COURTESAN CULTURE AND CHINA'S GENDER SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This article argues against existing scholarship that sees courtesans as a transcending force that blurred social and gender boundaries in the late Ming gender system. The gendered position of courtesans is examined from two perspectives, the market economy and the kinship system, to analyse how the booming courtesan culture stemmed from and reinforced the male-dominated gender hierarchy. Firstly, in the market economy, courtesans emerged as a product of the patriarchal practice of objectifying and commodifying women, whereby the ownership of women lay with men. Under such a commercialised environment, the literary and artistic skills of courtesans were highly gendered, sexualised and essentially cultivated to increase their market value and the attraction they held for their male patrons. Secondly, in the kinship system, a clear boundary was constructed between courtesans and respectable women in the domestic sphere. The existence of courtesans prevented such women from entering the public realm. Meanwhile, the de facto freedom enjoyed by courtesans prevented themselves from entering orthodox household units, as they were constructed outside of the kinship system, and were marginalised by both men and women of the gentry class, by Ming legal regulations and by popular literary work, to ensure the continuance of the existing patriarchal family structure and the husband-wife hierarchy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aubury A. Huang is a first-year PhD student in History at SOAS, University of London. Prior to embarking on his PhD journey, he completed his BA in History at the University of Manchester and an MA in History at SOAS. His scholarly interests include the history of gender and sexuality, especially that of non-normative gender groups in China. He is also interested in gender theory, particularly using different theoretical frameworks and historical sources to make sense of the construction of masculinities, femininities, as well as gendered positions within different power structures.

Keywords:

Chinese courtesans, Late Ming, gender history, prostitution, literati, family structure.

INTRODUCTION

Courtesans occupied a special place in late Ming social life, urban culture, gender system and literary tradition, which has received extraordinary scholarly attention. Existing scholarship on late Ming courtesan culture, based on the prominent status of celebrated courtesans, their outstanding artistic and literary skills and the praise they received from contemporary literati, considers this special group of women as a positive force that blurred the strict gender and social boundaries and even challenged the existing male-dominated gender relations in the late Ming period. Dorothy Ko points out that certain top courtesans were so educated that they were 'hailed as equals of literati men', attending social events organised by elites as guests in men's attire rather than as female entertainers, shuttling 'physically and figuratively between the male-public and the female-domestic worlds.'[152] Jean Wetzel also identifies the unprecedented freedom courtesans possessed as women. Instead of being confined to the domestic sphere as what was expected of women by the orthodox Confucian morality, courtesans were free from familial duties, enjoying a considerable amount of 'social and geographical mobility'. Such mobility allowed them to serve as the 'middleman' who negotiated unequal gender and status, both in everyday life and in the art world.[153] Based on the 'sophisticated training' and other opportunities that courtesanship provided for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, Harriet T. Zurndorfer considers courtesans to have even transcended the late Ming social strata and questioned the orthodox definition of a good (*liang* 良) woman.[154]

However, we should not let the ambivalent social positions of courtesans, as well as their accomplishments in literature and art, obscure their gendered position in late Ming society. The gender system of the late Ming period, especially the unprecedented fluid expressions of masculinity and femininity, was closely intertwined with the existing imperial class and Confucian social systems. As Charlotte Furth argues, the construction of someone's gender identity was always overshadowed by their social roles and responsibilities, thus reflecting

[152] Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 256.
[153] Jean Wetzel, 'Hidden Connections: Courtesans in the Art World of the Ming Dynasty', *Women's Studies* 2002, Volume 31, Issue 5, pp. 645–669, (pp. 646–647).
[154] Harriet T. Zurndorfer, 'Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Confucian Moral Universe of Late Ming China (1550–1644)', *The Joy and Pain of Work: Global Attitudes and Valuations, 1500–1650,* 2001, Volume 56, Issue S19, pp. 197–216, (p. 216).

and reinforcing the existing gender and social hierarchies. Among these constructions, it was the non-normative ones, such as the ambiguous courtesans examined in this article, that tended to be the most prominent examples embodying the dominant 'truths', as the display, or the celebration of their seeming gender and social transgression, were carefully controlled by those at the top of these hierarchies.[155]

Building upon Furth's perspective of analysing the identity construction of a certain gendered social group within the context of the social, class and gender systems that it emerged from, this article aims to argue against existing scholarship that sees courtesans as a transcending force in the late Ming gender system, by arguing and examining how female courtesans emerged and flourished as a product of the male-dominated gender hierarchy, and how courtesan status, already classified as a female 'mean people' social group,[156] was further constructed by both men and women from the gentry class to fit into and reinforce the existing patriarchal gender system.

This article is divided into two sections. Focusing on the commercial nature of the courtesan industry, the first section discusses how the booming courtesan culture perpetuated the existing gender hierarchy, whereby ownership of women lay with men. Celebrated courtesans symbolised the widespread late Ming practise of objectifying women's bodies and services as commodities that could be sold and exchanged by men. The literary and artistic talents that were praised by many were, in fact, business tools, a highly gendered set of skills, cultivated only to increase the courtesans' own market values and attract male clients. The second part of the article examines the role courtesans played in the late Ming kinship system and their relations with literati and gentry wives, as well as how courtesan status was constructed legally and culturally outside of the orthodox family structure to ensure the continuity of the existing kinship system and the husband-wife hierarchy.

[155] Charlotte Furth, 'Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China', *Late Imperial China*, Volume 9, Issue 2, (December, 1988), pp. 1–31, (pp. 14, 24).
[156] Courtesans were classified as 'mean people' (*jianmin* 賤民), outside the 'commoner' (*liangmin* 良民) status group, according to Ming judicial regulations, as described in Zurndorfer, 'Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Confucian Moral Universe of Late Ming China (1550–1644)', (p. 200).

COURTESANS IN THE MARKET ECONOMY

The developing monetary economy and a rising urban culture revolving around elite men and the literati community in the economically and culturally advanced late Ming urban centres made the burgeoning courtesan industry feasible.[157] The selling of women, ranging from servants to concubines, to upper-class families in a commodity market, had flourished through most of the late imperial period.[158] In this increasingly commercialised environment, the rising popularity of courtesan culture, with the growing public status and perceived monetary value of courtesans, further solidified the practice of objectifying and commercialising women as commodities whose ownership lay with men.

The fact that young girls being sold into courtesanship was accepted by late Ming society was consistent with the male-dominated gender system and its patriarchal values. Rather than seeing the selling of daughters for financial gain as evil or immoral practice, the Chinese tended to have a 'rather sympathetic view' towards these girls sold by their fathers, as they were considered as helping with their families' economic burdens and were even praised for fulfilling their filial duties.[159] Despite the overall economic growth, rising living costs and the widening gap between the rich and poor left increasing numbers of disadvantaged families struggling financially in the late Ming.[160] Selling a daughter became a profitable solution for many disadvantaged families.[161]

Some scholars consider the selling of girls into courtesanship as a means of providing poor girls with unprecedented opportunities that would otherwise have been unavailable to them. As Paul S. Ropp puts it, from the perspective of a 'poor family with ten children', the sale of a daughter to be trained as a courtesan might, in fact, have represented the girl's best chance of survival and even of upward social mobility.[162] Similar views are shared by

[157] Sufeng Xu, *Lotus Flowers Rising from the Dark Mud: Late Ming Courtesans and Their Poetry*, 2007, PhD thesis, McGill University, p. 309.
[158] Paul S. Ropp, 'Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China', in Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang (eds.), *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 44.
[159] Wetzel, 'Hidden Connections', p. 666.
[160] Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 163–167.
[161] Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chamber*, p. 342.
[162] Ropp, 'Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China', p. 32.

Harriet T. Zurndorfer, who points that out such a girl from a disadvantaged background might have seen the entertainment quarters she were sold into as 'an opportunity to improve her own material circumstances in a location where beauty, talent and accomplishment were valued.'[163] However, the commercial nature of this exchange should not be overlooked or romanticised. Since, after all, it was a transfer of the ownership of a woman in the market, from one male, the father, to another male, the new owner, a process of trading a girl's future in which she could not make any independent choices for herself.

The trading of courtesans as a highly commercialised industry, especially in Yangzhou, was depicted in *Wu Zazu (Five Miscellanies 五雜俎)* by Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛, a renowned social and cultural observer of that time:

> The people of Yangzhou have long treated their beautiful women as precious merchandise. Merchants bought young girls from everywhere. They taught them crafts such as calligraphy, drinking games, and chess, expecting a handsome return. The girls were called 'thin horses'.[164]

As this passage showcases, a young girl's 'beauty, talent, and accomplishment' – again borrowing Zurndorfer's statement – were indeed valued. However, her worth was purely valued against the standards set by men and judged by the attractiveness she possessed as an object to her male clients in the market, whereas a girl's self-worth was not taken into consideration and her own subjectivity was completely silenced. Moreover, throughout this whole valuation process, money remained the only indicator of a girl's value and was what separated the profitable 'thin horse' who was 'fortunate' enough to be picked by elite men from other ordinary impoverished girls.

Indeed, some famous courtesans were extremely highly valued. According to Craig Clunas, in the early 1640s, the scholar Gong Dingzi 龔鼎孳 paid a thousand ounces of silver for the celebrated courtesan Gu Mei 顧媚, and such large sums of money spent on courtesans were not unacceptable to men of the elite class.[165] Yet no matter how famous or expensive a

[163] Zurndorfer, 'Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Confucian Moral Universe of Late Ming China (1550–1644)', p. 205.
[164] Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛, *Wu Zazu 五雜俎*, 8.7a, cited in Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, p. 261.
[165] Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, p. 118.

courtesan was, she was either subjected to brothels or dependent on her clients, selling services in exchange for money to survive.[166] Courtesans' freedom of movement and socialising on public occasions went hand-in-hand with their dependence on male patronage. The nature of their business required constant travelling and sojourning in order to build connections in the networks of the gentry, and while on the road, these women mostly relied on their male clients for expenses, accommodation, introductions and protection. During her courtesan career, from 1631 and 1641, the famous courtesan, Liu Rushi 柳如是, hardly stayed in the same place longer than one year.[167] Thus, compared to ordinary housewives, courtesans did enjoy certain levels of social freedom; still, they were far from being the autonomous actors in the public realm portrayed by many, as the de facto freedom they enjoyed was actually a by-product of their reliance on men and was required by the commercial nature of the industry.

Known for their literary and artistic achievements, late Ming courtesans were praised by many as a significant cultural agent contributing to female self-expression and even as a positive sign of expanding female education.[168] Courtesanship did offer girls from humble families opportunities for education outside the family system, during a time when education was mainly available only to daughters from upper-class families that could afford it.[169] However, although overlapping in some areas, the education courtesans received and that received by gentry daughters were fundamentally different.

Courtesans' skills were essentially their professional expertise, a product more of the nature of the trade that developed to cater to their clients' tastes and to attract more business. Scholar-officials remained courtesans' primary clientele until the 18th century.[170] According to Shen Hongyu 沈弘宇's *Piaodu Jiguan (A Guide to Brothels and Gambling Dens 嫖賭機關)*, in order to cater to scholar-officials' tastes, a good courtesan needed to acquire the 'perfect ten', consisting of 'cultural elegance, freedom from vulgarity, reading and writing excellence, artistic skills, singing talent, playing of musical instruments, sense of

[166] Ropp, 'Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China', p. 43.
[167] Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers,* pp. 273–275.
[168] Judith Zeitlin, "'Notes of Flesh' and the Courtesans' Song in Seventeenth-Century China", p. 78.
[169] Ropp, 'Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China', p. 33.
[170] Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers,* p. 255.

discrimination, romantic charms, professionalism, and Suzhou-style aestheticism.'[171] Among these 'perfect ten', a distinct emphasis was placed on professional stage performance, which was not required of gentry daughters, who were expected to remain in the inner chamber, rather than entertain strangers outside of the household with their cultivated skills.

This client-oriented training system was also described in Li Yu 李漁's *Xianqing Ouji* (*Random Repository of Idle Thoughts 閑情偶寄*), which can be taken as an 'ideal representation of education for women in various grades of establishments in the entertainment world.'[172] Certain instruments were only taught in order to increase a courtesan's feminine appeal to clients, for example, the *xiao* (簫 flute) was taught because a woman was considered to look best when playing it as it made her mouth appear attractively smaller. Also, musical performance and sex appeal have long been intertwined, as 'blowing the *xiao*' could also be seen as a 'flowery term for fellatio'. By similar logic, playing the shawm was to be avoided, as such an instrument would distort women's faces in front of the audience.[173] Thus, Li Yu 李漁 clearly points out how to appreciate female entertainers' musical skills: 'What's important for a man in playing an instrument is the sound, for a woman it's her looks.'[174]

Based on the levels of their clienteles and varying demands, lower-class entertainers only needed to go through the basic elements of such complicated training in order to achieve a certain erotic charm. First-class courtesans, in contrast, were expected to achieve at a literary and artistic level high enough to socialise with literati and entertain them at social events, by participating in calligraphy and painting contests or engaging in literary exchange such as reciting and writing poems.[175] From the male perspective, some courtesans were so gifted that not only did they become the poetic inspiration for the

[171] Shen Hongyu 沈弘宇, *Piaodu Jiguan 嫖賭機關*, Ming edition, juan shang, cited in Hsu Pi-Ching, 'Courtesans and Scholars in the Writings of Feng Menglong: Transcending Status and Gender', p. 49.
[172] Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, p. 265.
[173] Zeitlin, "'Notes of Flesh' and the Courtesans' Song in Seventeenth-CenturyChina", pp. 78–81.
[174] Li Yu 李漁, *Xianqing Ouji 閑情偶寄*, Shan Mianheng (ed.) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guiji chubanshe, 1999), 3, 138–139, cited in Zeitlin, "'Notes of Flesh' and the Courtesans' Song in Seventeenth-CenturyChina", p. 98.
[175] Zurndorfer, 'Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Confucian Moral Universe of Late Ming China (1550–1644)', pp. 201–202.

literati but were also immortalised in a stylised literary genre based on their talents and essentially the companionship they offered.[176]

Some courtesans' poetry skills were indeed praised by many and their poems were even published. However, as Maureen Robertson points out, the thematic range and self-presentation of their poems were still associated with 'the identification of women with the body and sexuality, consistent with their address to the expectations of a male audience and relationship'.[177] A courtesan's ability to write poetry was also a practical business skill developed to manage client relations since poetry was the primary means for her to communicate with her clients outside of the pleasure quarters. Jing Pianpian 景翩翩, widely celebrated as one of the best courtesan poets of the Ming period,[178] wrote a considerable number of poems to impress and attract male clients. For example, *Guisi* (*Boudoir Thoughts 閨思*), which she wrote and sent to a 'Master Chen', included these tantalising lines:

> Flute sounds in this quiet room fill the morning with feeling.
> Piece by piece, floating blossoms brightly shimmer in the sun.
> A sprinkling of lonely tears has stained the pair of pillows;
> For short songs and long ones, I tune and return the *zheng*.[179]

This poem depicted a vivid and inviting picture of her boudoir, the most private place in a woman's life that could only become accessible to her husband when marriage was consummated. The usage of 'lonely tears' and 'the pair of pillows' implied a sad yet expectant sense that the author was alone in her bed, waiting to be visited by the recipient of this letter, for whom she might perform instruments such as the erotic 'flute', the gendered meaning of which has been discussed above, as well as '*the zheng*.' Although, in general, most poems by courtesans were more ambiguous than Jing's *Guisi*, as it is hard to figure out whether they were written for one specific lover or for a larger group of men. This ambiguity, intertwined with seductiveness, served as the lures of courtesan culture, as

[176] Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, pp. 229–231.
[177] Maureen Robertson, 'Voicing the Feminine: Constructions of the Gendered Subject in Lyric Poetry by Women of Medieval and Late Imperial China', p. 99
[178] Kang-i Sun Chang, Haun Saussy and Charles Yim-tze Kwong (ed.), *Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism*, pp. 224–226.
[179] Jing Pianpian 景翩翩, Guisi 閨思, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women, Volume II: Tang Through Ming 618–1644*, p. 176.

flirtation was institutionalised as one of the main attractions of the late Ming pleasure quarters.[180]

In summary, positioning courtesans in the commercialised market in which they operated, this section has examined how the booming courtesan culture grew from, and further reinforced the male-dominated hierarchy. The commercialised courtesan industry symbolised the practice of objectifying and selling women as men's property, thus perpetuating the patriarchal idea that the ownership of women belongs with men, and marking women's dependence on men. Rather than being genuine signs of self-expression and female subjectivities, the literary and artistic skills of courtesans were also products of the commercialised market, developed to increase courtesans' market value and to help them to better serve their male patrons. Nevertheless, all of these achievements, experiences and skills which courtesans gained in the commercial world also marked their outsider status with respect to the traditional household units and the kinship system, as the next section will further examine.

COURTESANS IN THE KINSHIP SYSTEM

The ambiguous status of courtesans was also constructed to reinforce the late Ming orthodox kinship system, which was built upon the male-centred gender hierarchy. Having been designed to fulfil the female role in literati public life, courtesans were a group separated from housewives, who were confined to the domestic sphere and whose entry to the public realm was therefore blocked by the presence of courtesans. Furthermore, courtesans' status was legally and culturally constructed outside of the traditional household and kinship system by Ming society to ensure their disruptive nature did not cause a threat to the existing family structure and husband-wife relations.

Some scholars, such as Paul S. Ropp, consider that, in contrast to the 'rigid segregation' of males and females in Ming society, the courtesan world has provided 'a meeting ground where women could openly socialise with men who were not their husbands'.[181] Nevertheless, the only women allowed in this 'meeting ground' were female entertainers,

[180] Ropp, 'Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China', p. 22.
[181] Ibid., p. 19.

a small portion of all women in Ming society, whereas housewives, as well as gentry daughters, were strictly excluded. Expected to remain dedicated to their husbands, respectable women were supposed to concentrate on wifely domestic duties, rather than venturing outside to socialise with other men.[182] As the 'antithesis of their wives' in the eyes of literati,[183] courtesans fulfilled the female role of wives in literati public life, serving as the public hostesses of literati gatherings, communal occasions that were so significant that they are considered to have helped 'define the literati as a class' and served 'as a source of accreditation for membership in the elite.'[184] With professionally trained courtesans being gradually institutionalised as an integral part of elite men's public life and even a symbol of literati's refinement and taste in the late Ming period, housewives' entrance to these social occasions was further denied.

Scholars also argue that the 'nominal wife–entertainer boundary' was eroded by courtesan culture, as Dorothy Ko points out, personal contacts between women from the two worlds increased, friendships started to form between these two groups of women, and some housewives even started to imitate art and fashion trends from the pleasure quarters.[185] Holding similar views that courtesans transcended late Ming social boundaries, Zurndorfer also points out that courtesans "operated at the elite level of society and were often indistinguishable from gentry women, thus indicating late Ming's blurry social strata."[186] However, there were deliberate attempts to highlight the boundary separating women in the public world from those in the domestic sphere, made by both women and men of the gentry class. Kang-i Sung Chang observes the tendency of late Ming gentry woman writers to separate their poetry from that written by courtesans and published within the same poetry collections. In an anthology by Wang Duanshu 王端淑, one of the most prominent late Ming female gentry poets, about one thousand female poets were arranged in descending order of social status, with gentry women being grouped into the category of '*zheng* (the proper 正)' and courtesans into the category of '*yin* (the erotic 淫)'.

[182] Zeitlin, "'Notes of Flesh' and the Courtesans' Song in Seventeenth-Century China", p. 67.
[183] Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers,* p. 258.
[184] Victoria Cass, *Dangerous Women: Warriors, Grannies and Geisha of the Ming* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), p. 27.
[185] Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers,* p. 259.
[186] Zurndorfer, 'Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Confucian Moral Universe of Late Ming China (1550–1644)', p. 197.

In other cases, courtesans' poems would just not be included at all in anthologies of women of the gentry class.[187]

Some gentry women did befriend courtesans and grew to appreciate their skills,[188] but the underlying pithiness they felt about courtesans' lives and sufferings, due to the fact that courtesans belonged to a group in the outside world so different from themselves, could still be seen in their writings. Such conflicted feelings were evident in the poem, *Bai Zhuci* (*Song of White Linen 白燭詞*), by gentry wife Lu Qingzi 陸卿子, in which she first acknowledged the glamorous side of her courtesan friends' lives: "Beauties of Handan, worth whole cities, their glamour outshines springtime itself. For gentlemen, sleeves twirl to the song of white linen." Without doubt, the popularity which courtesans enjoyed in the public realm and the attention they received from 'gentlemen' were things a proper gentry housewife like Lu Qingzi could never dream of. Nevertheless, she also expressed deep sympathy towards them, "as the sun sets behind blue hills, sadness intensifies,"[189] since courtesans remained alone at the pleasure quarters at the end of a night when the men had left to go back to their wives and their homes, where courtesans did not belong. Thus, such 'sadness' which the glamorous lifestyle of courtesanship could bring was highlighted by female gentry writers. Moreover, an underlying boundary marking the fundamental differences between themselves and courtesans, or more precisely, a patronising sense of moral superiority towards their counterparts in the pleasure quarters, was implied.

Also in exploring gentry wives' subjectivities showcased in their poetry work or literary exchange with courtesans, Zurndorfer gives an interesting insight as she suggests that gentry wives, apart from appreciating courtesans' beauty and pitying their lonely situations, might also have 'resented the courtesans' relative freedom from domestic responsibilities and burdens'.[190] Such resentment might have also contributed to a stronger sense of collective identity of gentry wives that was shared through family duties

[187] Kang-i Sung Chang, 'Ming and Qing Anthologies of Women's Poetry and Their Selection Strategies', in Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang (eds.), *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 158–159.
[188] Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers,* p. 266.
[189] Lu Qingzi 陸卿子, *Bai Zhuci 白燭詞*, cited in Ropp, 'Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China', p. 27.
[190] Zurndorfer, 'Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Confucian Moral Universe of Late Ming China (1550–1644)', p. 213.

and similar domestic experiences, thus further 'othering' courtesans and denying their entrance into the domestic world.

Men of the gentry class also acknowledged and attempted to maintain the boundary between the women of these two worlds. This was true even for those men who had married courtesans as their concubines, as they tried to dissociate these concubines, once married, from their courtesan past. It is seen in *Yutai Huashi (History of Jade Terrace Painting 玉臺畫史)*, an important biographical source on late imperial Chinese female painters, in which 32 courtesans were praised for various artistic skills. Again, a distinct boundary with the womanly characteristics that constituted respectable wives that set them apart from courtesans could be clearly observed, as none of the courtesans mentioned here was praised for embroidery, a skill normally considered to belong to domestic wives, rather than female entertainers in the brothels. The only exception made was for the famous late Ming courtesan Dong Xiaowan 董小宛, who became a concubine of the literati Mao Xiang 冒襄. Mao emphasised Dong's needlework skill and her lack of interest in instruments and paintings in his *Yingmeian Yiyu* (*Reminiscences of the Plum-shaded Convent 影梅庵憶語)* to hide her past as a talented courtesan and to erase any traits that might be associated with it:[191]

> She confined herself in a separate apartment with the door locked, desisting from playing instruments and dispensing with powder and rouge, but applying herself to practising needlework... cutting paper flowers, carving gold leaf into ornamental designs, and making palindromes.[192]

As analysed in the first section, 'playing instruments', especially certain instruments with erotic meanings for entertaining and commercial purposes, was closely related to courtesans' cultural image, and also symbolised the pleasure quarters.da ming It was therefore something that Mao was clearly stating that his concubine now 'desisted from.' Apart from playing instruments, Mao also highlighted that his concubine had desisted herself from 'powder and rouge'. This also underlined the existing husband-wife

[191] Wetzel, 'Hidden Connections', p. 649.
[192] Mao Xiang 冒襄, *Yingmeian Yiyu 影梅庵憶語*, 37, cited in Wetzel, 'Hidden Connections', p. 650.

hierarchy and implied the patriarchal values that domestic women were expected to follow. A decent domestic woman, once married, should not bother herself with cosmetics or spending too much effort on appearance since there is no longer a need for her to attract attention or please others outside the household with her looks, something that was only acceptable for female entertainers to do to make a living. What Dong's priority now was to simply make contributions to the household by taking up the gendered domestic tasks designated for women, such as doing 'needlework' and making decorations to make the home look more pleasing, rather than to make herself look pleasing.

Despite the rare case of Dong Xiaowan, who was taken as a concubine, late Ming courtesan status was constructed legally and culturally as a marginalised group outside of the orthodox family structure in order to neutralise their ambivalent and potentially disruptive social position with respect to the gender system. Marriage between courtesans and scholar-officials was explicitly forbidden in the *Da Ming Lü (Great Ming Code 大明律)* and was culturally denounced in Confucian ideals, as courtesans, coming from a polluting 'mean people' class, were not destined to be decent wives and mothers. According to the *Da Ming Lü*, under Article 119 Qu yueren wei qiqie (Marrying Musicians as Wives or Concubines 娶樂人為妻妾):

> In all cases where officials or functionaries marry musicians as wives or concubines, they shall be punished by 60 strokes of beating with the heavy stick. The marriages shall be dissolved in both cases... A record of their transgression shall be made, and on the day when they inherit the title of honour, their rank shall be reduced one degree and they shall be appointed to distant places.[193]

The same punishment also applied to 'the official's sons or sons' sons'.[194] Such measures might have been taken to ensure the hereditary nature of the courtesans' 'mean people' class and to prevent their status from polluting the decent patrilineal line of the gentry class as well as the purity of their household units. Although there were a few celebrated cases of

[193] Da Ming Lü *大明律*, Article 119, translated by Yonglin Jiang, *The Great Ming Code: Da Ming Lü* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), p. 87.
[194] Ibid., p. 87.

courtesans marrying scholar-officials, these remained isolated examples of individual mobility, according to Dorothy Ko.[195]

In addition to official Ming regulations, the marginalisation of courtesans from the orthodox family household units was also evident in late Ming literary work that emphasised courtesans' disruptive and ambiguous social identity. Many scholars of courtesan culture, such as Wai-yee Li, point out that in Ming vernacular stories, courtesans were represented as a 'cultural ideal', the sagacious and faithful lover embodying 'the *qing*' (romantic feelings 情), thus 'overcoming the boundaries between private and public spheres.'[196] Nevertheless, in these stories, again, it was courtesans' outcast status within the kinship system that writers constantly stressed to create tension or to base their storylines upon, thus culturally reinforcing this outsider image of courtesans. In Feng Menglong 馮夢龍's story, *Du Shiniang Nuchen Baibaoxiang* (*Du Shiniang Sinks her Jewel Box in Anger 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱)*, the fact was highlighted that the contradictory nature of courtesan status made marriage between courtesans and literati highly controversial and unacceptable in society. Deeply worried that his father would be angry at finding out that he was marrying a 'singsong girl' from 'low haunts', and convinced that 'all relatives and friends' would refuse to support him, the literatus Li Jia was persuaded to give up his marriage to the courtesan Du Shiniang and to sell her to another man. Disappointed by Li's decision, Du Shiniang jumped into the river and ended her life after throwing away her whole fortune.[197]

Sad endings, such as Du Shiniang's tragic death, further perpetuated the cultural image of courtesans as problematic outsiders with respect to the normal orthodox family accepted by society, and the idea that marriages between literati and courtesans would never be blessed but could only end in sadness and separation. Meanwhile, in spite of being portrayed as outcasts from the family structure, courtesans' dedication and loyalty to men were nevertheless encouraged and praised, as they were encouraged to follow the same

[195] Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers,* p. 254.
[196] Wai-yee Li, 'The Late Ming Courtesan: Invention of a Cultural Ideal', in Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang (eds.), *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 49.
[197] Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, *Du Shiniang Nuchen Baibaoxiang 杜十娘怒沈百寶箱*, translated by Yang Hsien-Yi and Gladys Yang in *The Courtesan's Jewel Box* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1957).

husband–wife hierarchy that had emerged in the domestic sphere, regardless of the fact that they would never be accepted as proper wives.

To summarise, this section has positioned courtesans in the late Ming kinship system and analysed the power dynamic between courtesans and both men and women of the gentry class. The existence of courtesans helped maintain the existing family structure and husband–wife hierarchy as they blocked the entry of women from the domestic sphere into the public sphere. To minimise the disruptive impact of courtesans to the kinship system, a clear boundary separating them from respectable housewives was constructed by both men and women of the gentry class. Similarly, marriage between courtesans and literati were prevented by Ming legal regulations and further problematised culturally by late Ming literary work.

Conclusion

Contrary to the existing literature that sometimes considers courtesans as a transcending force that challenged orthodox gender boundaries and existing hierarchies, this article argues that courtesans were a product of the existing patriarchal gender system, and the blossoming of courtesan culture in the late Ming period further reinforced the very male-dominated hierarchy from which it emerged. The life of a courtesan, at different stages, as discussed in the article, was affected by the gender system. In the beginning, they were sold into courtesanship by their fathers as commodities, and into a career of service to male clients. As they grew up, they were trained to speak the language of their potential male clients and to cultivate the skills that would be appreciated by these men. The de facto freedom and resources they enjoyed in the public realm came as a by-product of their dependence on male patronage. In the final stage of a courtesan's career, upward mobility and their ideal of 'respectability' were achieved through marriage to men, marking their ultimate dependence on such men.

However, the outsider status of courtesans in the kinship system was constructed legally and culturally by Ming society to create a boundary separating the public realm and the domestic sphere, and to ensure that the orthodox family structure and the husband–wife

hierarchy were not threatened. Ironically, courtesans were nevertheless accepted and praised culturally as 'filial daughters', even though they had little connection with their parents once sold into courtesanship at a young age. They were also praised as 'loyal and faithful lovers', even though marriage to courtesans was not encouraged. This cultural 'praise', as well as the de facto freedom and resources they enjoyed, might have contributed to incentivising young girls to remain in courtesanship and to ensuring the courtesan culture remained robust in the late Ming period.

The gendered position of courtesans can easily be overlooked or overshadowed by the praise these women received, as well as by their achievements in arts and literature. This is probably one of the main reasons that romanticised visions of courtesans have dominated the related literature, both by contemporary literati and today's Sinologists. The romantic vision of the former group could easily be a productive line of research if approached with literary criticism and rhetorical analysis, as well as through taking the authors' positionality and subjectivity into consideration. Having re-positioned courtesans into the gender system they emerged from and analysed their relationships with other men and women, this article contributes to the process of rethinking the romanticised images of certain marginalised gender and social groups in late imperial China, and brings this process to the attention of future researchers.

The cause of the romanticised visions of today's Sinologists and western scholarship towards courtesans is equally intriguing and worth exploring, a topic that this article has not addressed, at least directly. Can these romanticised views reveal certain patterns or limitations in western feminists'/gender historians' approaches to non-western regions? Or do these romanticised views have something to do with the western translation of 'courtesans', a term associated with another group of women that emerged from totally different gender systems and unique social settings in the west? Does the use of this translation risk the anachronism of borrowing a western group identity and then using it to identify its past in Chinese history? In adopting this western term, which parts of the experiences and subjectivities of this group of Chinese women have therefore been over-emphasised or silenced? And were women from similar backgrounds excluded by the categorisation of 'courtesans'? If so, should we stick with the use of the western translation

'courtesans' in future research or just refer to these women in Chinese simply as '*mingji* (famous prostitutes 名妓)'? These are all interesting questions that await further debate.

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THE "HONG KONG FACTOR"

Preliminary Research on Social Media Discourses during Taiwan 2020 Presidential Election Campaign

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ABSTRACT

As unrest erupted in Hong Kong in June 2019, the political scenario in Taiwan started to change as well. The aim of this preliminary research is to explore the changes that have occurred on Tsai Ing-wen and Han Kuo-yu discourses on social media after the beginning of the protests in Hong Kong and throughout the 2020 presidential election campaign in Taiwan. The main argument of the article is that the "Hong Kong factor" became a popular issue in the Taiwanese context to the extent that it influenced the narrative of both the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the Kuomintang (KMT). In order to prove this claim, the article analyses the posts on Facebook of Tsai Ing-wen and Han Kuo-yu shared between June 2019 and January 2020, and it seeks to reveal the discourse strategies they put into practice when talking about the Hong Kong situation and comparing it with the one in Taiwan. Although some early conclusions are reached in this paper, the research is still preliminary due to the extensiveness of the topic investigated.

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Keywords: Taiwan; Hong Kong; Hong Kong factor; social media; political discourse analysis; Tsai Ing-wen; Han Kuo-yu; 2019 Hong Kong protests; Taiwan 2020 presidential election

INTRODUCTION

On 11 September 2019, the media company *Bloomberg* published an article with the title "Taiwan's President Rises From the Ashes With a Hand From Hong Kong"[198]. The article asserts that, as the protests concerning the extradition bill began in June last year in Hong Kong, the firm posture of President Tsai Ing-wen on China and cross-Strait relations became "her biggest selling point" to the voters.

Similar conclusions can be reached if we look at opinion polls taken in Taiwan in July and October 2019[199]. In July, 64.7% of the respondents approved of the government's support of the protests in Hong Kong to protect freedom, rule of law and human rights, whereas, in October, 72% of the public supported the Taiwanese government's call for Hong Kong officials to meet people's demands for freedom and democracy and start a dialogue with the protesters. Even more interestingly, opinion polls taken in May 2019 see 83.6% of the public disapproving of the "one country, two systems" scheme, whilst in October, the number of people opposing the scheme rose to 89.3%.

In light of the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, it is possible to assume that a "Hong Kong factor" did influence the political environment in Taiwan. In this essay, the "Hong Kong factor" is understood as a coefficient that produces an effect on public opinion and politics in Taiwan. It derives from the perception of a potential threat from the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a consequence of the treatment that the people of Hong Kong receive from their government in the context of popular demonstrations. More specifically, it concerns the Taiwanese people's sentiment towards China that stemmed from the awareness – embodied in the slogan "Hong Kong today is Taiwan tomorrow"[200]– that what happened in Hong Kong in 2019 is what would happen in Taiwan if the government of the

[198] Cindy Wang and Miaojung Lin, "Taiwan's President Rises From the Ashes With a Hand From Hong Kong", *Bloomberg*, 11 September 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-09-10/taiwan-s-tsai-rises-from-the-ashes-with-a-hand-from-hong-kong (accessed 4 April, 2020).
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Republic of China (ROC, the official name of Taiwan) was to accept "one country, two systems" for a possible unification with the PRC.

However, the definition of the "Hong Kong factor" requires further specification. The purpose of this essay is thus to explore the debate at a political level, in particular the political discourse about the protests in Hong Kong posted on the social media pages (i.e. on the Facebook platform) of the two main candidates for the 2020 presidential election in Taiwan, namely the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairman Tsai Ing-wen and the Kuomintang (KMT) candidate, and former Kaohsiung Mayor, Han Kuo-yu.

The primary argument of this paper is that the "Hong Kong factor" became a popular issue in the Taiwanese political context that shaped the discourse of both the DPP and the KMT. Using data collected from Tsai and Han's Facebook pages, this essay analyses the discourse strategies they put into practice when talking about the Hong Kong situation and comparing it with the one in Taiwan.

The paper is organised as follows. In the next section, the methodology of the analysis and the political and social context are described. The following section looks at and confronts the posts on Facebook of Tsai and Han about the unrest in Hong Kong and seeks to understand how they were framed and utilised throughout the election campaign. Finally, the conclusion lists the main contributions of this preliminary research.

THEORETICAL STRUCTURE

Methodology

As far as the methodology is concerned, this paper utilises political discourse analysis as described in Fairclough and Fairclough[201]. Their approach is based on argumentation and, more specifically, on practical argumentation. The main idea is that political discourse is the result of deliberation, which involves making a decision on how to *act* in response to certain circumstances and goals. In particular, "analysis should focus on how discourses ,

[201] Isabela Fairclough and Norman Fairclough, *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*, London: Routledge (2012), Kindle e-book.

as ways of representing, provide agents with reasons for action"[202]. This research thus looks at the claims that the candidates make on Facebook in relation to the context in which they act and the goals they want to achieve, as well as the values or concerns that lead them to make a certain decision.

In addition, the data for the analysis were collected through what is called by Kozinets[203] "netnography", similar to an ethnography done on social media but with a more specific procedure which in this research was not followed in its entirety. The data collection was hence made through the five operations listed in the eighth chapter of Kozinets' book[204]: simplifying, searching, scouting, selecting and saving. I simplified the subject of the research when searching posts on Tsai and Han's Facebook pages that concerned Hong Kong protests. I then scouted and collected 30 of Tsai's posts and 13 of Han's shared between June 2019 and January 2020, which were all the posts in their Facebook pages during that time period that included the word "Hong Kong" (*xianggang*). Then, I saved and translated them from Chinese to English. Finally, the last step was the review process through the political discourse analysis above mentioned. Nonetheless, before starting the empirical analysis, it is imperative to give the reader the political and social context in which the research is embedded.

Taiwan's political environment and the Hong Kong –Taiwan nexus

Owing to the PRC's claim over its territory, Taiwan's relationship with China has always been a delicate matter. The two main parties in Taiwan – namely, the KMT and the DPP – have developed in time different approaches towards the "Giant Neighbour"[205], which originated from distinct perceptions of what that neighbour represents for Taipei. The main subject of debate has been whether Beijing is a foe or a friend of the ROC. For its part, the DPP is usually concerned about the aggressive approach through which the PRC tries to lead Taiwan towards reunification and thus considers the mainland as a possible threat to

[202] Ibid., 1.
[203] Robert Kozinets, *Netnography. The Essential Guide to Qualitative Social Media Research*, 3rd edition, London: SAGE Publications (2020).
[204] Ibid.
[205] Mumin Chen, "Embracing or Resisting the Giant Neighbour: Debates between KMT and DPP on the Mainland Policy", China Report, 49 (2013): 4, 399, doi: 10.1177/0009445513506649 (accessed 10 April, 2020).

Taipei's democracy and freedom–an argument often raised in Tsai's posts on Facebook. From the KMT perspective instead:

> the DPP's manipulation of Taiwan-China rivalry was dangerous since most people in Taiwan did not see China as an immediate threat. Rather, they believed Taiwan ought to utilise its advantages in geographic proximity and cultural bonds with China to maximise economic profit.[206]

In this regard, under the leadership of former President Ma Ying-jeou, the KMT was able to find a *trait d'union* in Taiwan-China relations through economic partnership while avoiding stressing the political implications of such choices. Implications that, on the contrary, the DPP and its Chairman Tsai Ing-wen had emphasised many times. Even on 12 June 2019, she claimed on Facebook that "everyone in Taiwan should join hands in opposing the people that accept the end of national sovereignty or the transfer of free democracy for a temporary benefit".

Another aspect where we can see the discrepancy in DPP and KMT attitude is the way in which the political elites *name* China and Taiwan – and, in this case, Hong Kong as well. As argued by Chang and Holt[207], if names are an effective means of political manipulation, they are even more so in the Taiwanese and Chinese environments, where an "intricate dance of name use"[208] has always characterised politicians' discourse in order to be in line with specific political agendas. For instance, using Taiwan (*taiwan*) instead of ROC (*zhonghuaminguo*), or using mainland (*dalu*) instead of China (*zhongguo*), gives a very different political message and creates diverse political realities. Although it is not possible to go into much detail in this essay, the rectification of names in the Taiwanese context is worth closeattention, and it is also relevant for the qualitative analysis of this research. In the case of Hong Kong, for example, even though in Chinese there are no politicised differences in naming the city, when a politician like Han Kuo-yu refers to people in the

[206] Ibid., 403.
[207] Hui-Ching Chang and Richard Holt, *Language, Politics and Identity in Taiwan. Naming China*, London: Routledge (2015), Kindle e-book.
[208] Ibid., 197.

former British colony as "dear friends" (*hao pengyou*) in his Facebook posts, the political message that is sent is very clear.

Those "dear friends", together with Taiwanese civil society, are indeed the main characters of the Hong Kong–Taiwan nexus. In his book *Challenging Beijing's Mandate of Heaven. Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement*, Ho[209] studies this nexus in depth: he finds the reasons of the linkage between the Sunflower and Umbrella movements not only in "a synchronised surge in protest activities", but also in "the more intrusive presence of Beijing in the two societies"[210]. The latter cause is also known as the "China factor", which is a consequence of the PRC's agenda to consolidate or take control in Taiwan and Hong Kong[211]. In defining the "China factor", it is also important to consider the way in which China is *perceived* by the two civil societies. For instance, Hsu claims that "the manifestation of the China factor is thus also a social construction", since it is interpreted differently by various actors "with their own social, economic, and political predispositions and prejudices"[212].

In this context, it is also relevant to mention what civil society organisations in the ROC called the "Hongkongization" of Taiwan[213]and what Sonny Lo[214] called the "Taiwanization of Hong Kong politics". The former refers to the preoccupation of Taiwanese people that the "one country, two systems" formula implemented in Hong Kong could also be a reality for Taipei if it continues to slip "slowly but inexorably into China's orbit"[215]. On the other hand, "Taiwanization" pertains to the "demonstration effect" from Taiwan to Hong Kong, as the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong was inspired by Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and "borrowed some political tactics" from it[216]. Even though Hong Kong and Taiwan used to be two worlds apart, nowadays, these two perspectives show that what happens in one of the

[209] Ming-sho Ho, *Challenging Beijing's Mandate of Heaven. Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press (2019).
[210] Ibid., 91.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Szu-chien Hsu, "The China factor and Taiwan's civil society organizations in the Sunflower Movement. The case of the Democratic Front Against the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement", 135, in Dafydd Fell, ed. *Taiwan's Social Movements under Ma Ying-jeou. From the Wild Strawberries to the Sunflowers*, London: Routledge (2017).
[213] Ho, *Challenging Beijing's Mandate of Heaven*, 41.
[214] Cited in Richard C. Bush, *Hong Kong in the Shadow of China: Living with the Leviathan*, Brookings Institution Press (2016), 234.
[215] Ibid., 236.
[216] Ibid., 234.

two entities has implications for the other and vice versa. Then, if we consider the unrest in Hong Kong in 2019, it would not be illogical to think that it had an impact on Taiwan as well. Nonetheless, these considerations require a better understanding of the discourse in Taipei on the Hong Kong protests, and in particular, the political debate on social media between the two main candidates of the 2020 presidential election, Tsai Ing-wen and Han Kuo-yu.

As Budge[217] claims, in fact, "texts are the main medium of political communication through which political parties present themselves to the public." As such, they require us to have adequate tools through which we can understand their workings. One of these tools is issue ownership theory. For a party, owning an issue means to be recognised by the voters as being better able to deal with that issue, and it hence implies that the party holds an advantage over opposing parties due to its association with that particular issue[218]. During an election campaign, nonetheless, some issues may be more popular than others. In that case, according to saliency theory[219], the *context* of the campaign increases its relevance: parties may then try to debate on the same, most *salient* issue in order to gain votes, even if they never quite converge on the topic. In doing so, they are likely to start a competition to "own" the issue that is most prevalent in the public agenda. In this essay, I argue that, during the 2020 presidential election campaign, considering its recurrence in the media coverage, the "Hong Kong factor" has been believed to be a salient issue, whose potential ownership has been fought for by both the DPP and the KMT.

Another lens through which we can look at this research is securitisation theory. When analysing the political debate in Taiwan on the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with China, Lai[220] describes securitisation as a theory that "considers security as a process of social construction of threat", in which "political elites declare certain issues as urgent threats that require extraordinary measures to deal with them".

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[217] Ian Budge, "Issue Emphases, Saliency Theory and Issue Ownership: A Historical and Conceptual Analysis", West European Politics, 38 (2015): 4, 761, doi: 10.1080/01402382.2015.1039374 (accessed 8 April, 2020).

[218] Jonas Lefevere et al., "Introduction: Issue Ownership", West European Politics, 38 (2015): 4, 755–760, doi: 10.1080/01402382.2015.1039375 (accessed 4 April, 2020).

[219] Ibid.

[220] Christina Lai, "Dancing with the Wolf: Securitizing China-Taiwan Trade in the ECFA Debate and Beyond", Asian Security, 15 (2019): 2, 141, doi: 10.1080/14799855.2018.1437145 (accessed 10 April, 2020).

Thus, when considering securitisation theory as a medium of analysis, attention is given more to the framing of the discourse rather than emphasising the real existence of a potential threat. This research, therefore, points out the way in which the posts on Facebook of Tsai and Han are phrased and seeks to reveal the construction process of their securitisation discourse.

ANALYSIS

Tsai Ing-wen

Since the very beginning of the protests in Hong Kong, which started on 9 June 2019, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen has been very vocal in expressing her concern about the uneasy situation in the former British colony. In fact, that same day, she wrote on Facebook that under "one country, two systems", freedom in Hong Kong was not sure anymore. This situation, in her opinion, should have made Taiwanese people deeply alerted and concerned. Then she emphasised the three claims that will become the *leitmotivs* in her social media discourse about Hong Kong.

First, she affirms her support for the people of Hong Kong, and she calls on the city's authorities to respect people's demands. This statement is often accompanied by the request not to use violence on the protesters and, as she said in a post on 13 November 2019, "not to utilise young people's blood sacrifice to save face in front of Beijing authorities". With such declarations, not only does she want to reiterate that people in Taiwan "stand with Hong Kong", but she is also sending a clear message to Hong Kong's (or the Chinese) government: people should be free to express themselves, and the use of violence against them is unacceptable.

Second, she declares that the values of democracy and freedom, which are fought for in Hong Kong, are cherished in Taiwan as well. The primary objective of such a discourse is to highlight that Taipei is determined to protect democracy, freedom and the rule of law, which "are so natural in Taiwan" and that "do not fall from the sky"[221]. The latter words, in

[221] 29 September 2019

particular, refer to the difficult path which Taiwan had to go through to achieve democracy and thus leverages on Taiwanese people's emotions and fears. Furthermore, she highlights the importance of protecting Taiwan's sovereignty vis-à-vis mainland China.

Finally, she asserts that "one country, two systems" is not a possible formula for Taiwan. In fact, as she mentions in a post on 10 October 2019, "Hong Kong, not far from us, is on the edge of disorder because of the failure of 'one country, two systems'", and refusing it "is the greatest consensus among the 23 million people in Taiwan, regardless of their party affiliation or position". In this case, the reference to the "China factor" is undoubted: Tsai not only reiterates her firm stance on China, but she also feels such confidence that she is able to consider it the "greatest consensus" in Taiwan.

An additional element that is possible to find in some of her posts is the reference to her *responsibility* towards defending and guarding Taiwanese people's democracy and freedom, claiming that, as long as she is in power, people in Taiwan "do not have to worry that Taiwan will become a second Hong Kong" and that she will "work hard to defend the country's sovereignty"[222]. Towards the end of the election campaign, in addition to these claims, Tsai affirms quite directly that people should vote for her because "if our generation does not defend Taiwan, those who will go to the streets [like Hong Kong's young people] will be our children".

Overall, the argumentation of these posts is quite demagogic: Tsai does not usually take objections and counterclaims into account, but she rather tries to bring about an effective discourse on an emotional level, making references to Taiwanese people's core values and ideals. What can be considered relevant to this analysis, though, is her consistency with the past. In fact, in September and October 2014, she was showing support on Facebook for Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement, and even in her post on 4 June 2015 (the anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre), she declared:

> Whether it is the June 4th, Wild Lily, Sunflower, or Umbrella Movement, they all send a message that the young generation has unlimited

[222] 12 August 2019

> possibilities, and their ideals and enthusiasm are an important driving force for social progress.

Her declarations on social media, thus, seem to have taken Hong Kong into consideration even before the outbreak of the 2019 protests. In fact, supporting social movements that counter China's influence has always been in line with the DPP's ideology and principles, to the extent that even some leaders of the Sunflower Movement, such as Lin Fei-fan, have joined the DPP later on. Nonetheless, as Chiu[223] contends, "although both Hong Kong and Taiwan were arguably under the influence of the China factor for some time [...], this is the first time that Hong Kong has become a salient issue in Taiwan's national elections". Therefore, even if Tsai had not exploited social movements in the former British colony as part of her political strategy before, it is clear that this time, the saliency of the "Hong Kong factor" pushed the DPP into using it to its advantage, thus giving rise to a securitisation discourse that gained momentum vis-à-vis the KMT, whose response to the Hong Kong unrest was quite slow and not as resolute.

Han Kuo-yu

"The first time they asked me about the anti-extradition bill issue, since I did not have complete information, I said: 'I do not know'". This is how former Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu started his first post on Facebook regarding the Hong Kong protests on 12 June 2019. Such a defensive approach will be one of the main characteristics of his social media discourse in the following declarations as well. Indeed, even in the last post on the issue, on 29 December 2019, he declares:

> I have expressed my position more than once. I support Hong Kong universal suffrage, I oppose "one country, two systems" and I insist on defending the sovereignty of the Republic of China. I have been very clear, there is no grey space. Please, do not pretend that you do not hear, or that you do not understand, and repeatedly question my approach to cross-Strait relations.

[223] Chiu, "The 'Hong Kong Factor' in the 2020 Taiwanese Presidential Election", 21 January 2020.

Looking at these words, it is clear that he is responding to criticism and that he is claiming that his declarations were either not comprehended or misunderstood. Nonetheless, if a broader look at his social media narrative on the issue is taken, it is possible to see that he is sending heterogeneous messages to the electorate.

First, Han criticises Tsai Ing-wen for "comparing Taiwan and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) all day"[224]. He declares that his party, conversely, does not use the anti-extradition movement in Hong Kong "as an instrument to gain votes"[225]. Furthermore, he calls on the DPP to "make laws and not to fill its mouth with empty promises without practical actions"[226].

Second, he emphasises the role of judiciary sovereignty in Taiwan. In other words, he suggests that "any suspect that committed crimes in Taiwan should come back to Taiwan to face justice"[227], since giving up judiciary sovereignty "for political factors [...] means stepping on national dignity"[228].

Third, Han invites the governments in Beijing and Hong Kong to seek a dialogue with the protesters. On 14 November 2019, for instance, after the police had entered the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Han asserts that he "cannot accept it" and that "the Hong Kong and Beijing governments should listen to the voices of the people". Overall, he reiterates his support for democracy in the former British colony.

Finally, Han refuses the idea of comparing Hong Kong and Taiwan. In other words, he stresses the fact that Taiwan, unlike Hong Kong, is a free and sovereign country, and thus they cannot be comparable. In addition, he promises that he will defend Taiwan's way of life, reiterating his non-acceptance of "one country, two systems".

Altogether, these comments have a substantial lack of *fil rouge*. In fact, they show that Han Kuo-yu's narrative is missing a clear strategy, which appears, instead, quite contradictory. On the one hand, Han insists on the need to preserve Taiwan's judiciary sovereignty, thus

[224] 10 October 2019
[225] 12 June 2019
[226] 12 December 2019
[227] 21 October 2019
[228] 25 October 2019

disregarding the reason that brings Hong Kong people to the streets. On the other hand, he highlights the importance of a dialogue between the government and the protesters, even suggesting that "a democratic universal suffrage, to directly elect the chief executive and the members of the parliament, should be implemented"[229]. These latter declarations, in particular, show potential support for the protesters in Hong Kong. Yet, Han criticises Tsai for her claims on Hong Kong and rejects the idea of exploiting the situation for political ends. Therefore, it is very likely that the absence of a coherent narrative has confused his followers in Taiwan.

Furthermore, when looking for posts on his Facebook page regarding Hong Kong, nothing is found prior to June 2019. In other words, Han's political discourse strategy on social media had never before taken uprisings in the former British colony into account, whether in a positive or negative manner.

As mentioned above, the more an issue is weighing on the public agenda, the more parties will try to fight for its ownership. However, the argument here is that moving towards the ownership of an issue that is not in line with the party's *recognised* ideals and principles could be counterproductive. On the one hand, it could temporarily raise support for the party. On the other hand, though, it could confuse the electorate even more, which would likely choose the party that was perceived as the "owner" of the issue for longer. Here, again, the consistency with the past is essential: if Han had been vocal on similar issues before 2019, his position would have been more stable and trustworthy for Taiwanese people. Conversely, brief and contradictory declarations on social media cannot supposedly make up for the lack of engagement showed during the rest of his career.

In general, Han's comments on the protests in Hong Kong are few and chaotic, and the real intention of his discourse is difficult to identify. The perception that is gotten here is that, due to its perceived saliency, he could not completely ignore the topic, but at the same time, he was neither eager to, nor capable of, exploiting it. What media usually call a "China-friendly" politician, thus, probably felt constrained to refer to the issue, whilst he failed to

[229] 14 November 2019

gain resonance among the public, as the outcome of the 2020 presidential election demonstrates.

CONCLUSION

The reason this research is "preliminary" is that much more could be said – and should be explored – about the "Hong Kong factor" and its impacts on Taiwanese politics. Nonetheless, some early conclusions can be made. First, the "Hong Kong factor" did influence the political discourse in Taiwan. The difference lies in the degree of influence that it had on Tsai and Han's discourses: whereas Tsai's narrative focused greatly on the issue and obtained considerable attention from the public, Han was not able to design a comparably effective discourse strategy to implement on his social media, in particular, because of his nonuniform claims.

Second, Tsai gave rise to a successful securitisation discourse, whilst Han tried to understate the implications of the "Hong Kong factor" for Taiwan. Indeed, President Tsai was able to evoke existential anxiety among Taiwanese people – namely, the potential threat coming from China and its desire to implement "one country, two systems" in the ROC as well. On the other hand, Han did not construct a narrative based on people's fears and feelings, but he rather concentrated on criticising Tsai for doing so and focused on the impossibility of Taiwan becoming like Hong Kong. It is likely that people in Taiwan were touched more by Tsai's discourse because she spoke to them on an emotional level, whereas Han brought about a more aggressive and pragmatic position.

Thus, the "Hong Kong factor" probably constituted the winning card for Tsai Ing-wen. As Christina Lai states, "as the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong evolved into violent confrontations, President Tsai began to rise in the polls"[230]. It is fair to assume that the President of Taiwan was able to be re-elected not only due to the context she had been presented with but also for the way in which she was capable of exploiting it. In other words,

[230] The National Bureau of Asian Research, "The Impact of the Hong Kong Protests on the Election in Taiwan. Interview with Christina Lai", 23 January 2020, https://www.nbr.org/publication/the-impact-of-the-hong-kong-protests-on-the-election-in-taiwan/ (accessed 25 April, 2020).

if her narrative had not taken Hong Kong into account, the results of the election would have likely been different.

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100% TZ FLAVA

Hybrid Hip Hop on the Swahili Coast

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the hybrid nature of hip hop from Tanzania and Zanzibar on the East African Coast. First, it discusses the music known as taarab to explain the long-standing tradition of hybrid genres in this region. Then it explores how, since the 1990s, hip hop has followed a similar path of cultural assimilation to taarab, and how contemporary hip hop artists draw from both local and global influences. It also considers what hip hop means for the people of the Swahili coast and how the internet has advanced the circulation of music from this region.

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KEYWORDS: hip-hop; Tanzanian; hybridity

INTRODUCTION

The countries that surround the Indian Ocean are bound by relationships and commonalities in music, culture and language. These were established centuries ago by traders, migrants, enslaved peoples and colonial settlers. The island of Zanzibar, located off the coast of Tanzania, is defined by an eclectic culture, characterised by the circulation of people throughout both the Indian Ocean and East Africa.[231] The music genre, taarab is a product of this circulation of cultures. It was born of the Egyptian urban classical music known as tarab, brought to the island by the Omani, Sultan Barghash in 1880. Zanzibari taarab can be identified by its use of Middle Eastern instrumentation, heterophonic melodies, Kiswahili lyrics and the Arabic modal system known as maqamat.[232]

In the 21st century, this movement of culture and music has continued throughout Zanzibar and the East African Coast as the influence of Indian Ocean culture continues to permeate into contemporary popular music. I explore how hip hop artists from Tanzania and Zanzibar are influenced by the circulation of music and culture throughout the countries of the Swahili Coast. By conducting a case study of a piece of music by the artists Ison 'Zenj Boy' Mistari and G. Nako, I consider how their use of language, visual aesthetics and instrumentation are symptomatic of the wider circulation of music and culture throughout this region. I draw on Catherin Appert's[233] and Misa Kibona Clark's[234] writing on African popular music in my exploration of how North American hip hop has fused with local Tanzanian music cultures. Jan Blommaert's[235] discussion of the Kiswahili language also elucidates hip hop's wider influence in Tanzania. I also use Homi Bhabha's concept of "cultural hybridity", the idea that culture is not fixed but is constantly moving and developing,[236] to demonstrate how Tanzanian hip hop artists align themselves with both

[231] Sugata Bose. *A hundred horizons: The Indian Ocean in the age of global empire*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), 6–7.
[232] Hilda Keil, "Travel on a Song –The Roots of Zanzibar Taarab." *African Music* 9, no 2 (2012): 2–4, https://doi.org/10.21504/amj.v9i2.1805.
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[236] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 2004): 296–297.

traditional East African culture and contemporary global hip hop. Finally, using Akbar Keshodkar's[237] discussion of movement and identity, I explore how the internet provides new opportunities for the circulation of music and culture from the Indian Ocean and East Africa.

TAARAB AND HIP HOP

In order to discuss the influence of taarab on hip hop, it is important to, first of all, explain how taarab progressed from a form of Egyptian urban-classical music into a genre that embodies many different elements of Zanzibari culture. Originally, taarab was sung in Arabic and was intended to entertain the ruling classes of Zanzibar, exclusively. However, during the 1920s and 30s, the music migrated into the public sphere and became popularised throughout the whole of Zanzibari society.[238] This change was largely initiated by the Zanzibari singer, Siti Binti Saad who in 1928, travelled with her band to Bombay in India to record traditional taarab songs but sang them in Kiswahili rather than Arabic.[239] This Africanisation of taarab progressed into more localised forms of the genre that incorporated different elements of traditional ngoma (pan-Bantu term for music). With this, the music became "distinctly identifiable as Zanzibari and Swahili".[240] An example of this progression is evident in kidumbak, a style of taarab which is sung in Kiswahili and played by a small ensemble of fiddle, drums, shakers made from coconut shells called cherewas and a washtub bass called a sanduku. By the 1960s many other forms of taarab that utilised Swahili poetry had emerged along the East African Coast. Singers replaced sentiments of love in Arabic songs with laments of social injustice, women's rights and other issues that resonated with the Swahili people.[241] These new forms of taarab created by artists such as Siti Binti Saad exemplify the long-standing tradition of Zanzibaris absorbing different cultures to create something that is new and entirely Swahili. Similarly,

[237] Akbar Keshodkar, *Tourism and Social Change in Post-Socialist Zanzibar: Struggles for Identity, Movement, and Civilization*. (Washington: Lexington Books, 2013), 6.
[238] Keil, "Travel on a Song," 83–84.
[239] Laura Fair, "Siti Binti Saad (c 1885–1950). 'Giving voice to the voiceless.' Swahili Music and the global recording industry in the 1920 and 1930s." in *The Human Tradition in Modern Africa,* ed. Dennis Cordell. (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 62–63.
[240] Janet Topp-Fargion, "The Role of Women in Taarab in Zanzibar: An Historical Examination of a Process of 'Africanisation'." *The World of Music* 35, no 2 (1993): 124–125, www.jstor.org/stable/43615569.
[241] Topp-Fargion, "The Role of Women in Taarab": 124–125.

the circulation of hip hop music throughout the East African Coast also embodies this process of assimilation and innovation within Swahili culture.

In his study of hip hop in Africa, Eric Charry's proposes that cassette tapes and films, that circulated with the movement of people from diasporic communities in the United States and Europe, first brought hip hop to Africa.[242] When this music emerged in Tanzania in the 1980s, it was listened to largely by privileged and educated youths,[243] and local artists were more culturally aligned with music from the United States.[244] However, hip hop rapidly became assimilated into Swahili culture. This was largely initiated by the rapper Saleh J who is of Arab descent. In 1990 he won a rap competition in Dar es Salaam by translating the lyrics of "Ice Ice Baby", by American rapper Vanilla Ice, into Kiswahili. Saleh J also changed some of the lyrics to align with issues that would resonate with the Tanzanian audience. In doing so, he instigated the wider assimilation of hip hop by Tanzanian artists and by the mid-1990s others started rapping in their own languages.[245] It is possible to compare the development of hip hop in Tanzania to that of taarab music in Zanzibar as both genres emerged through the movement of people. Also, both were originally reserved for the privileged few and gained wider popularity by incorporating the local Kiswahili language into their lyrics. I would also argue that the competitive elements of hip hop, i.e. "rap battles", aided its development as it bore similarities with other competitive music traditions from the East African Coast, for example, competitions between women's taarab groups[246] and Tufo choirs in Mozambique.[247] These similarities between elements of hip hop and localised music saw the genre become fully ingrained as a form of contemporary Tanzanian culture.

This exchange of influences between hip hop and Tanzanian culture is also symbiotic. Not only has the Kiswahili language been a major influence on hip hop but also since the 1990s

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[242] Eric Charry, "A Capsule History of African Rap", in *African Expressive Cultures: Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World*, ed Eric Charry (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2012): 11–12.
[243] Birgit Englert. "'Kuchanganyachanganya': Topic and Language Choices in Tanzanian Youth Culture." *Journal of African Cultural Studies,* 20, no 1 (2008): 45, www.jstor.org/stable/25473397.
[244] Charry, "African Rap", 2–4.
[245] Charry, "African Rap", 12–13.
[246] Topp-Fargion, "The Role of Women in Taarab": 118–119.
[247] Signe Arnfred, "Tufo Dancing: Muslim Women's Culture in Northern Mozambique' *Lusotopie,* 11 (2004): 54–55, https://www.persee.fr/doc/luso_1257-0273_2004_num_11_1_1588.

hip hop has become so ingrained in Tanzanian culture that it too has left demarcations of its influence. Along with music, hip hop imported a wider culture of heterographic codes used in artists names, song titles, graffiti and slogans which were widely adopted by the Tanzanian youth.[248] For example, "Bongo Flava" is the term given to a style of Tanzanian hip hop that blends elements of R&B, Afro-pop and dance music. Whilst the music's blend of local and global styles is significant in itself, the term 'flava' is a Kiswahili abbreviation of the English word, 'flavour'.[249] This hip hop slang term has been appropriated by other aspects of Swahili society and is used commercial advertising. For example, 'flava' appears in the slogan of a popular Tanzanian beer brand as "100% TZ FLAVA".[250] Significantly, this demonstrates how the influence of hip hop has exceeded youth counterculture and permeated into the lexicon of those who exercise the hegemonic power in Tanzania.

Despite such mainstream recognition, hip hop remains as a popular music choice for the Tanzanian youth. Much like taarab, hip hop's popularity has been aided by its ability to address the deeper issues affecting society. It is common for tracks to contain strong political messages as well as discussing health issues such as AIDS and Malaria.[251] By addressing such issues, the genre has gained popularity amongst a highly political Tanzanian youth population. In his discussion of Tanzanian hip hop culture, Alex Perullo argues,

> [The Tanzanian] youth have turned a foreign musical form into a critical medium of social empowerment whereby they are able to create a sense of community among other urban youth, voice their ideas and opinions to a broad listening public.[252]

[248] H. Samy Alim et al., "Global Ill-Literacies: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Literacy." *Review of Research in Education,* 35 (2011): 122–123, www.jstor.org/stable/41349014.
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[250] Blommaert, Jan, "Redefining the Sociolinguistic 'local'". 9–10.
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[252] Alex Perullo, "Hooligans and Heroes: Youth Identity and Hip-Hop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania." *Africa Today,* 51, no 4 (2005): 75, www.jstor.org/stable/4187688.

This demonstrates how, for Tanzanian youths, hip hop provides a sense of agency that cannot be found in other genres. Also, through association with a global hip hop culture, young people are able to relate their localised issues with those affecting youth populations in other countries. With this in mind, it is clear that many hip hop artists provide an essential link between the music of the Swahili Coast and contemporary music from around the world. An example of this follows in my study of the artists Ison "Zenj Boy" Mistari and G. Nako, who exemplify the "cultural hybridity" of contemporary Tanzanian hip hop.[253]

Case Study: Ison "Zenj Boy" Mistari ft. G Nako – Mazabe

The rapper known as Ison "Zenj Boy" Mistari is from Stone Town on Zanzibar and is a member of a small group of musicians associated with the label Stone Town Records. Mistari's sound has been dubbed as a hybrid between contemporary, urban sounds and traditional Zanzibari music.[254] Catherine Appert argues that "to talk about African popular musics [sic]... as hybrid is often to work from and between dichotomies of rural/urban, local/global, and traditional/modern".[255] Mistari embodies this hybridity in his music as he exemplifies aspects of both contemporary global hip hop and traditional Zanzibari music. On many of his tracks he both raps and plays the violin, an instrument that is common in taarab music, whilst also featuring a collection of instruments from both Western music as well as other countries from Swahili Coast. For example, the track "Mazabe", featuring the artist G Nako from Dar es Salaam, includes Western synthesisers, acoustic drums and layered backing vocals which align the track with a contemporary global hip hop sound.[256] However, this song also features a taarab style violin solo, by Mistari himself, and the main melody throughout is played on a synthesised lamellaphone. Lamellaphones are a family of instruments played throughout the East African Coast, for example, the mbira (thumb piano) from Zimbabwe.[257] The use of a lamellaphone on this track locates the music within wider East African traditions and signifies Mistari's recognition of the circulation of culture

[253] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 296–297.
[254] Salome Gregory. "Hip hop from Zanzibar to the world." *The Citizen Online,* (June 2019).
[255] Catherine Appert, "On Hybridity in African Popular Music" 281–282.
[256] Ison Mistari featuring G Nako. "Mazabe". Single. Stone Town Records. 2019, Digital.
[257] David McNamee,. "Hey, what's that sound: Thumb piano." *The Guardian Online,* November 1, 2010, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/nov/01/whats-that-sound-thumb-piano.

and music throughout Southern and East Africa. However, the synthesised and quantised sound of the instrument further demonstrates wider contemporary influences on this music.

The music video for "Mazabe" also shows this hybridity between the local and the global. It features people in traditional Bantu dress, Maasai robes with Mistari and G Nako both wearing the clothing of an Omani trader. The video takes place on an idyllic Zanzibari beach with traditional dhows sailing on the Indian Ocean.[258] Whilst such images are typical of Zanzibari culture, the visuals used in this video evoke the same sense of 'home' that is prominent within global hip hop culture. For example, the American hip hop artist Kendrick Lamar also uses images of his hometown of Compton in the music video for his song "Alright".[259]

Another way that Mazabe demonstrates hybridity is through the use of language. Jan Blommaert argues that "language is easily seen as one of the key ingredients of the construction of group identities".[260] In "Mazabe", Mistari raps in a combination of both Swahili and English and in doing so he is aligning himself with two identities: one of the national culture of Tanzania and the other with other global hip hop artists. Lyrically, "Mazabe" maintains the strong political sentiment that is prevalent within Tanzanian hip hop as Mistari sings in Kiswahili to addresses the social and political issues which are affecting many East African countries. Significantly, Mistari changes to English to sing a lyric that refers to colonialism, slavery and to quote directly from the words of Martin Luther King. He sings, "stop rising, colonising, slave-trade, black man. I have a dream."[261] In referencing the experiences of black people during the civil rights movement in America, he is connecting with a global hip hop culture as this lyrical theme is also common within US hip hop. For example, the albums, "To Pimp a Butterfly" by Kendrick Lamar, "Apocalypse 91... The Enemy Strikes Black" by Public Enemy and "Black on Both Sides" by Mos Def, are just a few American hip hop albums which address these issues. By choosing to sing this

[258] Zenj Boy. "Ison "Zenj Boy" Mistari ft. G Nako – Mazabe (Official Video)." YouTube Video, June 23, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZJRdzk1DDc.
[259] Kendrick Lamar. "Kendrick Lamar – Alright." YouTube Video, 6.54, June 30, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-48u_uWMHY.
[260] Blommaert, "Redefining the Sociolinguistic 'local'.", 7–8.
[261] Mistari, "Mazabe".

part in English, Mistari is directing his words towards the global hip hop community. By aligning these North American civil rights issues with the colonialism and slave-trade that have been experienced by people from the Swahili Coast, Mistari is showing solidarity with the struggles of many African Americans.

By displaying attributes of both global hip hop and traditional Zanzibari music Ison Mistari and G. Nako uphold Homi Bhabha's theory of "cultural hybridity". Through incorporating different styles, they create something that is completely unique, occupying a "third space" between tradition and modernity.[262] I would also argue that Ison Mistari continues the longstanding tradition of hybridity in Indian Ocean music culture. His contemporary incarnation of Zanzibari music is, in fact, indicative of the Swahili ability to combine local traditions with foreign influences. Furthermore, Mistari's music provides evidence that culture is not something that is fixed; rather, it is constantly in motion, creating an amalgamation of influences which can transform cultural identity. Moreover, I would argue that the "hybridity" displayed by Ison Mistari goes even further than previous Indian Ocean traditions as it combines culture, language and music of the Indian Ocean with influences from across the globe.

The Internet and Zanzibari Culture

In the 21st century, access to the wealth of information on the internet has accelerated the circulation of music and culture from the East African Coast. In his discussion of movement and identity in Zanzibar, Akbar Keshodkar states, "as Zanzibaris strive to move through the post-socialist landscape they are pursuing new 'routes' to establish their 'roots'".[263] Whilst this is referring to the Zanzibari revolution of 1964, I would argue that this point remains pertinent within contemporary Zanzibari society as one of the new 'routes' for Zanzibaris to establish their 'roots' is found through the internet. With the increasing usage of social media throughout Tanzania, new methods of file sharing have provided artists with access to a wider audience and further opportunities for engagement from their fan base.[264] As a result, artists have newfound opportunities to display their affiliation

[262] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 296–297.
[263] Akbar Keshodkar, *Tourism and Social Change in Post-Socialist Zanzibar*: 6–7
[264] Msia Kibona Clark, "The Role of New and Social Media." 1117–1118.

in traditional Zanzibari culture. For example, in an Instagram post, Ison Mistari is shown to be playing the violin with a Qanun, also a traditional taarab instrument.[265] Undoubtedly, this is a display of Mistari's 'roots' in Zanzibari music culture but is done so via the 'route' of contemporary social media.

Furthermore, it is through social media that it is possible for the music and culture of the Indian Ocean to circulate beyond the geographical boundaries to which it was once confined. Georgina Born argues that "[it is] the double mutability, the flux-form-of-existence of digitized music, that gives it a special capacity in spinning social connectedness".[266] The "social connectedness" discussed here is apparent in the comments on YouTube video for 'Mazabe'. This contemporary 'route' provides a platform for fans from Europe and America to interact with Mistari and G. Nako, and for the people of the East African diaspora to connect with the culture of their 'homeland'. For instance, one user writes, "Ndguyagu beautiful job message from baharia. [sic] USA".[267] 'Ndguyagu"', is Kiswahili for "my brother", highlighting how a Kiswahili speaker from America is able to connect with their East African culture via the internet.

Conclusion

As I have discussed, the assimilation of hip hop into Swahili culture was largely enabled through artists rapping the Kiswahili language and rap battles which resonated with a long-standing culture of musical competitions in this region. Moreover, the tradition of other hybrid music genres on the Swahili coast are also key to hip hop's success in the region. I also argue that the early work of the taarab pioneer Siti Binti Saad, has been influential in this incorporation of hip hop. When she recorded taarab in Kiswahili rather than Arabic, a century ago, she paved the way for contemporary artists to follow.

Today, the magnitude of hip hop's success in Tanzania is evident in its influence on commercial advertising whilst still providing an essential form of agency for a highly

[265] ZenjBoy_tz. "I Have a Dream" Instagram Video, December 26 2019. https://www.instagram.com/p/B6iaEbcJjQh/.
[266] Georgina Born. "On Musical Mediation: Ontology, Technology and Creativity." *Twentieth-Century Music,* 2 (2005), 29. DOI: 10.1017/S147857220500023X.
[267] Khamis Juma. Comment on: Zenj Boy, "Ison "Zenj Boy" Mistari ft. G Nako – Mazabe (Official Video)." YouTube Video, 3.31, June 23, 2019.

politicised youth population. Contemporary artists like Ison Mistari and G Nako are now able to use visual aesthetics, instrumentation and lyrics from both East African traditions and global hip hop, to create music that is a hybrid of traditional Swahili and global hip hop influences. However, it is to be considered that the most significant influence on Tanzanian hip hop over the years has been the ability of the Swahili to adopt foreign cultures into something that is entirely its own. As the circulation of people and music from this region is accelerated through the internet, it will be interesting to observe how this dictates the future of music from the region. I do not doubt that whatever this music sounds like, it will be entirely Swahili.

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FROM VICTIMS TO COLONIZERS

A Comparative Study of 'Repatriated Indigenous Communities' in Israel and Liberia

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ABSTRACT

Popular discourses have painted Israelis and Liberians as two peoples who fled persecution to return to their ancestral homelands. The oppression of blacks in America and Jews in Europe is without question. However, historical analysis indicates that the migration of Americo-Liberians to West Africa and European Jews to Palestine are unique examples of settler colonialism. Previous comparative work on Israel and Liberia is almost non-existent. Therefore, my writing attempts to fill the gap in academic literature. Throughout this article, I answer the question: "How and why did these two persecuted peoples perpetuate Western colonialism?" through the lens of comparative analysis and post-colonial theory. I hope that this work will open the door for a future comparative study of Israel and Liberia, black settler colonialism, and repatriated indigenous communities. Ultimately, I will demonstrate that, although they fled America and Europe for wholly legitimate reasons, Americo-Liberians and Israelis simultaneously adopted the role of colonial aggressors in West Africa and Palestine.

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KEYWORDS:

Israel, Palestine, Liberia, indigenous, repatriation, colonialism

Introduction

For centuries, Jews in Europe and blacks in America have been persecuted by a white, Christian majority. One potential solution to this oppression was the establishment of a 'homeland' for these communities, based on the cultural or racial attributes that led to exclusion in their countries of origin.[268] In both cases, this process was framed in public discourse as the repatriation of an indigenous community to its former ancestral homeland and resulted in the colonization of Palestine and West Africa. Eventually, this colonization led to the establishment of the nation-states of Israel and Liberia. While very little comparative scholarship currently exists on these two cases, I believe that the idea of repatriated indigenous communities merits consideration due to the longstanding conflicts they have generated. In this paper, I will compare the evolution of these two states, beginning with Israel as the paradigmatic case, and comparing Liberia to it. I will argue three main points: 1) The creation of Israel and Liberia was a direct response to the problems of exclusion and persecution faced by blacks and Jews in the countries from which they emigrated. 2) The immigrating populations faced substantial challenges transitioning to their new environments and required significant support from external actors to remain viable. 3) Geographic territory and religious ideals played significant roles in both cases and served as powerful incentives for colonization. Finally, I will demonstrate that the colonial projects of Israel and Liberia were harmful, illegitimate, and have resulted in generations of conflict and trauma.

The Case of Israel

The Jewish people are acutely aware of the many hardships they have suffered, from slavery in ancient Egypt to genocide in Hitler's Europe, and this painful history plays a defining role in Jewish identity. Over time, the communal identity shared by European Jews evolved from being religious in nature (Judaism) to secular (Jewishness). In the latter part of the 19th century, the new Jewish secular society in Eastern Europe began to feel that social exclusion and violent persecution could be solved through political articulation and

[268] Mark Krain, "A Comparative Study of Transplantations of Nationalism: The Cases of Israel, Liberia, and Sierra Leone," *International Review of Modern Sociology* Vol. 2, No. 2 (September, 1972): 168.

organization. However, this changed with legal restrictions and periodic pogroms, which, combined with the lengthy Dreyfus Affair, turned public opinion in Europe even further against Jews, despite the soldier's eventual exoneration.[269]

By the 1880s, ongoing Jewish suffering and the desire for a political solution led to the rise of Zionism and foundation of the Zionist World Organization (ZWO) by Europe's Jewish elite. In 1888, the First Zionist Congress was convened in Basel, Switzerland with the belief that European Jews were facing an urgent crisis. The Zionist leadership, including Congress Chair Theodor Herzl, ultimately agreed that Jews would not enjoy equality and safety anywhere in the world unless they possessed a homeland of their own.[270] However, the notion of just what constituted a homeland and how it would be established was unclear and the subject of intense debate. The Zionists had been considering South American options at the time, including Leon Pinsker's 1882 proposal of Argentina.[271] However, by the conclusion of the Congress, the ZWO had produced their manifesto, known as the Basel Program, which pledged to work for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.[272]

Palestine, then part of the Ottoman Empire, became increasingly important to Jews in the 19th century. Uri Abulof explains the belief of religious Zionists that "Eretz Israel" (The Land of Israel) was promised to the ancient Israelites when they entered into a covenant with God.[273] As part of fulfilling this covenant, modern Jews are obligated to occupy and defend the land in a way that embodies the ideals of the Torah. Additionally, the city of Jerusalem has served as a symbol of the Holy Land for generations of diaspora Jews, helping to maintain their connection to Palestine.[274] What the religion of Judaism held for centuries as a central tenet of the faith, secular Jewishness declared as a political goal: Return to the Holy Land.[275]

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[269] Nancy Fitch, "Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France," *The American Historical Review* Vol. 97, No. 1 (1992): 55.
[270] Salo W. Baron, *Great ages and ideas of the Jewish people*, L. W. Schwarz (Ed.) (New York: Random House, 1956), 435.
[271] See: Leon Pinsker, *Auto-emancipation* (Maccabaean, 1906).
[272] Zionist World Organization, 1897.
[273] Uriel Abulof, "The Roles of Religion in National Legitimation: Judaism and Zionism's Elusive Quest for Legitimacy," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Vol. 53, No. 3 (2014): 525.
[274] Nissan Mindel, "The Three Daily Prayers," *Chabad.org*.
[275] Abulof, "The Roles of Religion in National Legitimation" (2014): 525.

Despite this, many Jews were slow to embrace Zionism due to religious uncertainties, believing that re-establishing a Jewish national home in the Biblical land of Israel by human agency, rather than Divine intervention, was blasphemous. Religious Jews initially viewed Zionism as a form of rebellion against God, as the movement sought to expedite Salvation and the arrival of the Messiah, which was expressly forbidden.[276] Samson and Fishman have examined the religious legitimation of Zionism by the late Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. As a right-wing religious ideologue, Kook responded to criticisms of the Zionist project by asserting that, "Zionism was not merely a political movement by secular Jews. It was actually a tool of God to promote His divine scheme, and to initiate the return of the Jews to their homeland."[277] This belief eventually came to be tolerated, if not embraced, by the majority of religious Jews, save for extreme left-wing Haredi groups like the Neturei Karta, who reject the Israeli state and advocate for Palestinian rights.[278]

In 1917, the political support the Zionists sought to facilitate the return of the Jews to Eretz Israel was delivered in the form of the Balfour Declaration. This announcement saw the British government pledge assistance for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.[279] The publication of the Balfour Declaration was tantamount to an official recognition that European Jews were in crisis, and relocation to Palestine was the solution to their problems. Still, questions always surrounded the legitimacy and legality of the British promise to facilitate the settlement of Jews in Palestine. Not the least of these issues was that at the time the Balfour Declaration was published, the region was still under Ottoman control.

Yet, as persecution of European Jews continued, the constant danger motivated their accelerated emigration from Central and Eastern Europe. In this context, the Zionist elite was able to influence the British government's issuance of the 1922 White Paper, which saw the Empire reaffirm its support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.[280] However, despite having little authority to make promises of this nature to the Zionists or

[276] Babylonian Talmud *Ketubah* 111A.
[277] David Samson and Tzvi Fishman, *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, (Jerusalem: Torat Eretz Yisrael Publications 1991), 12.
[278] Neturei Karta, "About Us," https://www.nkusa.org.
[279] Arthur James Balfour, "The Balfour Declaration" (London: British Foreign Office, 1917).
[280] Winston S. Churchill, "British White Paper, 1922" [Cmd. 1700] Correspondence with the Palestine Arab Delegation and the Zionist Organization.

anyone else, the British had already made conflicting commitments to the Arabs. In 1917, British diplomat Sir Henry McMahon had pledged his support for Sherif Hussein of Mecca to establish a Hashemite kingdom (including Palestine) in the Arabian Peninsula in exchange for his participation in a revolt against the Ottomans.[281] These incompatible promises by the British would directly contribute to violent conflict in the Middle East for generations to come.

British support notwithstanding, the Zionists fully expected that the indigenous Arab population would challenge the immigration of a large number of European Jews to Palestine, an area the Arabs long considered a homeland of their own. In a 1915 address to a Jewish audience in New York City, David Ben-Gurion articulated this impending conflict in Zionist terms. Ben-Gurion, who would go on to become the first Prime Minister of Israel, stated that, like American pioneers, the Zionists would fight "wild nature and wilder redskins" in Palestine.[282] While clashes between Arabs and Jews in post-WWI British Mandate Palestine took a different form than the violence the Jews experienced in Eastern and Central Europe, they were similarly acrimonious. The infamous intercommunal riots of 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1933 led to the bloodshed of both Arabs and Jews across the region.[283]

Indeed, Palestinian Arabs reacted strongly to the mass immigration and land acquisition practices of the incoming European Jews (Ashkenazi), which were necessary precursors for achieving the Zionist goal of re-establishing the Jews in Eretz Israel. When European Jewish settlers began arriving in significant numbers to Palestine in the late 19th century, their approach towards the native population was emblematic of traditional colonial attitudes towards "savage" and "uncivilized" peoples.[284] By lifting the region's indigenous Jews out of their "primitive" conditions of "poverty and superstition," the settlers saw themselves as benevolent modernizers, bringing a western society to the Middle East that would be characterized by democracy, tolerance, and human rights.[285] To this end, Zionist

[281] Ali Ibrahim Al-Bashayreh, "The British policy and its impact in the implementation of the Balfour Declaration," *Asian Social Science* Vol. 8, No. 7 (2012): 229.
[282] David Ben-Gurion, "Earning a Homeland," *Rebirth and Destiny of Israel*, trans. M. Nurock (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 3.
[283] W.F. Abboushi, "The Road to Rebellion Arab Palestine in the 1930s," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring, 1977): 42.
[284] Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism* (New York: Verso, 2008), 62-73.
[285] Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel," *Social Text* (Autumn, 1988): 3.

discourse painted the colonization of Palestine as a means of "saving" Middle Eastern Jews from their Arab "captors."[286]

The original Zionist settlers were largely comprised of a first-world elite who spoke European languages, were predominantly secular, and segregated themselves from Palestine's Arab population, both Jewish and Muslim.[287] Zionist leaders actively discouraged Jewish settlers from learning Arabic and turned Arabic-speaking, Middle Eastern Jews away from their Christian and Muslim neighbours, drawing a clear social distinction between Jewish and "non-Jewish" communities.[288] Charles D. Smith highlights how, from the beginning, Zionist settlers never intended to integrate themselves into Arab society. Instead, they sought to create a "new" Jewish society in Palestine (the Yishuv) that would be culturally, politically, and socially distinct from its surroundings, despite the enormous challenges involved.[289] Moreover, like other settler-colonial movements, the Zionist project also aimed to establish an autarkic economy, independent and superior to its indigenous Arab counterpart.

By 1922, the Yishuv was already accomplishing this goal, by running its own schools and implementing its own welfare system under the Histadrut, the labour federation organized and later headed by Ben-Gurion, all under the legal protection of the British Mandate.[290] Simah Flapan argues that the Zionist's push for "100 per cent Jewish labour" in the settler economy was the most significant factor in ensuring economic, social, and territorial separation between Palestine's indigenous population and the Yishuv.[291] With foreign capital flowing in from American and European benefactors and the Jewish boycott of Arab labour, the Yishuv industrialized and expanded its market at a rate that considerably surpassed the indigenous economy.[292]

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[286] Ibid.
[287] Ella Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims," *Social Text* Vol. 19, No. 20 (Autumn, 1988): 2.
[288] Thompson, "Moving Zionism to Asia," *Colonialism and the Jews* (2017): 320.
[289] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 122.
[290] Elizabeth F. Thompson, "Moving Zionism to Asia: Texts and tactics of Colonial Settlement, 1917–1921," *Colonialism and the Jews* (2017): 320.
[291] Simah Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, 199.
[292] Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, 62–73.

The British could have acted at any time to restrict Jewish immigration and control the acquisition of land.[293] Their failure to do so, combined with the increasing economic marginalization of Palestinian Arabs, largely prompted the 1936 Arab general strike. This preceded the three years known as the 'Arab Revolt' against increasing Jewish immigration and British rule in Palestine.[294] By 1937, the British felt their hand had been forced and established the Peel Commission to uncover the causes of unrest in Palestine. In the aftermath, the British withdrew critical elements of support for the Zionist project, placing severe restrictions on Jewish immigration and land acquisition.[295] These back-and-forth issues became a zero-sum game: any concession to the Arabs was a loss for the Jews and vice versa.[296]

The restrictions implemented by the Peel Commission, combined with the proposed characteristics of the Jewish state, represented a significant threat to the Zionist project as well as Jews currently living in Palestine. More specifically, both the curbs on immigration and restrictions on land acquisition threatened the population growth and economic viability of the burgeoning Jewish community. More pressingly, at this very time, the necessity for Jewish emigration from Europe was most desperate. The gathering momentum of the Holocaust saw the most severe pressure yet for immigration to Palestine.

However, despite the significance of curtailing Jewish immigration at a vital juncture, Salo Baron rightly argues that the Peel Commission's defining act was the recommendation to partition the Mandate into separate Arab and Jewish states.[297] While the Zionists accepted this plan in principle, a combination of factors, including the backpedaling of British support and staunch Arab resistance to the partition proposal, convinced them that they could rely only on their own resources to achieve statehood. To this end, throughout the 1940s, Jewish paramilitary organizations such as the Irgun and Stern Gang carried out terror attacks against Arab and British targets across Palestine. These acts, combined with

[293] George E. Kirk, *A Short History of the Middle East* (New York: Praeger, 1959), 187–189.
[294] Kirk, *History of the Middle East*, 187–189.
[295] Baron, *Ideas of the Jewish people*, 446–447.
[296] Kirk, *History of the Middle East*, 153–159.
[297] Baron, *Ideas of the Jewish people*, 446–447.

increased illegal immigration by European Jews, served to put enormous pressure on the British to free themselves of the burden Mandate Palestine had become.[298] Finally, the conclusion of the Second World War and the British decision to relinquish the fate of Palestine to the United Nations resulted in a Jewish victory, and the Israeli Declaration of Independence on May 14th, 1948.

The Case of Liberia

Like the Jews who had experienced generations of persecution in Europe and elsewhere, black slaves were keenly aware of their own suffering at the hands of the slave trade. In the late 18th and early 19th century, the abolition movement was well underway in pre-Civil War America. At the time, slavery was the primary concern of American society, especially in the middle and southern Atlantic states where many plantations were located. The status of 'freedmen' (former slaves who had been emancipated) was seen as a pressing issue, as the black population had doubled between 1789 and 1819.[299] Within white American society, the freedmen were seen as a potentially agitating and rebellious demographic. This was due to the general feeling that freedmen should not aspire to legal equality with whites. Any notion of equality threatened the doctrine of racial superiority that was inherent to the institution of slavery.[300] Emblematic of the failure to fully emancipate black slaves, the legal restrictions levied upon them became more arduous throughout the 1820s. Indeed, all states implemented legislative restrictions on the economic, political, and social activity of freedmen, a move that coincided with the dramatic increase in their numbers.[301]

The constant danger of kidnapping or malicious use of the legal system (i.e. the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850) to snare freedmen back into slavery was perhaps comparable to the violent pogroms experienced by Jews in Europe. But, while the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe were left to fend for themselves by the Christian majority, and thus comprised the vast majority of those who recognized and reacted to their problem, those who responded to the plight of the black freedmen were predominantly white. Indeed, two

[298] Y.S. Brenner, "The 'Stern Gang' 1940–48," *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 2, No. 1 (1965): 5.
[299] Robert E. Anderson, *Liberia: America's American Friend* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), Ch. 5.
[300] Krain, "Transplantations of Nationalism," 175.
[301] John H. Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 213–219.

groups of American elites felt compelled to address the situation. The first were altruistic and sympathetic abolitionists, mainly businessmen, clergy, and politicians. They were less likely to view the freedmen as a threat and sympathized with their situation. The second group were slaveholders whose primary motivation was the fear that freedmen would incite a slave rebellion against plantation owners and aid those who remained enslaved to escape.[302] From an early stage, both groups agreed that the remedy for the problem of the freedmen was their removal from the American body politic.

In this context, the American Colonization Society (ACS), was founded in 1816 by Robert Finley, a Presbyterian minister, along with some of America's most prominent national leaders. Among them were slave-owning American presidents Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe and prominent businessmen such as Henry Clay, John Randolph, and Bushrod Washington.[303] The organization's stated mission was to "encourage and support the voluntary migration of free African Americans to the continent of Africa."[304] The ACS' membership was also thoroughly populated with evangelical zealots seeking to fulfil a 'civilizing mission' by converting the 'dark continent' to Christianity.[305] The group organized quickly and, owing to its wealthy founders, was well-financed. They sought to implement their plan for an African colony of freedmen as soon as possible.

While the organization professed that any emigration from the United States was voluntary, many blacks were pressured to do so. In some cases, slaves were manumitted on the condition that they join the ACS' venture immediately.[306] The primary obstacle to the ACS' goal, however, was that the vast majority of the African American community was strongly opposed to the project and colonialism in general.[307] In many cases, freedmen could trace their family histories in the United States back for generations. They argued

[302] Anderson, *Liberia*, Ch. 5.
[303] Krain, "Transplantations of Nationalism," 175.
[304] American Colonization Society, Library of Congress, (Washington D.C. 4 September, 1895), https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam002.html.
[305] Franklin, *Slavery to Freedom*, 235–238.
[306] Francis Scott Key, "Mr. Key on the Colonization Society," *African Repository and Colonial Journal* Vol. 12, No. 11 (November, 1836): 346–351.
[307] Brandon Mills, "The United States of Africa: Liberian Independence and the Contested Meaning of a Black Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring 2014): 98.

vehemently that they were "no more African than the Americans were British."[308] Almost exclusively, the freedmen spoke English, wore Western clothing, and practised Christianity. On this basis and others, even as early as the 1820s, many blacks were advocating for equality and inclusion in American society rather than segregation or emigration.[309] At the same time, however, the freedmen's disillusionment about their prospects for emancipation in the United States was growing, and they dreamed of greater political freedom in Liberia. This persuaded some members of the black community to reconsider the project they had decisively opposed from the beginning.[310] However, if there was to be a future repatriation to Africa, the freedmen wanted to make the decision themselves.

Because of the role of the Holy Land in Judaism, European Jews had prayed for God to "return (the Jewish people) in mercy to thy Jerusalem" on a daily basis for centuries.[311] As a result, they fundamentally understood which 'homeland' they would be 'returning' to before there was even a pressing need to do so. Conversely, Mark Krain highlights that, for the freedmen, the concept of establishing an African 'homeland' was considered a purely practical matter. It was an open secret that white men had inhumanely removed the blacks from Africa, and abolitionists felt that they bore the responsibility of returning them. Yet, there was much uncertainty as to where. Over generations of slavery, the freedmen had lost their former tribal identities and places of origin.[312]

This issue was resolved on an entirely practical basis. When faced with the same question a generation earlier, the British elected to establish their colony of black freedmen (Sierra Leone) in a lightly-populated and underdeveloped area of the West African coast.[313] These elements were vital, as building a colony at many locations along the west or southwest coast would have exposed the settlers to the dangers of the still-flourishing slave trade and the local tribal regimes who supported it. It was only to this extent (protection, viability)

[308] Key, "Colonization Society," 346.
[309] Key, "Colonization Society," 346.
[310] Mills, "The United States of Africa," 84.
[311] Mindel, "The Three Daily Prayers," *Chabad.org*.
[312] Krain, "Transplantations of Nationalism," 176.
[313] Donald L. Wiedner, *A History of Africa* (New York: Random House, 1962), 74–75.

that the specific territory was important, as opposed to simply "somewhere in Africa."[314] With these necessities in mind, the ACS, whose members were very influential in American industry and politics, successfully lobbied Congress for the necessary legislation to begin transferring freedmen to Africa. With the assistance of President Monroe, the ACS established the first African-American settlement on the quiet and somewhat inhospitable headland of Cape Mesurado in 1820.[315]

Because the initial freedmen communities were heavily reliant on external support, assistance from the ACS was critical to their survival. The organization was not only required to purchase the land upon which the freedmen's settlements were built, but it also provided the tools the settlers used to construct buildings and work the land. Without this external support, the early settlers could barely defend themselves against external threats and mobilize resources for physical sustenance.[316] While the ACS went to great lengths to aid the emigrating freedmen in addressing the practical problems of survival in an inhospitable land, the organization's high-ranking elite were careful to make it appear as though the U.S. government had no official concern with the colonization project. The intensity of the slavery debate in American politics and the Federal government's policy of not engaging in colonialism prohibited an official declaration of support for these settlements.[317] Despite this, throughout the 1820s, the U.S. Navy consistently intervened on behalf of the settlers. The Navy regularly stepped in to defend Americo-Liberians against incursions from neighbouring French Guinea and Sierra Leone, and from local tribes like the Golahs and Condos,[318] who were waging war against colonial aggression while simultaneously aiding and abetting the region's still-thriving slave trade.[319]

The settlers from whom the Liberian nation evolved were far more American than African in their worldview and orientation, maintaining a strong sentimental attachment to the

[314] Wiedner, *A History of Africa*, 74–75.
[315] Wiedner, *A History of Africa*, 74–75.
[316] Magdalene S. David, "The love of liberty brought us here (an analysis of the development of the settler state in 19th century Liberia)," *Review of African Political Economy* Vol. 11, No. 31 (1984): 61–62.
[317] Wiedner, *A History of Africa*, 74–75.
[318] Monday B. Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian rule over the African peoples of Liberia, 1841–1964," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* Vol. 7, No. 2 (1973): 221.
[319] Svend E. Holsoe, "A Study of Relations between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia, 1821–1847" *African Historical Studies* Vol. 4, No. 2 (1971): 343–346, Krain, "Transplantations of Nationalism," 172.

United States, which they saw as their "native land."[320] The colonists preferred American foodstuffs such as bacon, butter, corn-meal, flour, lard, and pickled beef, in comparison to African food like cassava, palm oil, plantains, sweet potatoes, yams, and locally-grown "country rice," instead opting to import large quantities of American-grown varieties.[321] They dressed in the Victorian, Western styles with which they were familiar,[322] and openly denounced the scantily-clad Africans, whom they viewed as semi-nude, "untutored savages."[323] The settlers also abhorred traditional African religions such as heathenism, idolatry, and paganism. H.A. Jones highlights how many of the colony's ACS backers and leading settlers aimed, through territorial expansion, to create a great, "civilized" Christian nation on the West Coast of Africa that would overcome the "barbarism and paganism" of the local inhabitants by spreading "light and knowledge."[324]

Thus, in spite of the colour of their skin, the Americo-Liberians were foreign, and, similarly to British, French, and Portuguese colonists elsewhere throughout the continent, lacked emotional attachment to the West African region in which they settled.[325] Like the European settlers in newly-established colonies from Algeria to Zimbabwe, the Americo-Liberians had been raised in Western culture and were imbued with the accompanying epistemologies of modern science, technology, and political organization. In contrast to the communal land ownership practices of the local African population, the colonists held land individually, and their political institutions were based on the American model, with an elected president, House of Representatives, and Senate.[326] As such, the settlers regarded their own culture as superior to that of the indigenous African population. Moreover, by as late as the 1830s, at least one Liberian colonist held that, due to their "heathen" and "uncivilized" nature, "Africans ought to be slaves."[327]

[320] *The African Repository* LII, January 1876, 16.
[321] *The African Repository* IV, March 1828, 16.
[322] Sir Harry Johnston, *Liberia* Vol. 1, (Hutchinson, London, 1961), 354–355.
[323] *The African Repository* XXVII, April 1851.
[324] H.A. Jones, "The Struggle for Political and Cultural Unification in Liberia 1847–1930," Doctoral Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1962, 151, A.C.S., *Tenth Annual Report*, January 1827, 42–43.
[325] Akpan, "Black Imperialism," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (1973): 219.
[326] Monday B. Akpan, "The African Policy of the Liberian Settlers 1841–1932: A Study of the Native Policy of a Non-Colonial Power in Africa," Doctoral Dissertation, Ibadan University, 1968, Ibadan, Nigeria, 11–14.
[327] *The African Repository* X, December 1834, 316–318.

After 1834, ACS support for the settlers weakened for several reasons. Abolitionists, at the behest of the freedmen, became opposed to the idea of colonization over integration into American society. In the same vein, it had become clear that the majority of black freedmen were not interested in emigrating to a West African outpost. Even if there had been substantial black support for emigration to Liberia, the ACS, despite its well-heeled founders, could not have financed it. The cost of assisting the first several thousand settlers alone was prohibitive, and many had died due to tropical diseases and conflict with the native inhabitants.[328] In addition, land acquisition posed another significant issue. The original territory had been purchased from local ruler Zolu Duma (King Peter) under accusations of duress, and the chief later denied that he had sought to relinquish it permanently. Even so, it is debatable whether local chiefs had the power under the tribal structure to sell off land, even if they wished to do so.[329]

Generally speaking, aside from the establishment of several small communities such as Buchanan, Greenville, and Monrovia, none of the goals of the ACS' founders were being achieved. Free blacks were strongly opposed to mass emigration, widespread Christianization of Africa was appearing unlikely, and a major colonial expansion did not appear to be on the horizon. With the failure to achieve significant progress, the heterogenic nature of ACS' leadership devolved into much internal disagreement regarding how best to proceed. In 1834, experiencing a shortage of funding, the ACS became insolvent. When the last ACS-appointed white governor of Liberia died in September 1841, he was succeeded by Joseph J. Roberts, a freedman.[330] In the years following, the settler's ambiguous relationship with the American government as neither a colony nor a protectorate factored strongly in the July 26, 1847 decision to terminate their official ties to the ACS and declare independence.[331] This assertion of sovereignty by which the Republic of Liberia was founded was legalistically unique: a solely private enterprise of citizens in one country (America) had evolved directly into a sovereign nation-state.[332]

[328] Tom W. Shick, "A quantitative analysis of Liberian colonization from 1820 to 1843 with special reference to mortality," *The Journal of African History* Vol. 12, No.1 (1971): 50.
[329] Wiedner, *A History of Africa*, 76.
[330] Akpan, "Black Imperialism," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (1973): 218.
[331] Mills, "The United States of Africa," 89.
[332] Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 245.

Analysis

The challenges faced by African Americans and European Jews differed in nature. In Europe, Jews were struggling against centuries of discrimination and segregation. In America, the institution of slavery was premised on a fundamentally de-humanizing understanding of blacks that failed to end when they achieved freedom from slavery. In each instance, the need to alleviate these hardships compelled influential groups to action. While in the case of the freedmen, their cause was championed primarily by white American elites, in the case of the Jews, it was said demographic that responded to its own crises. Although European Jews faced great persecution, when compared to emancipated slaves, the Jews possessed a degree of social and economic capital that blacks in America never did. Furthermore, it is obvious that the emigration of blacks from America and Jews from Europe was viewed favourably, if not actively encouraged, by the majority white population.

Both the ZWO and ACS were able to mobilize influential backers and financial support from those who were moved by the enormity of their respective plights. In the case of the ZWO, the movement was able to achieve its goals of establishing a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine and providing a safe haven from European persecution. Conversely, while the ACS was successful in establishing a West African colony that evolved into modern-day Liberia, it largely failed in its quest to encourage the mass emigration of black freedmen and its dream of using the colony as an outpost to spread Christianity throughout the continent. Nevertheless, the support of both organizations was vital for the establishment and sustainability of settler colonies of both African American and Jewish communities.

The role of the specific geographic territory was critically important for Israel, due to the central role played by the land of Eretz Israel in the Jewish faith. Indeed, Judaism's religious ideal of a return to the Holy Land was essential to the Zionist project and merged with the growing secular awareness of European Jews. This marriage of two powerful forces resulted in a nationalist fervour that served as the overwhelming impetus the ZWO required to carry out its project of colonization. Additionally, Israel had both push and pull factors working in its favour. The Jews 'pushed' out of Europe but were also 'pulled' back

to their homeland. Conversely, black freedmen 'pushed' out of the US but were not 'pulled' by a strong religious ideology or historical claim to a specific geographical territory.

Indeed, in the case of Liberia, the freedmen's loss of their tribal identities meant that the importance of a specific territory for settlement was based on practical, rather than ideological, considerations. Throughout the abolition process in America, there were many proposals for granting freedmen land on the Western frontier. Yet, the inherent racial element of the freedmen's exclusion from society may have been due to the belief in the minds of white Americans that blacks "came from Africa" and their return to "somewhere in Africa" was somehow just.[333] Regardless, practicality was the determining factor in deciding where in Africa the emigrating freedmen would be situated. Because of the known hostility of the West African tribes and their cooperation with slave raiders on the coast, the ACS' choice of territory was entirely logical, due to its relative safety.

The Jews immigrating to Palestine were aided both by the policies of the British Mandate and the worldwide network of financial support from the ZWO. In the case of Jewish settlers in Palestine, external (British) assistance was most vital in terms of political support. The policies of the British Mandate gave immigrating Jews the opportunity to increase their population and take ownership of economic assets (i.e. land and resources) that facilitated their dominance of Palestine.

In West Africa, the vulnerability of the African Americans lay in their ability to survive the swampy, disease-ridden climate and defend themselves from attacks by inland tribal communities. While the Liberian colonists did not enjoy nearly the same financial backing as their Zionist contemporaries, they still benefited enormously from ACS support. West African settlers were provided with training and tools that were highly beneficial for establishing their settlements and moving towards a declaration of sovereignty. In both cases, the initial support from external actors allowed the colonists to develop the capacity to sustain themselves and eventually assert their sovereign independence.

[333] Krain, "Transplantations of Nationalism," 184.

Conclusion

Israel and Liberia are unique examples of settler colonialism. In the case of Israel, European Jews did not immigrate to Palestine from a single metropole, a common characteristic of this type of colonialism. Additionally, the case of Liberia is perhaps the only known example of black settler colonialism. In both instances, the hostility and resistance towards the colonists from the local population have been the defining characteristic of these colonial projects. In each instance, the native inhabitants considered these attitudes legitimate on the grounds that the immigrants had no right to the land they were occupying. Indeed, neither the ACS nor the ZWO had the right to establish colonies in either of the regions in question. While, in many cases, the colonists purchased the land they settled on, both the fairness of the transactional terms and the right to sell the land in the first place were disputed and led to enormous problems.

In the case of Israel, the conflict between Zionism and emerging Arab nationalism resulted in a series of wars and intergenerational trauma that endures to this day. In the case of Liberia, the country continues to be plagued by a despotic ruling elite, multiple civil wars, and general poverty and destitution. The establishment of Israel and Liberia as sovereign nation-states was framed as the result of successful repatriation of an indigenous community to their former ancestral homeland, and this provided ideological legitimacy in the eyes of both backers and colonists alike. Yet, generations of war and conflict in both states lead to the conclusion that European Jews and black freedmen were as indigenous to the lands they colonized as the Americans were British.

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FAIRUZ AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL

Popular Music, Folklore and Nationhood in 1960s Lebanon

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Near Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures and music
MMus Ethnomusicology

ABSTRACT

This paper examines and explores the disputes of the religious communities of Lebanon and the ways these communities are unified through the music, as well as through the on and off-stage performances of Fairuz during the twentieth century. As a world-renowned singer and as a Lebanese national symbol of the twentieth century, Fairuz has become pivotal in the formation of the religious, as well as national identities of Lebanon. The cultural characteristics, political affiliation and sense of belonging of Lebanese national identity have been extensively debated and discussed in the relevant academic work surrounding Lebanon. However, the constitution and reproduction of a religious unified Lebanese national identity through music is seldom examined. This study analyses the interrelation of national identity and popular music in Lebanon through the examination of Fairuz as a national symbol, while taking into consideration Lebanon's brief history as a nation-state and the dispute between the different religious communities. This paper further suggests that through her music and performance, Fairuz has become a symbol for multiple identities, not only religious but also national, transcending the restrictive identification of her music and performance with her religious, communal background.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anastasia Modestou completed her undergraduate studies in music at the University of Glasgow in 2019, continuing with a master's in Ethnomusicology at SOAS. Her main focus is Near Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures and music, examining the different expressions of nationalism that are constructed through music. Her dissertation focused on the political music scene of the Republic of Cyprus and the ways that it challenges the ideological narratives of the state. Outside academia, Anastasia also plays multiple instruments including the piano and the oud.

Keywords: Fairuz, Rahbani Brothers, Lebanese music, Arab nationalism, Lebanese national identity, Everyday nationalism

INTRODUCTION

Female singers in the Middle East strongly participate in the construction and reproduction of their nations, often through symbolic identification with nation-states and locally situated national – as well as cultural – identities.[334] This phenomenon can be observed with Umm Kulthum in Egypt,[335] Ofra Haza in Israel and the Jewish Mizrahi identity,[336] as well as with Fairuz (Nouhad Wadie' Haddad) in Lebanon. This paper will examine the on and off-stage performances of Fairuz during her thirty-year collaboration with the Rahbani brothers, and the various ways these performances have constructed a cultural identity that has become synonymous with Lebanon. Further, this paper will explore how Fairuz's music and musical-theatrical performance, particularly during the 1960s, has unified the religious communities of Lebanon, transcending sectarian and religious differences. A historical contextualisation of Lebanon is firstly presented, spanning from the establishment of Greater Lebanon until the end of the civil war, briefly discussing and contextualising the various nationalisms and political affiliations that developed throughout the twentieth century. Following this historical contextualisation, the article moves on to discuss Fairuz's on and off-stage performances – songs and musical-theatrical work – as cultural processes constituting a common identity in Lebanon. Particular emphasis is given on the musical-theatre *The Moon's Bridge* (1962), as well as her songs about Jerusalem. Fairuz will be approached as a national symbol, which constructs a cross-communal identity in Lebanon and beyond.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Michael Billig suggested that banal nationalism describes the "ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to reproduce" themselves.[337] These habits are part of everyday life and are not removed from it as the nation is defined by the lives of its

[334] Christopher Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon: The Fairuz and the Rahbani Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2008b): 14.
[335] Laura Lohman, *Umm Kulthum: Artistic Agency and the Shaping of an Arab Legend, 1967–2007* (USA: Wesleyan University Press, 2010): 6.
[336] Marianna Ruah-Midbar Shapiro and Omri Ruah Midbar, "Outdoing Authenticity: Three Postmodern Models of Adapting Folkloric Materials in Current Spiritual Music", *Journal of Folklore Research* 54, no. 3 (2017): 201.
[337] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: SAGE Publications, 2014): 6.

citizens.[338] His concept was thus developed to analyse the interconnection and association of employed language and national identification, a process resulting in the continuous reproduction of the nation itself.[339] Expanding on Billig's top-down analysis, Antonsich suggested that, by focusing on the everyday reproduction of banal nationalism and by approaching it as a bottom-up process of social reproduction, banal nationalism is reproduced on the everyday level of social life, through employed language and the routine usage of deixis such as 'we', 'them', 'here', 'there'.[340] Therefore, nationalism is reproduced from everyday linguistic signifiers that aim to establish and illustrate a constructed community or state.

Furthermore, the concept of "imagined communities" is employed in this paper to analyse the community that was created under Fairuz and her music. Benedict Anderson developed the concept of "imagined communities" to suggest that, even in the smallest nation, its members will never meet each other, yet they imagine that they live in a communion.[341] He further argued that nationalism should be interpreted through its large cultural systems, which consist of the "dynastic realm" and the "religious community".[342] Language, geography, and religion are strongly associated with national identification and the creation of imagined communities.[343]

In his historical analysis, Hobsbawm noted that culture becomes important in the establishment of nations, developing the concept of "invented traditions" to describe traditions that were constructed, invented and established formally to reproduce the nation, as well as traditions that emerged in a datable period and established as such in the following years.[344] These traditions include symbolic practices that are repeated, reinforcing a strong relationship and continuity with the past that can be characterised as artificial. These practices constitute "responses to novel situations which take the form of

[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid: 24.
[340] Marco Antonsich, "The 'Everyday' of Banal Nationalism – Ordinary People's Views on Italy and the Italian", *Political Geography* 54, (2015): 33.
[341] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 2016): 6.
[342] Ibid: 12.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions". In: *The Invention of Tradition*. Edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 1.

reference to old situations",[345] further reproducing nationhood. These concepts are employed to analyse the songs and musical-theatrical works of the Rahbani brothers and Fairuz, in order to identify the ways that a cross-communal identity is established in Lebanon.

The academic literature focusing on Fairuz that is available in English is limited. Nonetheless, a number of academics have contributed to the understanding of Fairuz as a national performer. Christopher Stone, expanding on the struggles that followed the decolonisation period of Lebanon, suggested that Fairuz and the Rahbani brothers were important in exploring and defining Lebanese national identity through their music.[346] Focusing more on the Lebanese-Christian identity, Stone suggested that, through their work, Fairuz and the Rahbani brothers aimed to preserve a folklore that was interconnected with the Christian-Lebanese mountain villages.[347] Furthermore, in his book regarding cultural hybridity, Kraidy expands on the case study of Lebanon and the Maronite community, arguing that the music of Fairuz and the Rahbani brothers was of a "more enduring value, as it encapsulated what was the truest expression of their hybrid identity".[348]

This paper will expand on this previous work by approaching Fairuz as an expression of everyday nationalism. It further aims to challenge the claims that Fairuz's work produces a restrictively Christian Lebanese identity, arguing that her music and performances interact and reinforce a Lebanese Arab national identity.

Fairuz: A Short Biographical Note

Fairuz was born in 1934 in Beirut, in a Christian Lebanese family. Exhibiting her vocal talents from a young age, she often performed for her family and neighbours, consequently studying vocal performance at the National conservatory.[349] While studying in Beirut,

[345] Ibid: 2.
[346] Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon*.
[347] Ibid: 27.
[348] Marwan Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalisation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005): 137.
[349] Sawi W. Asmar and Kathleen Hook, "Modern Arab Music: Portraits of Enchantment from the Middle Generation". In: *Colours of Enchantment: Theatre, Dance, Music and the Visual Arts in the Middle East*. Edited by Sherifa Zuhur, (New York: The American University of Cairo Press, 2001): 316-317.

Fairuz worked as a chorus singer at the national radio where her supervisor, Halim al-Rumi, noted her talent and introduced her to the Rahbani brothers, Asi and Mansour, initiating their thirty-year long collaboration.[350] Fairuz established herself from her debut in the Baalbek festival in 1957, rising to fame throughout the Arab world and receiving honours from leaders of various Arab nations.[351] By combining music in "novel arrangements",[352] that reflected the cultural trends of Lebanon, Fairuz and the Rahbanis developed a genre that could be characterised as Lebanese, Western, and Arab, marking their audiences throughout the Arab and Western world.[353] The music of Fairuz and the Rahbani brothers was composed of "blends of folk melodies with classical Arabic and modern Western music".[354] This intermixing of Western and Arabic melodies resulted in the characterisation of their music as Lebanese, as it was seen by the Christian community as the expression of their identity.[355] This strategy was part of the trend that reflected the "cultural phenomenon of that time and place".[356]

Stone suggested that Fairuz appears as a paradox in her acceptance and fame in the Arab world, like her songs, films and musical, theatrical works:

> She participated in an elite national project that spoke primarily to the Christian minority of Lebanon, the same minority that would pit itself against Lebanon's largely Muslim Palestinian refugee population, among others, at the start of the civil war.[357]

Indeed, most of the work by the Rahbanis and Fairuz focused on the ideal Christian Lebanese mountain village,[358] inevitably reproducing a Christian Lebanese nationalism. It is important to contextualise the politics and space in which the music and compositions of

[350] Ibid: 318.
[351] Ibid.
[352] Ibid: 321.
[353] Ibid: 321–322.
[354] Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalisation*: 135–136.
[355] Ibid: 317.
[356] Asmar and Hook, "Modern Arab Music": 321.
[357] Christopher Stone, "Fairuz, the Rahbani Brothers, Jerusalem, and the Leba-stinian Song". In: *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*. Edited by Tamar Mayer and Suleiman Ali Mourad (London: Routledge, 2008a): 156.
[358] Ibid: 155.

Fairuz and the Rahbani brothers developed and formulated. Therefore, the next section focuses on the historical contextualisation of Lebanon.

Lebanon: History and the Formation of Conflicting Identities

Greater Lebanon was established in 1920 under the French mandate, gaining its independence in 1943 with an unwritten agreement known as the National Pact which established Lebanon as a multi-confessional state.[359] The National Pact did not aim to prescribe a unified Lebanese identity, but it was rather based on a compromise between the religious communities, founded on the false political assumption and fears that the "Muslims would 'Arabise' the Christians, while the Christians would 'Lebanonise' Muslims".[360]

Within Greater Lebanon, a multiplicity of religious communities and sects are encountered; the most prominent being Sunni Muslims and Maronites, as well as Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic Christians, Shia Muslims and the Druze. The National Pact segregated Lebanese citizens according to their religious and sectarian affiliations, ascribing religion as the primary value for society resulting in an "interplay between religion and politics",[361] constituting the political system through which the subsequent violent conflicts overshadowing Lebanon developed in the following years.[362] Salibi suggested that the independence of Lebanon and the National Pact resulted in the beginning of a:

> Great game of confidence in Lebanon. The game involved a succession of devious transactions between players who invariably pretended to stand for nationalist ideals and principles aimed at the common good, while they strove to outwit and overturn one another, motivated by atavistic loyalties and insecurities for which the professed ideals and principles normally served as a mere cover.[363]

[359] Robert G. Rabil, *Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 1.
[360] Ibid: 15.
[361] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019): 27.
[362] Ibid.
[363] Ibid: 55.

Therefore, this 'game' was based upon the historical disagreements of the religious communities and their claims over the correct history of Lebanon, reinforcing communal claims over the appropriate political control and hegemony that each community aimed to hold in Lebanon.[364] These disagreements escalated in the mid-20th century, with the pan-Arabist, Nasserist Lebanese Muslims, attempting to overthrow the government of President Camille Chamoun towards the last months of his presidency in 1958. However, this attempt backfired as the Christian paramilitary organisation (Phalange) – who embraced an ideology that strove for an independent Lebanon, developed from Maronite clergymen – took the conflict to the streets resulting in a sectarian struggle that only ceased through a U.S. military intervention.[365] These sectarian conflicts resulted in even more tensions developing through the years, leading to the initiation of the Lebanese civil war of 1975-1990.[366] Furthermore, the continuous interventions from the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation), the neutral stance taken by the Maronite leadership over the Israeli-Arab conflict, and the continuous interventions of neighbouring Syria in the internal politics of Lebanon,[367] resulted in the eruption of sectarian political division, disintegrating the political structure of the state and contributing to the initiation of the civil war.[368] Salibi noted that the 1975-1990 civil war was a dispute that had as a fundamental point the realisation and determination of the "correct history of the country",[369] and had:

> Torn Lebanon to shreds, reduced large parts of the country to rubble, and caused massive movements of population between different regions; but the civil war has failed as yet to destroy the fundamental political and administrative structure of the Lebanese Republic or to put an end to its existence as a sovereign territorial state by removing it from the map.[370]

[364] Ibid: 50.
[365] Rabil, *Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon*: 20.
[366] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*: 189.
[367] Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalisation*: 117.
[368] Rabil, *Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon*: 22-23.
[369] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*: 201.
[370] Ibid: 219.

In 1990, the Taif Accord (Document of National Understanding) was signed, leading to the end of the civil war and sectarian strife, establishing the continuation of the National Pact.[371] The Taif Accord agreed to an equitable representation of the religious communities in politics and in the parliament.[372] Furthermore, it was established that the executive power of the country would be allocated to the Council of Ministers, which is usually led by a Sunni, representing the largest community in Lebanon .[373] The Taif Accord finally settled that in the political sphere, Lebanon is "Arab in belonging and identity".[374]

Therefore, the Lebanese national identity became highly contested by "secular, religious, progressive and reactionary" factors,[375] as well as historical narrations and constructions that were ascribed to the identities of each religious group.[376] Tense disagreements between the various Christian and Muslim communities regarding a claimed unified Lebanese national identity have spanned since the establishment of Greater Lebanon, intrinsically connected with the histories that each community ascribed to Lebanon, with Christians usually affirming a unified Lebanese identity; whereas the Muslims tended to deny it, subsuming it under a pan-Arabic, and occasionally a pan-Islamic understanding of Lebanon's belonging.[377] Christian elites promoted and identified with Lebanism,[378] a political position established prioritising a sovereign Lebanese state with an accompanied sense of Lebanese national identification.[379] In contrast, the Muslim community identified with Arabism[380] and Arab nationalism, an ideological current developed in the mid-20th century that aspired to establish a pan-Arab state under the hegemony of either Egypt or Syria.[381]

The Lebanese identity is still disputed today and is considered as "partly mythical and partly constructed",[382] therefore marking the struggle for a unified Lebanon also as a

[371] Rabil, *Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon*: 1.
[372] Ibid: 89–90.
[373] Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalisation*: 117.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Ibid: 116.
[376] Ibid.
[377] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*: 3.
[378] Ibid: 182.
[379] Rabil, *Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon*: 27.
[380] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*: 182.
[381] Rabil, *Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon*: 37.
[382] Ibid: 9.

conflict over the definition of a common identity. As national identities are created and maintained through a "common sense of political community [...] that share a common vision of their past",[383] it has remained important for the Lebanese to define their common historical past. Salibi suggested that today there is a rising ideology claiming that all Lebanese share the same national identity defined regardless of other religious or sectarian affiliations,[384] creating a new, compound Lebanese "supranational identity".[385]

Popular Music and Nationhood in Lebanon

Popular culture is an undoubtedly significant aspect of modern nationhood and contemporary national identification. Popular music, in particular, offers an everyday cultural terrain through which the relationships between individuals, groups and places, are routinely articulated.[386] Music does not simply reflect individuals or groups, but it rather constructs experiences and identifications, including that of ethnic, national, religious or gendered identities.[387] Kraidy suggested that, through their musical understanding, Lebanese Maronite youth identified the "Arab world with tradition and the West with modernity",[388] establishing a binary understanding and experience of popular culture.[389] Stone suggested that Fairuz and the Rahbani brothers were pivotal in this struggle over the definition of a unified Lebanese national identity, particularly in a period of increased migration and civil strife, their songs and musical-theatrical works becoming prominent within Lebanon, marking their importance in Lebanese nation-building.[390]

Folklore, Popular Music and Nationhood

The Baalbek festival was a pivotal point for the career of Fairuz and the Rahbani brothers, as it was where Fairuz established her fame as a singer of the Arab world.[391] The Baalbek

[383] Ibid: 216.
[384] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*: 3.
[385] Rabil, *Religion, National Identity and Confessional Politics in Lebanon*: 145.
[386] Martin Stokes, "Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music". In: *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*. Edited by Martin Stokes (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997): 3.
[387] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity". In: *Question of Cultural Identity*. Edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications, 2011): 109.
[388] Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalisation*: 129.
[389] Ibid.
[390] Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon*: 1.
[391] Asmar and Hook, "Modern Arab Music": 318.

festival created a symbol for Lebanon that was based on the narration of a "glorious past, but also a past that was very much connected, through its folklore, to its present",[392] and was formed under an "elite nationalist project that aimed to highlight the Christian European face of the new nation".[393] Baalbek, as a historical site, acquired a symbolic meaning of its own; it invoked a Phoenician past that for the Christian Lebanese acquired the meaning of the nation and a connection with modern Lebanon.[394] The project of the "Lebanese Nights" in the Baalbek festival, where the Rahbanis and Fairuz participated, aimed to establish and depict a folklore that was associated with the propagation of an image of Lebanon that the Maronite elite wished to project; "a westward looking nation that had reclaimed its original Phoenician role as a cultivation of culture and civilisation".[395] Consequently, Fairuz and the Rahbanis participated in the construction and representation of a Christian Lebanese folklore, which interconnected an 'imagined' Phoenician past Lebanon with a new westward "potentially glorious future".[396] Therefore, the Rahbanis' and Fairuz's musical-theatrical works reproduced the invented Christian traditions and folklore of Lebanon, by prescribing in their works an image of the Christian Lebanese mountain village as a symbol that actively participates in the establishment and reproduction of a Christian past in Lebanon.[397]

Fairuz herself perfectly fitted the role of the female performer that participated in postcolonial nationalism, by enacting the image of the Christian Lebanese mountain girl, as well as her "Virgin Mary-like chastity",[398] both on and off-stage. Thus, Fairuz became a symbol that reproduced the conservative role often ascribed to female singers as participants in nation-building projects through their performance.[399] Furthermore, by combining Christian Lebanese folklore and colloquial Lebanese Arabic, the Rahbanis and Fairuz participated in the reproduction of the nation through its strong association with language, folklore and culture. It is identified that the nationalism reproduced through

[392] Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon*: 19–20.
[393] Ibid: 3.
[394] Ibid: 18–20.
[395] Ibid: 25.
[396] Ibid: 36.
[397] Christopher Stone, "The Ba'albeck Festival and the Rahbanis: Folklore, Ancient History, Musical Theatre and Nationalism in Lebanon", *The Arab Studies Journal* 11/12, no. 2/1 (2003): 31.
[398] Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon*: 142.
[399] Ibid: 145.

Fairuz and her performance was encouraged by the Maronite elite, who elevated the French, westward-looking Christian culture and civilisation.[400]

Through their works, the Rahbanis and Fairuz participated in the "propagation of the myth of Lebanon as primarily a Christian country".[401] Their musical-theatrical works were modelled around an imagined fantasy that the conflict is always caused by an outsider, an 'Other', and is only resolved by music, love and miracle.[402] *The Moon's Bridge,* performed in Baalbek in 1962, *The Holiday of Glory* (1960), *The Night of the Lantern* (1963), as well as *The Ring Seller* (1964) represented the Christian Lebanese mountain village, where trouble is caused from the outside and is resolved with love and song.[403] It is suggested that the fact that Fairuz and the Rahbanis were Christian Lebanese should not overdetermine their work; however, Stone noted that "they repeatedly claimed to be a symbol of national unity, or had the claim made for [them]",[404] marking their works as important in their symbolisation.

Specifically, the plots of their musical-theatrical works, as well as Fairuz's characters, can be interpreted as a metaphor of the nation and ideal nationhood, as propagated by the Maronite elite.[405] Fairuz's characters are marked as symbols of an everyday Maronite Christian nationalism project that developed in Lebanon, consequently being interconnected with her public persona as the characters became a metaphor for herself.[406] *The Holiday of Glory,* performed in the Baalbek festival in 1960, is a representation of how the works of the Rahbani brothers became symbols of everyday nationalism. It is worth noting that Fairuz did not perform that year in the Baalbek festival as she was pregnant; however, *The Holiday of Glory* is marked as one of the pivotal works by the Rahbanis and as a great representation of their work.[407] When an outsider falls in love with the female protagonist, she answers to his declaration of love;

Our heart is not your heart

[400] Ibid: 142.
[401] Stone, "Fairuz, the Rahbani Brothers, Jerusalem, and the Leba-stinian Song": 157
[402] Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon*: 142.
[403] Ibid: 56-58, 70.
[404] Ibid: 38.
[405] Ibid: 144.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid: 58.

Our road is not your road

(Translation form *The Holiday of Glory*).[408]

The female protagonist uses the deixis 'our' to distinguish between the village and its people from the outsider that does not belong in their village, marking the work with symbolism. Stone suggested that *The Holiday of Glory* is a work that participated ideologically in the nation-building project, illustrating the Chehabist ideology[i] of the time.[409] Therefore, it represented a bottom-up reproduction of everyday nationalism distinguishing between 'self' and 'other', 'insider' and 'outsider', through the usage of 'our' and 'not your'.[410]

Furthermore, *The Moon's Bridge,* a musical-theatrical work performed in the Baalbek festival in 1962, is an illustration of the way Fairuz becomes an expression of everyday Christian Maronite nationalism through her characters. The plot is concerned with a conflict between two villages, which is solved by Fairuz's character. The female character is held captive on the bridge between the two villages and reveals that there is a hidden treasure beneath it, proposing that the villagers should work together to find the treasure instead of fighting.[411] The two villages are distinguished by the deixis 'we' and 'them', with their conflict being resolved when Fairuz's character appears as a mediator between them, solving the problem – by introducing the idea of a common heritage: the treasure. *The Moon's Bridge* can be identified as a representation of Lebanese society; the two villages representing the two growing nationalisms, the pan-Arab and the Lebanese one, with the conflict being resolved by their common heritage which can be identified as the geographical Lebanon as well as Lebanese culture.

Furthermore, *The Moon's Bridge* can be seen as an example of the way Fairuz, as a symbolic figure in popular culture, represented an imagined community that unified Lebanon regardless of religious or sectarian affiliations. Merabet notes that Fairuz's performance on stage became a symbol of national representation, creating "an imagined community

[408] Ibid: 59.
[409] Ibid: 58.
[410] Antonsich, "The 'Everyday' of Banal Nationalism": 33.
[411] Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon*: 56.

called Lebanon".[412] Fairuz constructed an image of Lebanon that despite sectarian and religious affiliations, "congregated in search of a common ground".[413] Therefore, for Merabet, Fairuz became a representation of an imagined Lebanese community.[414] People from all religions unified under her music as it encompassed the different aspects of Lebanese culture; combining "folk melodies with classical Arabic and Western music [...] their music is seen as a mixture of Western and Eastern influences".[415]

Stone suggested that the music of the Rahbanis and of Fairuz not only represented a unified, imagined Lebanese community, but that it further acted as a representation of the Palestinian diaspora[416]. Fairuz performed throughout the Arab world and Europe. When she performed in London, it is noted that she sang *Ana Lubnan (I Love You Lebanon)* as well as the Lebanese national anthem, performing and dedicating her songs to the Lebanese diaspora.[417] Although Fairuz initially represented the Christian Lebanese imagined community, she increasingly became a paradox to Maronite elites, as she further participated in the growing sentiments of pan-Arabism by performing songs about Jerusalem and the strife between Israel and Palestine.[418] Stone suggested that most Arab singers have performed songs for Palestine and Jerusalem, arguably noting that Fairuz's songs for Palestine have become the most popular throughout the Arab world, placing Lebanon on the side of the Palestinians in cultural representation.[419] Indeed, the song *The Flower of the Cities* has become the most distinguished song by the Rahbanis and Fairuz, as it described the city of Jerusalem in great detail – the city is "described from afar, it is remembered".[420] *The Flower of the Cities* is one of the few Rahbani songs that is sung in Classical Arabic, rather than the Lebanese dialect, marking its importance throughout the Arab world.[421] Further, *The Flower of the Cities* was the introductory song in the Rahbanis' musical-theatrical work, *Exile* (1967), a pivotal point for Fairuz's career, as it was the

[412] Sofian Merabet, *Queer Beirut* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014): 202.
[413] Ibid: 203.
[414] Ibid.
[415] Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalisation*: 134–135.
[416] Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon*: 90.
[417] Ibid: 166.
[418] Nasser Al-Taee, "Voices of Peace and the Legacy of Reconciliation: Popular Music, Nationalism, and the Quest for Peace in the Middle East", *Popular Music* 21, no. 1 (2007): 44–45.
[419] Stone, "Fairuz, the Rahbani Brothers, Jerusalem, and the Leba-stinian Song": 155.
[420] Ibid: 159.
[421] Ibid: 160.

musical-theatrical work that young non-Christian Lebanese – and further people from other Arab countries – began listening to her music.[422] The song begins by describing Jerusalem from afar;

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, city of prayer, I pray

Our eyes travel to you every day

Moving about the hallways of the temples

Embracing the old churches.[423]

Stone suggested that, at the beginning of the song, Jerusalem is being remembered, as the voice of the narrator describes the city from afar.[424] Additionally, the song comments on the struggle between Israel and Palestine;

For those made homeless

For the children without houses

For those who defended at the gates and were martyrs.[425]

Through this song, the Rahbani brothers and Fairuz established an imagined community with the non-Christian Lebanese by advocating for the Palestinian struggle. As the Muslim Lebanese community developed an Arab identity, the support that was created through *The Flower of the Cities* for the Palestinian cause represented the feelings of Lebanese Muslims as well as of the Palestinian diaspora. The work of the Rahbani Brothers and Fairuz in the early 1960s represented and illustrated an everyday Maronite Christian nationalism that emphasised the imagined Phoenician past of Lebanon. Nonetheless, by later allying with the Palestinian cause they constructed, through their songs and musical-theatrical works, a cross-communal imagined community within and outside of Lebanon.

[422] Ibid: 158.
[423] Ibid: 159.
[424] Ibid.
[425] Ibid.

Merabet suggested that Fairuz became a common icon for Lebanon and projected:

> an immaculate image, into the ever-embattled national stage that allowed for the hardships of the present to be repressed and for a future to be imagined as a space which the Lebanese would be saved from seemingly irreversible decline.[426]

Conclusion

Through her musical-theatrical work and performance, Fairuz became a symbol representing a multiplicity of identities in the 20th century, shifting from communal Maronite nationalism to a cross-communal imagined community, representing in this way a unified Lebanese national identity. This encompassed not merely the various religious communities in Lebanon, but also the political struggles through which the communities have come to associate themselves with. However, Fairuz became a prisoner within this cross-communal nation-building project, as she was "entrapped by the Lebanon that she enacted and embodied",[427] thus binding her representations with the Lebanese nation-state.

Both the Rahbani brothers and Fairuz can be described as some of the most influential families in Lebanese popular culture, attempting through their production of popular music the construction of a Lebanese sense of nationhood that unified the religious communities of "Lebanon and beyond".[428] Their shift from Maronite Christian nationalist representation to a cross-communal representation of Lebanese nationhood can be argued to be reflective of a broader social process, slowly giving rise to a more unified and less fragmented notion of Lebanese nationhood; a view that is certainly further supported by the recent cross-communal anti-establishment protests in Beirut. Nonetheless, sectarian divisions remain, reinforced both by a communally allocated political system, as

[426] Merabet, *Queer Beirut*: 204.
[427] Stone, *Popular Culture and Nationalism in Lebanon*: 166.
[428] Ibid: 1.

well as by deep divisions within the communities of Lebanon, reinforced through the contradictory narrations and understandings of Lebanon's recent traumatic past.

ENDNOTES

[i] Chehabist ideology refers to the period that Camille Chamoun was president. The growing ideology of that period was Lebanism that was developed from the Maronite elite who strove for an independent Lebanon.

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LET'S MAKE THEM HEAR IT IN EUROPE

The Sound of Banging Pots and Pans, the Internet and Networked Protest

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ABSTRACT

The internet and social media are radically changing the very nature of protests in the modern world, allowing people to connect and exchange information through new channels previously unavailable and in virtual rather than physical spaces. As music and sounds have long been an important factor in the way social movements are born, received and remembered, they too are disseminated more widely by this technology and help to motivate protests both online and offline. Through virtual fieldwork and interviews with members of London-based Chilean protest group *Asamblea Chilena en Londres*, I track the sound of *cacerolazo*—a form of popular protest involving banging pots and pans. I explore how this noise challenges and defies space, is mediated and disseminated through social media and the internet and connects individuals and communities, mobilising them both locally and globally.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Finlay McIntosh recently completed the MMus Ethnomusicology programme at SOAS. He also holds a MA degree in Chinese and Spanish from the University of Edinburgh and has years of experience working in China and Chile. His research focuses on music-making in both countries and in particular, the various ways in which music and sounds become involved in and interact with politics. He is now undertaking the position of World and Traditional Music Rights Intern for the British Library's Unlocking Our Sound Heritage project.

KEYWORDS:

Cacerolazo; networked protest; 2019 Chilean protests; social media; sound studies, noise.

INTRODUCTION

On November 13, 2019, a friend and I went to see Chilean cumbia band Chico Trujillo play in London. We wanted to relive the memories of our time working in Chile, where the band's irreverent style of music was the vibrant soundtrack to many family events and parties. However, this concert seemed different. There was a highly politicised atmosphere in the room with concert-goers dressed in Chilean flags chanting and demanding that their president Sebastian Piñera resign. The lights dimmed and piped in through a speaker, a cacophony of banging pots flooded the room as the band entered to great applause. The atmosphere only intensified throughout the performance as the group played various political songs from Chile's history, such as Victor Jara's "*The Right to Live in Peace*" and Quilapayún's "*The People United Will Never be Defeated*".

It was also at this concert where I became aware of *Asamblea Chilena en Londres* —A London-based protest group that aims to make Chile's problems visible to the UK and the wider world. At the end of the performance, they gathered onstage in front of a large black Chilean flag splattered in fake blood. Wearing bloody eye patches, they denounced the acts of the Chilean government and militarised police force who had shot and blinded protesters in the eye during the ongoing protests. The crowd responded with cheers. This concert took place during the most intense moment of the 2019 Chilean protests which were sparked in October by a 30 peso rise in public transport fares.[429] Following this, protesters started to jump over the subway barriers to enter the subway system for free and began destroying its facilities. An increasingly violent police force tried to suppress street demonstrations but was met with even more resistance, and although the president decided to retract the fare increase, he had unleashed a movement that demanded a complete change in the country.

The only way I have come to know about these protests is through the internet and social media, which have also been defining factors in their manifestation. The importance of social media and its ability to change the nature of modern-day protest has also started to

[429] Charis McGowan, "Chile Protests: What Prompted the Unrest?," *Al Jazeera*, October 30, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/chile-protests-prompted-unrest-191022160029869.html.

receive more scholarly attention. In her book *Twitter and Tear Gas* (2017), techno-sociologist Zeynep Tufekci studies its role in the Arab Spring and its power as a tool that could "overcome censorship, coordinate protests, organise logistics, and spread humour and dissent."[430] She explores how such technology allows for people to mobilise without relying on formal leaders, hierarchies or traditional organisational structures, instead offering the possibility of a new style of protest that can increase participation both on and offline.[431] As beneficial as these new means of communication may be for networked protest, she also recognises that they inevitably bring new problems: social media and the internet can just as easily be subjected to government control and surveillance or can be intentionally subverted with the posting of misinformation to confuse online coordination.[432]

Noriko Manabe's *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (2015) focuses on Japanese anti-nuclear demonstrations and deals with similar themes. However, noting that music and cultural materials have a long history in bolstering social movements, she brings these into the debate. She contends that in Japan, both the internet and music offered new channels for expression as the "combination of potential anonymity in cyberspace and the expressivity of music helped citizens to overcome the spiral of silence and raise their voices against nuclear power."[433] Given that protest, music, and now the internet and social media are complexly linked, they offer us a framework for exploring the ways that information and sounds can cut across space and connect people in new, sometimes unpredictable ways.

Following Tufekci and Manabe, I want to look at the internet and social media's technological affordances—"the action a given technology facilitates or make possible."[434] Focusing on the sound of banging pots and pans heard at the concert, I will ask: How have the internet and social media facilitated the journey of this sound? And how were the sounds of banging pots and pans imbued with meaning along the way, managing to

[430] Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2017), xxii.
[431] Ibid., xxiii–xxiv.
[432] Ibid., xxvii–xxviii.
[433] Noriko Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Protest Music After Fukushima* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4.
[434] Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, xi.

mobilise protesters both locally and globally? Also borrowing ideas about noise and noise-making from sound studies, I attempt to track the sound's flow in a somewhat chronological order from its production in Chile, its transmission and mediation through the internet, its effect in protests in London, and finally, its circulation back to Chile.

I have engaged in virtual fieldwork, specifically sifting through posts, videos and comments posted on Chilean local news Facebook group *Todos Somos Valparaíso* to track the sounds and the discourse surrounding them. I have also attended demonstrations with the protest group in London to witness the sounds in action and have interviewed the head organiser of their picketing team Tania Moraga, who has given consent for her name and comments to be used in this paper. She has provided me with invaluable information on the protests, the group's connection to the internet and social media, and the sounds that have shaped their cause. Throughout my research, although I have shown my friends and interlocutors support in their attempts to call for constitutional change in Chile, I have tried to maintain a largely observational standpoint at protests and have not interacted directly with social media posts online.

CACEROLAZO FROM PAST TO PRESENT

The term *cacerolazo* comes from the Spanish word for a casserole dish, *cacerola*, but has come to mean a popular form of protest where people strike pots and pans with wooden spoons. In Chile, the first recorded *cacerolazo* event was in 1971 and is now referred to as "The March of the Empty Pots," when conservative and mainly middle and upper-class housewives took to the streets, banging their empty pots and pans to protest against food shortages during the presidency of Salvador Allende's socialist government.[435] It was a way to make noise—which sound studies pioneer R. Murray Schaffer simply describes as "any undesired sound signal."[436] This noise dominates the quotidian soundscape in a paradoxically peaceful form of protest, in which anyone can participate—it takes little skill, and everyone has some sort of pot and an implement to hit it with. Also symbolic as the

[435] Jedrek Mularski, *Music, Politics, and Nationalism in Latin America: Chile During the Cold War Era*. Cambria Studies in Latin American Literatures and Cultures Series (Amherst, New York: Cambria Press, 2014), 210–11.
[436] R. Murray Schafer, *The New Soundscape: a Handbook for the Modern Music Teacher* (Don Mills, Ont: BMI Canada, 1969), 17.

voice of the common people, it did not come from radicals but the housewives and families who the food shortages directly affected.

Over time, this form of protest has managed to spread to Chile's neighbouring countries and further afield. It appeared during Argentina's period of civil unrest in 2001 as a way to express public anger at the government for the country's economic collapse.[437] In 2015, Brazilians employed *cacerolazo* to drown-out the then-president Dilma Rousseff's televised speech, as a way to call for her impeachment.[438] It has been used in movements ranging from the 2012 Quebec student protests to the 2013 Gezi Park demonstrations in Turkey and the 2009 Icelandic financial crisis, where *cacerolazo* became so emblematic of the demonstrations that it has been termed "The Pots and Pans Revolution."[439]

Even the Coronavirus pandemic that spread throughout the world in 2020 prompted a resurgence of this phenomenon. It reappeared in Brazil, where many performed *cacerolazo* in opposition to their president, Jair Bolsonaro's "economy first" approach to the handling of the crisis.[440] Whereas in the United Kingdom, it became a way to show solidarity rather than as a tool for protest. Every week, this sound joined the chorus of cheering and clapping as people showed their gratitude for the NHS and care workers' efforts to control the effects of the pandemic. It is partly due to the *cacerolazo*'s accessibility and its role as a surrogate voice for the common people that has helped it spread to other countries as a popular form of protest or solidarity.

But in Chile, *cacerolazo* has a particularly long history as a method to express dissatisfaction with the authorities and has resonated with many generations of protesters—from those during the Allende years to the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990) or

[437] Naomi Klein, "Out of the Ordinary," *The Guardian*, January 25, 2003, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jan/25/argentina.weekend7.
[438] Jonathan Watts, "Dilma Rousseff Stares Down the Spectre of Impeachment: 'The Question is Arithmetic'," *The Guardian*, August 13, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/13/brazilians-protesting-president-dilma-rousseff-impeachment.
[439] Philip England, "Iceland's 'Pots and Pans Revolution': Lessons from a Nation that People Power Helped to Emerge from its 2008 Crisis All the Stronger," *The Independent*, June 28, 2015, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/icelands-pots-and-pans-revolution-lessons-from-a-nation-that-people-power-helped-to-emerge-from-its-10351095.html.
[440] Sam Cowie, "Deny and Defy: Bolsonaro's Approach to the Coronavirus in Brazil," *Al Jazeera*, March 30, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/deny-defy-bolsonaro-approach-coronavirus-brazil-200330181645501.html.

the 2011 student demonstrations, where activists used *cacerolazo* to demand educational reform. With such a long history, Chilean sociologist Nicolás Ortiz Ruiz notes that the act of banging pots and pans creates a historical narrative of resistance which not only emotionally connects activists but the general public.[441] He argues that during the 2011 protests when activists were met with police violence, it reawakened the collective memory of the violence committed during the dictatorship. This collective fear was then channelled and reinterpreted through *cacerolazo*, resonating with members of the public who, though not directly involved with the protests, ssympathised with the students' cause. It was the *cacerolazo*'s mnemonic content and ritual characteristic that resonated with the older generations, promoting support across wider sectors of society.

Returning to the 2019 Chilean protests, we see that *cacerolazo* still resonates with the public today. Due to the escalation of demonstrations, the government–imposed curfews for the first time since the dictatorship. People still wanted to protest, but the curfews meant that they could not do so in the street, so they organised *cacerolazos* through Facebook pages.[442] The plan was for individuals and families to perform *cacerolazo* from their houses so that the sound could flow from private to public space, filling the big cities with the unified sound of protest despite government restriction. They hoped to play so loudly that they could even be heard in Europe and encouraged participants to share videos and pictures on the page to create a virtual community of protesters.[443] Participants filmed videos of their individual efforts on their phones and subsequently posted them online, commenting and interacting with other protesters and with some even posting photos of broken pans to show just how committed they were to the cause.

Within this, we see an attempt to reconfigure space, which is a concept that can be analysed through a variety of models. In the case of Japan, Manabe uses Lefebvre's trichotomy of space, which conceptualises it as a "physical, mental and social space,"[444] that is "controlled by structures of power and reimagined by users."[445] It comprises of *perceived space* (the

[441] Nicolás Ortiz Ruiz, "Cacerolazo: emociones y memoria en el movimiento estudiantil 2011," *Polis* 53 (2019): 1–13.
[442] See appendix, figure 1.
[443] See appendix, figure 2.
[444] Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, 15.
[445] ibid.

physical environment), *conceived space* (representations of space) that is regulated by hegemonic forces, and *lived-in space* (spaces of representation) which is "where people imagine new uses and meanings for space in contrast to the conceived space regulated by hegemonic forces."[446]

Applying this to the case of Chile, the *perceived space* is the roads, plazas and public spaces of the cities that are subject to the control of city planners, as they dictate the flows of people, where they can gather, communicate, and here, protest. This space was re-conceived by the government through imposing curfews, denying people a place to do so. However, Facebook allowed for an alternative virtual space that served the same functions as the conceived physical spaces did previously. Here, the *cacerolazos* acted as *spaces of representation* which allowed protesters to reimagine the controlled physical space. The sound challenged the power of the government and saturated the otherwise controlled physical space, as a result reclaiming it. Thus Facebook provided an alternative virtual space which facilitated the sound of banging pots and pans to flow undisturbed.

From Offline to Online/ from Online to Offline

In this we see what Tufekci refers to as a "digitally networked public sphere," which she uses as "a shorthand for this complex interaction of publics, online and offline, all intertwined, multiple, connected, and complex, but also transnational and global."[447] Social media was not just used to virtually coordinate physical protests, but also allowed people to interact and create their own discourse surrounding them, feeling that the media was not faithfully reporting the course of events. When interviewing Tania, the head of *Asamblea Chilena en Londres*' picketing team, she said that "the media is owned by the richest people in Chile. It's ridiculous but it's been like that forever". Even the current president owned one of Chile's main television channels *Chilevision* from 2005 to 2010. Tania is one of many young Chilean voices who have become disillusioned with the media's representation of protest activity. The news reports tend to focus on the vandalism and supermarket lootings

[446] Ibid., 16.
[447] Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, 6.

done by the protesters, and such a lack of true coverage often "creates a significant challenge to activists in communicating their alternative views."[448]

However, Facebook again proved useful as it relies on "the power of network effects – the more people who use them, the more useful they are to people."[449] Given that Facebook is so widely used, people can connect more and more, which makes the platform more difficult for the government to shut down than an activist-only site. In addition, its design promotes sharing and devalues privacy, helping information to spread easily and quickly.[450]

People in the digitally networked public sphere filmed what was happening on the ground and shared their videos online. They showed what the news did not: videos of police brutality, peaceful demonstrations, moments of unity, personal stories, eye-witness accounts and opinions, which created a constantly expanding, diversifying and snowballing discourse online that was largely free from media bias. In this discourse, jokes and memes were spread and somebody even created a website called *iCacerola,*[451] which digitally recreates the sound of *cacerolazo* when you touch the pot icon on the screen, particularly useful for protesters who do not have access to physical pots or pans. The protest was just as online as offline.

On October 21, a mere two days after the first night of curfews, the domestically and internationally acclaimed Chilean rapper Ana Tijoux uploaded a short one-minute-long song on YouTube called "*Cacerolazo."*[452] In this, the sound of the *cacerolazo* underwent a process of dissociation called schizophonia, where the artist "split the sound from the makers of the sound."[453] It was transformed into a catchy repetitive rhythm, also reflected in the lyrics – "*cacerolazo, cacerolazo, cacerolazo, cace, cace, cacerolazo".* In performance, people usually choose to play different simple rhythms that often collide, creating the

[448] Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, 6.
[449] Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, 20.
[450] Ibid., 13–20.
[451] https://www.icacerola.cl/.
[452] anamaria tijoux. "#CACEROLAZO – Ana Tijoux," YouTube video, 1:03, October 21, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVaTuVNN7Zs.
[453] Schafer, *The New Soundscape*, 43.

intended cacophony of noise, but here we hear a mediated schizophonic sound that manages to turn this noise into music.

The rap's lyrics speak of Chile's problems which the protests revolve around: the general price of living, including rent, gas and water bills; poor pension plans; lack of access to quality education; the privatisation of natural resources; media bias; and police brutality. The accompanying video employs these various video clips, photos and memes circulated by the digitally networked public sphere, and the video itself quickly gained traction online. Tania mentioned that Tijoux is a popular musician among the protesters because her music has always been committed to the common people, and this piece manages to channel the real message of the protests. In the song, she sums up the movement in one slick phrase: "*no son 30 pesos, son 30 años*"—"It's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years," which explains that the protests are not about the raising of public transportation fares, but about the lack of change in Chile since the dictatorship ended almost 30 years ago. It seemed to be the perfect phrase that summed up the movement, and whether Tijoux created the phrase herself or it came out of this ever-expanding discourse, the song clearly popularised it.

"Cyberspace is not hermetically isolated"[454]—what happens online "spills over into the real world."[455] Overnight, the song had re-captured the imaginations of the protesters and had spilt into the streets where it was played at physical demonstrations, and its popularised phrase was written across placards and banners. Ana Tijoux's "*Cacerolazo*" and its mediated sounds of banging pots and pans became the soundtrack to the movement itself. The root of its creation lies in the digitally networked public sphere, which provided visual materials, interaction free from bias and a new discourse. Tijoux managed to eloquently summarise the protests, detaching the noise from its source and turning it into music, which circulated online, and not only spilled back into the streets of Chile but to a wider audience given her international following and the piece's accessibility as music rather than noise.

[454] Manabe, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, 110.
[455] Ibid.

From Chile to the World and Back Again

The internet can also "easily connect many people who are not in the same physical space, or even people who do not know each other at all."[456] It has been invaluable in bridging the gap between Chilean living abroad and their friends, family and native country in this tumultuous time. For example, when interviewing Tania, she told me that she had come to London temporarily to support her partner, who is studying at university. Due to the physical distance between her and her family and friends, she feels guilty that she cannot join in with the protests. However, she mentioned the internet helps her and others in similar situations connect: "For us, the internet is how we see everything and how we know everything. It's our connection with all the conflict. It's our connection with Chile."

The members of *Asamblea Chilena en Londres* have grown in numbers as many like-minded Chileans have used the internet and social media to find a community outside of their country. Tufekci calls this tendency to seek out people who are like themselves as 'homophily' which has been greatly facilitated by digital connectivity.[457] They don't have to live in the same physical spaces to communicate: now, "people may just need to find the right hashtag."[458] Tania recalled:

> So this huge thing happened in Chile, the military were out in the streets, and we were all thinking: "oh my god, it's like 1973 all over again." So the Assembly was born in that context; in that urgent need to get together, eager to do something. We didn't even think why. We have to get together and shout and scream.

She mentioned that the group larges comprises of two types of people: students and young workers like herself, who are only in London for a few years; and Chileans living in exile who

[456] Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, 6.
[457] Ibid., 9.
[458] Ibid.

have resided here since fleeing the military dictatorship. With them, they have brought two different methods of protesting. Many of the younger demonstrators were also involved in the 2011 Chilean student protests which saw the appearance of creative demonstration practices including flashmobs, viral campaigns and kiss-a-thons.[459] Given their experience, they prefer a more 'carnivalesque' style of protesting, employing music, chants, visuals and spectacle. On the other hand, the older generation prefers to go to the embassy every day and just shout, in that way expressing their anger.

To satisfy both internal groups, they have employed a variety of protest tactics, including flash mobs at St Pancras train station and pickets outside the Chilean embassy. They have translated chants and songs into English so they can communicate their cause to the UK, but Tania mentions that it never really sounds the same. They've not got the same rhythm. However, they often perform *cacerolazos*, which avoids this detachment from feeling and words because no words are needed.

Novak mentions that noise can be both social and antisocial.[460] Here, we can see that *cacerolazo*'s social and carnivalesque nature appeals to the younger generation of protesters, while its ability to create a dominating, antisocial noise echoes the relentless shouting of the older protesters. Therefore, the performance of *cacerolazo* satisfies both groups' methods of protest and unifies them. They often perform these at iconic landmarks in London to raise awareness amongst the British population and tourists, but also to record videos, which they post on their Facebook page as, in the words of Tania, "energised messages of support" to Chile.[461] The landmarks clearly situate their protests, showing Chile that the world is listening.

Returning to the Facebook page that organised the *cacerolazo* under curfew – which demanded that they play so loudly that they are heard in Europe and encouraged people to post videos and photos – there was also a stream of support that came from Chileans living

[459] Cristián Cabalín, "Estudiantes conectados y movilizados: El uso de Facebook en las protestas estudiantiles en Chile," *Comunicar: Revista Científica iberoamericana de comunicación y educación* 43, no. 22 (2014): 28.
[460] David Novak, "Noise," in *Keywords in Sound*, edited by David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2015), 125.
[461] https://www.facebook.com/asambleachilenapagina/.

abroad who posted messages, photos and videos to show that despite not being in the country, they too were participating in the protests.[462]

They were finally heard in Europe. However, it was not just the act of playing loudly, but the internet and social media that facilitated the sound to reach the world. Videos of solidarity protests from around the world were being uploaded to the now global digitally networked public sphere, attracting Chileans, non–Chileans, and even celebrities such as Roger Waters from Pink Floyd, who posted a video of himself on YouTube symbolically banging a pot in his back garden for one minute as a sign of support.[463]

On October 27, Ana Tijoux uploaded a longer version of "*Cacerolazo*" on YouTube.[464] This time, the video included the latest jokes and memes created and circulated online, and videos of international solidarity protests from Sydney, Paris, and even scuba divers at the bottom of the sea! This deterritorialised sound was now international.

On November 26, I attended my last protest on a quiet street in Mayfair, London. The group assembled outside the office of the Chilean mining company CODELCO in a protest to support the national strike occurring in Chile. After a rousing speech, Ana Tijoux's "*Cacerolazo*" was played from a large speaker directed at the company's window. The protesters quickly produced pots and pans of all different sizes from their rucksacks and began to strike. I was standing at the side, and embarrassed that I had not brought one, I reached for my phone, turned up the volume and played the sound of banging pots and pans through the *iCacerola* website. In that cacophony of sound, it seemed that the interactions between public/ private; virtual/ physical; online/ offline; people/ politics; governments/ citizens; noise/ music; local/ global; and past/ present were playing out in all their complexity.

[462] See appendix, figure 3.
[463] Roger Waters. "*CHILE*," YouTube video, 5:39, October 31, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nLBS7aYnhk.
[464] anamaria tijoux. "#CACEROLAZO – Ana Tijoux," YouTube video, 3:27, October 27, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lItbHicquo4.

Conclusion

In the past, "your voice only travelled as far as you could shout."[465] In the digital age, however, the internet alters space and allows for sounds to reach anywhere and everywhere. Sounds are "always in motion; they emulate, radiate, reflect, canalize, get blocked, leak out, and so on."[466] This has been demonstrated by the journey of the *cacerolazo*: the sound that started in 1971 by housewives protesting against food shortages resonated with current day protesters in Chile. Under curfews, Facebook allowed for an alternative virtual space to organise protests, and the sound of *cacerolazo* managed to flow from private space into public space, dominating the urban soundscape and simultaneously circulating online.

Here, a digitally networked public sphere was created, which facilitated an alternative discourse largely free from media bias. *Cacerolazo* was picked up by Ana Tijoux who moulded its noise into music and created a video from the circulated videos created in the discourse, which was again virtually circulated and then leaked back into physical space when it became a soundtrack for the movement and was performed in street protests.

The internet and social media helped the song reach the world, where it was performed in copy-cat demonstrations in big cities around the globe. In London, social media helped Chileans living abroad connect, and the performance of *cacerolazo* unified two generation's protesting methods, which were recorded and sent back into the virtual world. Joining with other messages of solidarity, they reached Chile and Chileans everywhere as a sign of support. The internet and social media have made this already loud sound louder, the space it dominates broader, and has rendered its significance more meaningful to even more people.

[465] Schafer, *The New Soundscape*, 43.
[466] Andrew Eisenberg, "Space." In *Keywords in Sound*, edited by David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2015), 193.

APPENDIX

Facebook Screenshots

Figure 1.
"Curfew at 6 o'clock? It doesn't matter. Nation-wide cacerolazo at 8 o'clock. Let's make them hear it in Europe."
Todos Somos Valparaíso, "Toque de queda a las 18 hrs? No Importa." Facebook, October 22, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/Todos-somos-Valpara%C3%ADso-270353113142813/.

Figure 2.

"Cacerolazo. Leave your video or photo here."
Todos Somos Valparaíso, "Cacerolazo. Deja tu vídeo o foto acá." Facebook, October 22, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/Todos-somos-Valpara%C3%ADso-270353113142813/.

Figure 3.
"We hear you in Europe!" And messages of solidarity from Chileans in Spain, Puerto Rico, Canada and Belgium.

Todos Somos Valparaíso, "En Europa se escucha!" Facebook, October 22, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/Todos-somos-Valpara%C3%ADso-270353113142813/.

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OPINION PIECE

ARE BIG DATA JUDGEMENTS ABOUT HEALTH OR PERSONALITY MORE ACCURATE THAN THOSE MADE BY HUMANS?

An anthropological critique in relation to the Quantified Self Movement.

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents a critical anthropological gaze at the difference in accuracy between human and big data judgements on health or personality, where the latter are engendered by wearables and self-trackers. Referencing journalistic and ethnographic literature, particularly on the Quantified Self movement, it argues for a resituating of this debate in the negotiations of big data by users in the everyday. The calibrations of health and personality are lived and phenomenologically experienced, and therefore continuously constructed by as also constructing the self in the cultural. At the same time, the paper cautions that an overt focus on individual interpretation and therefore individual agency distracts at once from big data's social and political considerations, the temporality of the question of its accuracy, as well as the separate valence it commands depending upon the level of abstraction or aggregation of the judgement. The debate then warrants a repositioning as not between human or computer-based judgments, but between the potentialities of *becoming*-human of big-data and *becoming*-big data of the user.

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Abhishek Mohanty's professional experience includes design-research, impact entrepreneurship, and management consulting, with a focus on South Asia and the Middle East. He is the co-founder of LagomWorks, a human-centred design and service innovation firm. He is also currently working on an impact idea on sustainable consumption in the UK. He has an MA in Social Anthropology from SOAS, an MBA from XIM Bhubaneswar, and a BA (Honours) in Economics from Hindu College, University of Delhi. His research interests lie at the intersection of society and technology studies, as well as the anthropology of design and media.

INTRODUCTION

Through their analysis of the 'connections between data, bodies and self-improvement' resident in weight scales and wearable self-trackers, Crawford, Lingel and Karppi surmise that such discourses around 'physical quantification ... external measurement and self-knowledge' are not particularly new.[467] Leveraging the genealogical method, Foucault demonstrated how the modern sciences employed 'techniques of verbalization' in the project of understanding the subject to 'constitute a new self'.[468] Furthermore, and drawing upon the chalice as his instrument of exposition, Heidegger advanced that need precedes the technology which realises it.[469] In other words, while self-tracking technologies rooted in big data have come to define our zeitgeist, they are but contemporary manifestations of our inherent desire for the validation of health, personality, and selfhood.

In this opinion piece, I reference journalistic and ethnographic literature, particularly on the *Quantified Self* (hereinafter *QS*) movement, to argue that the debate around accuracy between human and big data judgements about health or personality, needs to be read instead as a need for 'situated objectivity' with a 'focus on the everyday'[470] which incorporates at once the data, the individual, as well as the Latouresque social. Through the processual gaze proffered by the 'plasticity'[471] undergirding how *QS* movement members negotiate big data, I gesture at how the 'power of the Norm'[472] of the healthy individual is continuously constructed by and also constructs the self in the cultural. I, therefore, conclude that data, and by inference, the question of its accuracy, commands a different valence, at variegated levels of abstraction and aggregation, for each of its many actors.

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[467] Kate Crawford, Jessa Lingel and Tero Karppi, "Our Metrics, Ourselves: A Hundred Years Of Selftracking From The Weight Scale To The Wrist Wearable Device", *European Journal Of Cultural Studies* 18, no. 4–5 (2015): 480.
[468] Luther Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick Hutton, *Technologies Of The Self: A Seminar With Michel Foucault* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1988).
[469] Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology And Other Essays* (London: Harper Perennial, 1977).
[470] Mika Pantzar and Minna Ruckenstein, "Living The Metrics: Self-Tracking And Situated Objectivity", *Digital Health* 3 (2017): 9.
[471] Dawn Nafus and Jamie Sherman, "This One Does Not Go Up To 11: The Quantified Self Movement As An Alternative Big Data Practice", *International Journal Of Communication* 8 (2014): 1785.
[472] Michel Foucault, *Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

DATA, JUDGMENT, AND THE DIALECTIC SELF

Comparing self-assessments by tens and thousands of volunteers using a personality traits questionnaire, assessments by the participants' 'close others or acquaintances' on a subset of the questionnaire's parameters, and computer-based personality judgments using the volunteers' Facebook likes as an account of their digital footprint, Youyou, Kosinski and Stillwell[473] show how computer or big data-based personality judgments are more accurate and consistent, even at times 'outpacing' human assessments. As they themselves report, the study suggests 'that people's personalities can be predicted automatically and without involving human social-cognitive skills'.[474]

Harari cautions that the coming together of big data and neuroscience means that we are all that much closer 'to the point where an external system can understand ... [our] ... feelings better than' us.[475] In conversation with this alarmingly prescient warning is Lupton's[476] positing of the 'data double' as 'representing aspects of the body and self' in the form of data, in the manner of a Strathernian dividual. She cites the example of a self-tracker who privileged a digital construct of himself in the sense that he felt weak because and when his app indicated a lower than calibrated share of protein in his dietary intake for the day.[477] Through the self-tracker's realisation that he had in fact begun to 'trust the digital data over his own physical sensations, and that the data also began to shape how he felt', Lupton indicates how the endemic 'recursive and reflexive' nature of the data double begins to dictate life.[478] Here, we are also reminded of Haraway's 'cyborg ontology' and its concomitant 'tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other'.[479] In other words, by fulfilling our voyeuristic desire to be validated, big data and its enabling

[473] Wu Youyou, Michal Kosinski and David Stillwell, "Computer-Based Personality Judgments Are More Accurate Than Those Made By Humans", *PNAS* 112, no. 4 (2015): 1036.
[474] Youyou, "Computer-Based Personality Judgements," 1036.
[475] Yuval Harari, "The Idea Of Free Information Is Extremely Dangerous", *The Guardian*, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/aug/05/yuval-noah-harari-free-information-extremely-dangerous-interview-21-lessons.
[476] Deborah Lupton, "Self-Tracking Cultures: Towards A Sociology Of Personal Informatics", *Ozchi '14: Proceedings Of The 26Th Australian Computer-Human Interaction Conference On Designing Futures: The Future Of Design*, 2014, 82, doi:10.1145/2686612.2686623.
[477] Lupton, "Self-Tracking Cultures," 83.
[478] Lupton, "Self-Tracking Cultures," 82-83.
[479] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs And Women: The Reinvention Of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

battery of self-tracking wearables and apps reproduce the self in the form of an analytically derived Bourdieusque 'habitus', with 'dispositions' around health and personalities which complete the circle by nudging us to 'think, feel, and act in determinate ways'.[480]

Pantzar and Ruckenstein[481] consider the abovementioned argument and highlight that such health and personality judgements based on big data advocate a 'mechanical objectivity' which denies individual users the everyday encounters they have with their personal data, and comes to ignore their 'expectations' and 'social setting'. This precludes 'human agency' in the sense that 'the heart rate or the number of steps taken per day proposes a seemingly mechanical and objective way to capture aspects of … [the] … self'.[482] Instead, they suggest a 'situated objectivity', as one that combines self-tracking or device-generated data along with human contextualisation in the everyday social, with its different actors.[483] And it is this implicit notion of data as having a different meaning for each individual that serves as a point of departure for the *QS* movement, which describes itself as an 'international community of users and makers of self-tracking tools who share an interest in "self-knowledge through numbers"'.[484] As Nafus & Sherman ethnographically show, *QS* members contest the subjectivities which big data engenders by avoiding and repurposing 'normative understandings of what is and isn't "healthy"' or right, moving between tracking tools and devices, and opting for those through which they can differentiate 'between what might be "good for you" as a general principle and what works'.[485]

The phenomenological interpretation of data and attendant judgments by *QS* members, in the form of lived and embodied experiences, thus resituates the debate on accuracy between human and big data judgments of health and personality, to an idiosyncratic dialectic. The movement's co-founder, Gary Wolf, alludes to this higher-order synthesis as he blogs that self-tracking is a project in garnering 'another perspective on yourself, one

[480] Loïc Wacquant, "A Concise Genealogy And Anatomy Of Habitus", *The Sociological Review* 64, no. 1 (2016): 64–72.
[481] Pantzar, "Living The Metrics," 2.
[482] Pantzar, "Living The Metrics," 2.
[483] Pantzar, "Living The Metrics," 9.
[484] "What Is Quantified Self?", *Quantified Self*, 2020, https://quantifiedself.com/about/what-is-quantified-self/.
[485] Nafus, "This One Does Not Go Up To 11," 1789.

that isn't available from unaided thinking'.[486] *QS* members turn to self-tracking as a means of 'purposefulness and intention' in the everyday, where tracking is less teleological and more of a 'technology of noticing', as 'one learns how to feel one's body through the data'.[487] In fact, for members of the *QS* community, it is not so much the data in and of itself, but the processual act of tracking which holds valence, as 'tracking transcends utility … [since] … the process itself lends meaning'.[488]

However, an overt focus on individual interpretation and therefore, individual agency, like that espoused by the *QS* movement, can 'steer the discussion away from social and political aspects of health'.[489] As we are being made all too aware through the Covid-19 pandemic, underway as I write this essay, 'health, considered from the standpoint of insights generated through self-tracking, is both a societal and an individual issue, with political and existential implications'.[490]

There have been instances by the State, for example, to coerce citizens to download apps which detect and record various data, including but not limited to health alone. In an ongoing piece of research where I am pursuing an ethnographic inquiry of State-mandated contact-tracing apps, one of my interlocutors in India tabled how it was the status on the app, in the sense of his Covid-19-free data double, that now determines whether he can enter a bank branch or the neighbourhood mall. And for another conversationalist, a non-State actor in the form of his employer has mandated the use of a second track-and-trace app, developed by the employing organization itself, which also folds in his medical history as recorded in his personnel file. The data double is thus rendered a necessity and no longer a choice. As Deleuze has suggested, 'the numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information or reject it' and 'individuals have become *dividuals*, and

[486] "The Unreasonable Effectiveness Of The QS Show & Tell", *Quantified Self*, 2020, https://quantifiedself.com/blog/the-unreasonable-effectiveness-of-the-qs-showtell/.
[487] Nafus, "This One Does Not Go Up To 11," 1789.
[488] "The Quantified Self: The Psychology Of Self-Tracking", *Quartz*, 2019, https://qz.com/quartzy/1644006/the-psychology-of-self-tracking/.
[489] Pantzar, "Living The Metrics," 9.
[490] Pantzar, "Living The Metrics," 9.

masses, samples, data, markets or *banks*'.[491] In short, if control is the definitive trait of the pandemic's zeitgeist, then the data double has emerged as its determinate manifestation.

Thus, relying on atomized trends and nuances at the level of the individual, as the *QS* movement has shown, 'can be illusory and the new rules based on them premature', evinced by the example of a self-tracker who 'believed that eating half a stick a butter a day made him smarter' at the risk of cardiac complications.[492] Our original debate on accuracy between humans and big data therefore merits a look at the starting discourses of health and personality as preceding the individual judgement itself, whether human or big data-driven. This is now where I turn.

DISCOURSES AS POTENTIALITIES

Discourses are viewed with suspicion by the *QS* community, as they also present the possibilities of Foucauldian panopticism and biopolitics, with the former imposing disciplinary relations of 'docility and utility'[493] and the latter engendering a 'system of social control'.[494] Although *QS* members contest them, such 'constructs of healthiness … [are nonetheless] … embodied in the devices that they use',[495] thereby defining the frames of negotiation. In this sense, the frames themselves are agentive and limiting, since the categories, content, and standards they present to *QS* members as spaces of negotiation are but material realisations of the biases and predispositions of the algorithm designers themselves.

However, the constructs and the frames they give birth to are never static, whether at the level of the individual or in aggregate. On the one hand, the *QS* members can be seen as prosumers of self-tracking devices and wearables. Their 'data doubles' are constantly constituted and configured with newly logged data. As *QS* members reflect upon and contextually interpret their own data, their data doubles reconstitute and reconfigure the

[491] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control", *October* 59, Winter (1992): 3–7.
[492] "The Quantified Self: The Psychology Of Self-Tracking"
[493] Foucault, "Discipline and Punish," 137.
[494] Jen Pylypa, "Power And Bodily Practice: Applying The Work Of Foucault To An Anthropology Of The Body", Arizona Anthropologist 13 (1998): 24.
[495] Nafus, "This One Does Not Go Up To 11," 1793.

self.[496] And on the other hand, at the macro level, big data constructs change as individuals log in more data, in effect continuously evolving and shifting the norm or standard of the healthy individual or the appropriate personality.

I offer the auto-ethnographic example of using a mobile app which I use to track my physical workouts or runs. Falling within the realm of wearable self-tracking devices, it orders me as a user into data categories lying at the intersection of locality, demographics like age and gender, and personal statistics such as weight and previous running records, thus highlighting the app's agency, presuppositions, and omissions.[497] It advances standards of running competence, accompanied by testimonials of users at corresponding levels, thus constructing a norm where 'health is equated with fitness'.[498] Whilst on a run, an automated voice assistant alerts me about my pace, heart rate, and lap-times, peppering each such update with suggestions on gait, breathing technique, and even mental fortitude, thus effecting a 'sense of a human-device hybrid'.[499] At the end of my run, statistics and celebratory badges to complement my endorphin-induced stupor are displayed, including gains I have made with respect to my previous workouts and how I now compare with a cohort of other runners in a project of reordering. To complete the reconfiguration, I am given a personalized plan, videos of supplemental workouts, a dietary guide, and a monthly workout summary, showing the points I have earned and the levels I have moved up, or slid down, in the sense of an 'arithmetical economy'.[500] And finally, advertisements on running gear, health supplements, and health insurance schemes are regularly emailed across to me, with discounts as rewards depending on my current running statistics, thereby bringing into sharp relief my utility as a prosumer of data.

What this gestures at then, is that accuracy, when silhouetted against the starting discourses of health and personality, is at once temporal, as well as contingent upon the level of abstraction or aggregation of the judgement. There is no permanence, but only a constant 'crossover' in a manner that 'everything is always crossing over into something

[496] Lupton, "Self-Tracking Cultures," 82–83.
[497] Crawford, "Our Metrics, Ourselves," 484–485.
[498] Pylypa, "Power And Bodily Practice," 26.
[499] Crawford, "Our Metrics, Ourselves," 487.
[500] Foucault, "Discipline and Punish," 180.

else, decomposing and recomposing itself'.[501] In the interplays and interactions between the user, the data double, the app or self-tracker, and abstracted or aggregated constructs, there is a continual reconfiguring. Thus, I borrow from Deleuze and Guattari,[502] to argue that the debate on accuracy warrants a repositioning as not between human or computer-based judgments, but between the potentialities of *becoming*-human of big-data and *becoming*-big data of the user.

Conclusion

Even though their study showcases the significantly greater accuracy of computer-based assessments, Youyou, Kosinski and Stillwell[503] table the caveat that 'human perceptions have the advantage of being flexible and able to capture many subconscious cues unavailable to machines'. Thus, as I have shown earlier in reference to the *QS* movement, a judgement on health or personality which combines the human context of the person's everyday social with big data readouts, is more accurate to the extent that it is more meaningful for the individual user. Yet as criticisms of insular interpretations by *QS* members indicate, a judgement's relevance nee accuracy lands on its potentialities in the manner of *who* it is meant for, at *what* level of abstraction or aggregation, and *when*. And I, therefore, conclude that as users, big data corporations, institutions, and governments traverse the embodiments and understandings of such health and personality judgements, the debate around their accuracy will gravitate towards the ends towards which they are the means, in the form of marketing and advertising campaigns, public policies, and surveillance. For as McLuhan reminds us, 'the medium is the message'.[504]

[501] Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories Of The Self From Freud To Haraway* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 144–145.
[502] Mansfield, "Subjectivity: Theories Of The Self," 144–145.
[503] Youyou, "Computer-Based Personality Judgements," 1039.
[504] Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions Of Man (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

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BOOK REVIEW

THE POLITICS OF TECHNOLOGY IN AFRICA

by Iginio Gagliardone

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), in their advancement, have added a new dimension to development approaches and became a critical element in the integration of the developing world into the global knowledge society. This review explores Iginio Gagliardone´s book, The Politics of Technology in Africa, which provides a comprehensive account of ICT adoption and adaption in Ethiopia and an experimental framework for researching ICTs on the African continent, grounded in Hecht's concepts of technopolitics and technopolitical regime. Drawing on the history of technology, international relations, African studies, and a decade of field research, the author´s alignment of the technological and political to study the relationship between development and ICT, not only challenges the assumption that African countries are passively accepting ICTs but also avoids the pitfalls of techno-determinism. Ethiopia, as the top "Official Development Assistance (ODA)" recipient in Africa and the staunchest advocate of an alternative development state for Africa, makes for an excellent case study and foregrounds a good presentation of the recipient/donor relationship, role of the state, African agency and communication strategies.

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KEYWORDS: ICT; Technopolitics; Nation- and State-building, Recipient/donor; African Agency.

The advance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), by redefining real-time communication, reshaped global dynamics and became a critical element in the developing world´s integration into the global knowledge society. Iginio Gagliardone, in *The Politics of Technology in Africa,* maps out the complex and conflicting tactics and strategies undertaken by the Ethiopian government to incorporate ICTs in its state- and nation-building and stabilize its power after the political turmoil following Eritrea's secession.

Drawing on the history of technology, international relations, and African studies, the book is a culmination of 10 years of field research and studies. The author has established a name within the fields of new media, political change and human development, and this book centres him within the emergent discourse on Global South information societies. Existing literature, limited by dichotomous generalizations (authoritarian vs. democratic) and heavy reliance on indices, fails to explain why and how ICTs are being reshaped across the globe, while in development circles the concept of technology is de-politicized.

Gagliardone aligns the technological and political to study the relationship between development and ICT and argues that ICTs can be used to enact political goals as sites of multiple conflicts, where values and visions can be contested or accepted. Challenging mainstream assumption that ICTs are neutral tools passively accepted by African countries, he builds on Hecht's concepts of *technopolitics* and *technopolitical regimes* to avoid the pitfalls of techno-determinism known for lacking historical depth.

Scholars of international relations and political communication, development and African studies, policymakers and ICT professionals may find the book useful. Within eight chapters, the author first introduces the conceptual foundation, then analyses the internal and external actors shaping the conflictual process of ICT assimilation in Ethiopia. A focus on national politics and discourses is then further explored against China´s role and Western donors´ foreign agendas and rising securitisation, concluding with the framework´s possible replication in other case studies.

Ethiopia is an excellent choice for analysis. Top Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipient in Africa,[505] it features one of the lowest regional internet penetration rates and tightest state control on information.[506] Its large population alone beacons interest within the highly competitive global ICT sector. More liberalised Sub-Saharan countries have navigated the introduction of ICTs by empowering the private sector and civil society organizations. Kenya prioritized market openness to establish itself as a tech hub on the continent and deal with fast, unplanned urbanization issues, through its "Silicone Savanah" in Konza.

Ethiopia´s minority-led government, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), opted for a step-by-step state-controlled absorption. Capitalizing on the regional onset of ICTs, it consolidated its power at the centre within an ethnically diverse political entity through controlled decentralization. Central to it was the government´s *culture of communication*, which interlaces the tangible and intangible. Gagliardone's novel conceptual approach of technopolitics combining machine and meaning offers a good analytical framework.

Discourses of ethnic federalism (national ethnic equality), revolutionary democracy (populist government focused on peasant unity and elite exclusion) and developmental state (economic policy) linked the periphery to the centre, ideologically. Technically, the communication strategy translated into technopolitical regimes through WoredaNet and SchoolNet. WoredaNet, a network of district (woreda) administration, enables central ministries to videoconference with and instruct peripheral offices, which are passive receivers in this relationship. SchoolNet broadcasts pre-recorded classes in English to all secondary school students via plasma TV screens, and trains teachers and government officials on civic education across the country.

Digital literacy and internet access were hardly priorities as both projects aimed to facilitate EPRDF´s communication with the general population not to enable the latter's

[505] "Development Aid at a Glance: Statistics by Region", Africa, OECD, last modified June 6, 2020, 2, https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/Africa-Development-Aid-at-a-Glance.pdf
[506] Iginio Gagliardone, *The Politics of Technology in Africa: Communication, Development, and Nation*. (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1,122.

integration into global communication flows. The book would have benefited from an account of the financial agreements and investors behind the projects, considering Ethiopia is a low-income aid-dependent country. Considerable contributions to important and highly debated topics in related literature are identified.

Role of the State

The book expertly engages opposing by-products of the tight state control on ICTs. Mercenary practices of the governing elite appropriating features of a new sector to consolidate their own power are addressed through the lenses of technopolitical regimes and strategies to quiet dissenting voices. The state, as a mechanism of defence against the shortcomings of Western interventions, ignorant of the local context, is explored through the cautiousness with which the Ethiopian government approached ICTs.

Aggressive pro-market approaches usually overlook the implementation pace, which is paramount when inserting a new concept in its functional-material form into a highly illiterate society uneducated on its benefits and pitfalls, i.e. Facebook genocide in Myanmar. [507] Regardless of criticisms on poor digital integration and government monopoly over telecommunications, EPRDF fought with external actors for its policy space.

African Agency

Usually seen as a passive receiver under the auspices of homogenization *Africa is a country*, there is much room for investigating African agency in mainstream Africa development[508] approaches. Gagliardone, in his analysis of the WoredaNet and SchoolNet, skillfully brings attention to it by highlighting and exploring the diverse tactics and strategies employed by the Ethiopian government to bypass traditional donor conditionality.

[507] Paul Mozur, "A Genocide Incited on Facebook, with Posts from Myanmar´s Military," *New York Times*, October 15, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/15/technology/myanmar-facebook-genocide.html

[508] A country-specific account: Lindsay Whitfield, ed., *The Politics of Aid: African Strategies for Dealing with Donors* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

The 2005 Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness has centralized this issue in donor–recipient relations. Labelled as ownership, it purports that receiving countries should decide where and how to channel the funds but does not clarify exactly "who" is the decisive agent. Is it the government, political or business elites, or the civil society? The book, by contextualising the different narratives on the adoption and adaptation of ICT in Ethiopia, expertly addresses the issue revealing a complex picture, characterised by regional/external and country/internal heterogeneity with convoluted competing discourses including the often-overlooked diaspora.

Traditional Donors

The book gives the overall impression that EPRDF proficiently deals with both internal and external actors. Major reliance on foreign assistance suggests a different picture. Gagliardone efficiently explores the government's control over national discourses and practices. A successful example of resistance to Western technopolitical regimes is UNDP's SchoolNet, same-name project prioritizing internet access and digital literacy implemented in response to EPRDF´s initiative. Interestingly, there is little distinction between the two in international settings and on the internet, the latter being mainly addressed in Gagliardone´s work.

When powerful international entities control global discourses and ICT flows, is it about EPRDF´s skilful manoeuvring or donor leniency seeing the transient nature of a political elite and ICT securitization in the region? Though the author explores how EPRDF uses the latter to suppress adversaries and realise its national vision, the lack of a note on projects´ performance in later years suggest a momentary happenstance catalysed by alternative support.

China–Africa relations

There is much space for studying ICTs in China–Africa relations. The author narrowly covers the agreements with ZTE and Huawei and mainly emphasizes the *silent partner* as an alternative financier. The no-strings-attached policy is downplayed, though,

simplifying the complex relationship China has with its aid/investment recipients.[509] China is not a charity, so why continue to endorse government monopoly on communications when facing negative returns? Following general trends of looking at Chinese companies as a coherent group, misses their controversial and highly competitive inner dynamics, and discounts their impact on Ethiopian technopolitics.

Considering China is the main investor in the Ethiopian telecommunication sector, closely following the establishment of the African Union in Addis Ababa in 2001, the book would have gained from a deeper exploration of the Ethiopian government's relationship with both ZTE and Huawei, in which the latter was used as a mechanism to curb the former's sector monopoly and induce reforms.[510] Gagliardone´s new book, *China, Africa, and the Future of the Internet* may give further insight.

[509] A comprehensive account: Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon´s Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[510] Ding Fei, "Chinese Telecommunication Companies in Ethiopia: the Influences of Host government Intervention and Inter-Firm Competition," *The China Quarterly* (May 2020): 3, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741020000417

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